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## Climate Armageddon

Planet Earth is being frequently visited by the vagaries of climate change in the form of extreme weather events like floods, erratic rainfall, droughts, hurricanes, wildfires etc., that claim heavy toll of human and animal lives, causing irreparable damage to property and infrastructure. We humans have failed to hark the warning signals being sounded by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) through its Assessment Reports from time to time and especially the Fifth Assessment Report of 2014, Special Report on Global Warming released in October 2018, Special Report on Climate Change and Land released in August 2019 and the latest Special Report on Climate Change and Oceans released on September 25, 2019.

Failure of global leadership to come up to the expectations of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change agreed to by over 190 countries has spurred youngsters like Greta Thunberg to ask "How dare you?" Our failure to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is rapidly pushing us towards climate Armageddon. IPCC's latest report deals with as to how climate change is reshaping the oceans and ice sheets, and its major focus is how *water*, in all its forms, is closely tied to human flourishing. Continuous release of carbon pollution into the air entails the potential of accrual of serious implications for the humankind. This report makes it evident that climate change is going to reshape every system made of water on Earth. In other words, warming of ocean would lead to decline in seafood safety, accumulation of mercury in fish and the toxic bacteria *Vibrio* will become more common. Surge in the frequency of extreme coastal flooding events on the pattern of Hurricane Harvey and Katrina can be exacerbated by climate change. Scientific evidence cited in the IPCC report warns that climate change can push the worst rainstorms, including tropical cyclones and hurricanes thereby leading to increase the frequency of extreme El Nino and La Nina.

According to the report, if humankind manages to quickly lower its carbon pollution in the next few decades, then sea-level rise by 2100 may never exceed about one foot, and this will be tough but manageable. Concurrently, the report also warns that if carbon pollution continues rising through the middle of the century, then sea-level rise by 2100 could exceed 2 feet 9 inches and under those circumstances the task would be too gigantic to manage. While referring to the effects of climate change seemingly to be speeding up, the report adds that the seas are now rising at an unprecedented pace over the last century; and that the rate of global sea-level rise was 2.5 times faster from 2006 to 2016 than it was for nearly all of the 20th century. In the Antarctic ice sheet, the rate of mass loss had tripled relative to the previous decade and in Greenland, it's doubled over the past decade.

The IPCC's latest report informs that the oceans act like a massive sponge in the planetary system, and they have so far absorbed most of the warmth trapped by greenhouse gases. It is further reported that since 1993, the rate of ocean warming has more than doubled. Marine heat waves—when the ocean becomes so hot that it can kill plants and animals—happen twice as frequently now, and they have grown in intensity, duration, and size. According to the report, ecological upheavals of climate change are not restricted to the seas. Many glaciers will disappear within the next decade and—at the latest—within a century and that could have implications for water security across the globe. There are two huge stores of water on the planet – the oceans encompassing more than two-thirds of its surface, and the rocklike ice caps – and the scientists have already detected one key change in how those two stores of water interrelate. The biggest driver of sea-level rise has been heating itself for past some decades and as the ocean gets hotter, it literally occupies more space, what the scientists call "thermal expansion," and it applies to matter more generally; and meltwater from Greenland and Antarctica has overwhelmed this effect. The report warns that policies that curb greenhouse gases today can have a strong impact on future sea-level rise, particularly in terms of what happens after 2050.

— BK



# Myanmar Factor in India-ASEAN Relations

Pankaj Yadav\* & Arvind S. Yadav\*\*

*[India has decided to augment its relations with ASEAN countries after assimilating the policy of globalization and liberalization; especially in the wake of 'Look East Policy' that has been adopted by the country. In changing global political and economic scenario, ASEAN countries emerged as a vital region of strategic importance and resource dynamics; it can fulfil India's strategic, political and economic interests, and also equally significant to counter China's policy in this region. Myanmar shares a long land boundary of about 1,643 kilometers with India and an important member of ASEAN group, so it is spontaneous for Myanmar to play an important role to connect India with ASEAN. In 2011, theoretically democracy had been established in Myanmar. After political alteration Myanmar opened its economy to the world. Myanmar's new policy gave India an opportunity to cooperate economically and strategically with ASEAN, and provided a foundation to change its 'Look East Policy' to 'Act East Policy'. Present paper deals particularly with various aspects of bilateral relations between India and Myanmar and analyze the role of Myanmar in impacting India-ASEAN relations in its broadest sense.]*

**A**ssociation of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a political and economic organization of 10 countries. ASEAN was established on 8 August 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand to promote political-economic cooperation and regional stability. It was initially an organization of five member countries, but on 8 January 1984, Brunei became the sixth member of this organization. Vietnam joined the ASEAN Group in 1995, followed by Laos and Myanmar accepting full membership of the organization in 1997, with Cambodia's entry into the organization in 1999, taking its membership to 10 and establishing itself in its current form (Maharana, 2014).

Geographically, India and ASEAN member countries are closely linked with each other. India has shared maritime borders with Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia in the Indian Ocean. Indonesia is just 112 miles away from Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India (Maharana, 2014). India and ASEAN member

countries are geo-politically connected to each other; therefore, from the point of view of national security they are also important for each other, because the threat to the security of one will affect the security of the other. Myanmar is a member country of the ASEAN and is connected to India by terrestrial border, hence discharging the role of a terrestrial link between India and ASEAN. It is therefore natural that the evolution of India-Myanmar relations should affect relations with ASEAN and similarly ASEAN will also affect India-Myanmar relations.

## Emergence of India-ASEAN Relations

India's policy of inclination towards ASEAN is in fact a part of the 'Look East Policy', which deals with the changed geopolitical context of the international structure in the early 1990s. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Cold War came to an end and the US emerged as the sole superpower on the world stage. Since the Soviet Union was an economically and strategically helpful country for India, therefore, after the dissolution, the question of economic and strategic security arose for India. The Indian economic situation was at its lowest level at the time; as a result, economic reforms were initiated in India in 1992, under which policies such as

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globalization, privatization and liberalization were adopted.

After the implementation of economic reforms in 1992, there was an increase in production of goods and the need for a market to sell manufactured goods and products was felt. South-East Asian countries could play the role of a better market for products manufactured in India, where Indian goods could be exported. Therefore, India preferred relations with these countries. Apart from this, another factor of the emergence of India-ASEAN relations has also been the excessive dependence of ASEAN countries on China. The ASEAN countries were aware of the threat of increasing dominance in China's Southeast Asian countries.

Apart from this, in the event of Chinese economy suffering from recession, its adverse effect would also be reflected on the economy of ASEAN countries. ASEAN faced a situation in 1997 when China's economic slowdown adversely affected the economy of ASEAN countries, so the ASEAN countries also reduced their dependence on China. To conduct their business, they started searching for more markets in other countries such as America, Japan and India too.

If seen clearly, India's policy towards ASEAN and East Asia is multifaceted in nature. Apart from economic connectivity with South East Asia and Asia-Pacific region, this policy also has strategic and political aspects. In the last two decades, the center of power in international politics has been moving towards the Asia-Pacific region and India's 'Look East Policy' has been outlined with the aim that India should play a decisive role in the region to achieve its national interests.

### **India-ASEAN: Political Relations**

At the time of the establishment of ASEAN in 1967, its member countries had proposed to India to become its member but the then Indian government showed reluctance to join the organization. At that time, regional economic organizations did not have a significant role in global politics and according to Indian

policymakers, India is not even a part of Southeast Asia, so India decided not to be part of ASEAN.

The end of the Cold War and India's 'Look East Policy' in the early 1990s fashioned new potentials for India-ASEAN relations. India's economic liberalization program and its immense potential as a large market spurred the ASEAN countries to change their approach and they started emphasizing fostering relations with India. Relations between India and ASEAN formally began in 1992, with India becoming the 'Regional Dialogue Partner', stipulating mutual cooperation in trade, investment and tourism sectors.

Subsequently, at the ASEAN summit held in December 1995, India-ASEAN relations were raised to 'full dialogue partner' status (Chhibber, 2014). The move marked the beginning of a new round of India-ASEAN relations and mutual interaction rose from the official level to the ministerial level, which authorized India to participate in the 'ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference'. In 1996, India was made a member of the 'ASEAN Regional Forum'. The 'ASEAN Regional Forum' is an influential forum that focuses on issues such as disarmament and non-proliferation, along with world and regional security.

After the year 2002, India-ASEAN relations got an impressive platform in the form of summit, under which it was agreed to organize an India-ASEAN summit every year to identify and implement the key areas of cooperation (Chakraborty, 2014). At the Second India-ASEAN Summit held in October 2003, an agreement called 'Comprehensive Economic Cooperation' between India and ASEAN was agreed between the two sides. Under this agreement, a consensus was reached on the decision to implement the 'Free Trade Zone' (FTZ) between India and ASEAN by 2011. Apart from this, two more agreements were signed in this conference, one of which was a document of India's accession to the agreement of harmony and cooperation in South East Asia, while the second was related

to cooperation in the fight against terrorism (Pokharna, 2014).

India's involvement in an agreement of harmony and cooperation with ASEAN was indicative of the growing closeness with South East Asia, which was seen as an important step towards India's 'Look East Policy'. But the agreement on the goal of free trade was more important, although eight-year time was given for its successful implementation.

The India-ASEAN summit, started since 2002, is being held successfully every year. During this time, an effort has been made to form a consensus between the two sides on a number of major regional and global issues, including some important issues like environment, terrorism and reform of international financial institutions.

The 10th summit of India-ASEAN was held on November 19, 2012 at the Peace Palace in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The summit also celebrated the twentieth anniversary of India-ASEAN relations. The conference also decided to implement the ASEAN-India Partnership and Action Plan for Progress, Peace and Common Prosperity (2010-2015) (Kumar, 2013). It is noteworthy that at the 8th ASEAN-India Summit held in Hanoi, Vietnam on October 30, 2010, an initiative was taken to draft the ASEAN-India Action Plan for Progress, Peace and Shared Prosperity (2010-2015).

This was a major step towards motivating India-ASEAN cooperation towards action, cooperating in the depth of ASEAN-India Dialogue Partnership and completing ASEAN unity and community building.

### **India-ASEAN: Economic Relations**

In the early years of the 1990s, India pursued new policies in the economic field, under which policies like globalization and liberalization were adopted. The Indian economy had reached the verge of insolvency at that time and due to a controlled economy, India was facing excessive shortage of foreign exchange, in which case India made extensive changes in its economic policy, which was known as liberalization. At the same time, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union,

which was a major ally of India, Indian policymakers decided to make a detailed change in the direction, magnitude and composition of Indian trade to make India economically viable in the changing global scenario.

The result of these changing global circumstances was reflected in India's 'Look East Policy', which was subsequently carried forward under the 'Open Sky Policy' in Atal Bihari Vajpayee's time, with the main objective of India's engagement with the ASEAN countries. Economic relations had to be improved. Under the 'Open Sky Policy' Indian metros were to build Indo-ASEAN unity by establishing better connectivity with the capitals of all ASEAN countries (Sultan, 2003).

In 1997, the economic recession began in China, the effect of which was clearly seen on the economy of ASEAN countries. China was the largest trading partner among ASEAN countries at that time, so the impact of China's economic slowdown was bound to be reflected naturally to ASEAN countries. Thus after 1997, ASEAN countries made necessary changes in their trade policies with India as an alternative market and encouraged the investment process in India. At the 4th India-ASEAN Summit held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 13 December 2005, a broad outline of the areas of cooperation was created. The goals of cooperation in several areas such as agriculture, health and pharmaceuticals, science and technology, human resource development and infrastructure were set.

India raised US \$ 2.5 million for the India-ASEAN Cooperation Fund (Shekhar, V. 2007); move was appreciated by the ASEAN countries. In order to ensure regional cooperation, India proposed to expedite the ASEAN unity initiative.

At the 7th India-ASEAN Summit held in Thailand in 2009, India announced a contribution of \$50 million to the ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund with an aim to support ongoing ASEAN-India projects in several fields. In addition, India established the 'ASEAN-India Science and Technology Development Fund' with an initial capital of \$1.0 million (Pokharna, 2014).

There has been a steady increase in cooperation between India and ASEAN in the economic field. While the total trade volume in 1993 was \$2.9 billion, in 2008 it increased to \$47.5 billion. Thus, India's total share in trade with ASEAN increased from 0.8 percent to 2.8 percent in 2008 (Chhibber, 2014). India was the 7th largest trading partner of ASEAN until 2008, while was the 6th largest investor in terms of investment. At the seventh India-ASEAN summit itself, both sides set a target of taking bilateral trade to \$70 billion by 2012. It is noteworthy that in 2018 the trade volume was \$81.33 billion between India and ASEAN, which is 10.6% of India's total trade. Beside this India's total share of exportation with ASEAN countries is 11.28% (mea.gov.in, 2018).

### **Myanmar as the Gateway to ASEAN**

Myanmar is an important country for India, particularly in India's 'Look East Policy' and relations with ASEAN. Myanmar's geographical location places it at the center of South Asia and South East Asia. Myanmar is the only country in Southeast Asia that provides terrestrial routes between India and South East Asia, so it acts as a bridge to India's 'Look East Policy'. In promoting the 'Look East Policy', India realizes that there is a need for greater participation of the northeastern states of India. The ASEAN region is one of the areas where India and China have taken interest in terms of strategic trade and economy, so it becomes important for India to attract ASEAN countries.

Indian policy makers considered an action plan to establish better physical connectivity between Northeast India and South East Asia and to achieve this objective; a special focus has been given to Myanmar, a major country of ASEAN. Myanmar is a major pillar connecting North East India and ASEAN with terrestrial connectivity. From this point of view, it can help in catering to Indian interests in the ASEAN region. Economic reforms began in Myanmar after the political changes in 2011 and the economy was opened up to the outside world, with Myanmar's open-door policy providing India with an opportunity to expand its strategic cooperation with ASEAN.

Better relations with ASEAN are a part of India's 'Look East Policy'. ASEAN has always worked on a policy of establishing better relations with Myanmar. ASEAN is a regional organization of South East Asian countries, which serves the purpose of peace, unity and economic development in the region; therefore, it was necessary that Myanmar, a major country in Southeast Asia, be made a partner in the process of development. With this objective in mind, it was decided to include Myanmar in ASEAN in the year 1997 (Ranjan & Upadhyay, 2013). It is worth noting that this was the time when major countries of the world were imposing economic and political restrictions on Myanmar.

Although Myanmar is in the direction of creating better conditions for economic growth and trade in the era of economic reforms and an open economy is being built by removing the obstacles to economic activity which were prevalent during the time of military rule. Despite political constraints, ASEAN has decided to set up an 'ASEAN Economic Community' by 2015 (Pokharna, 2014). The main objective of this institution is to make possible the seamless exchange of capital, goods trade, services, investment and trained employees and workers.

### **Conclusion**

Therefore, it is necessary to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the 'Look East Policy'. As a result, India has initiated some bilateral projects and is also engaged in some multilateral schemes whose main objective is to improve connectivity between Northeast India and South East Asia. Since Myanmar will act as the hub of India's 'Look East Policy' and Thailand's 'Look West Policy' therefore work is going on a 'trilateral highway project' with the cooperation of these three countries which will provide terrestrial routes for border trade and tourism in the region.

In the changing scenario, where democracy has been established in Myanmar in principle, Myanmar has attracted the attention of the international community and has succeeded in changing its past perception to some extent. But

after the establishment of democracy and the implementation of economic reforms IN 2011, Myanmar has gained a political place on the road map (Twinkle dunk) of discipline-rich democracy.

ASEAN had many challenges to bring Myanmar back into the international community, such as the establishment of military rule in Myanmar and lack of democracy, illiteracy, poverty and internal unrest caused by conflict between Rohingya Muslims and Buddhist community. ASEAN was conscious that by isolating a country from the international community and imposing sanctions, the situation there would be more distorted rather than improving, which also fostered regional instability along with that country. In 1997, Myanmar was made a member of ASEAN with the aim that Myanmar's integration with ASEAN would have more impact on the military government than boycott.

It is not that ASEAN's initiative in the development process in Myanmar was only in the interests of Myanmar, but it was also a part of the process of meeting the objectives of ASEAN, given the political and strategic importance of Myanmar. It is clear that ASEAN relationship with the country which is an important neighbor of India and India's gateway to ASEAN, should focus on better relations. In addition, ASEAN members have decided to cut tariffs on trade items in addition to items falling under the 'ASEAN Free Trade Area' for backward economic countries such as Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. The main objective of this initiative is to support the economic development of the organization's backward member countries by providing them economic benefits.

Ultimately, it can be said that after joining ASEAN in 1997, Myanmar policymakers felt that the role of Indian cooperation is indispensable for sustaining the process of economic development. Thus, the policy of reactive engagement with India came to the center of Burmese foreign policy. The main reason for this changed attitude of Myanmar was India's increasing economic and political cooperation

with ASEAN, since now Myanmar has also become a member of the organization, so being isolated from India can be a hindrance in its economic development. As described earlier, Myanmar acts as a bridge connecting India and ASEAN. Naturally, Myanmar serves as a gateway to India, from where India can successfully conduct its 'Look East Policy' along with ASEAN countries. Apart from this, India and Myanmar are members of many such sub-regional organizations in which some other ASEAN countries are also members, such as 'Mekong Ganga Corporation', BIMSTEC etc. Therefore, Myanmar can help strengthen India-ASEAN cooperation in multiple ways.

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# India-Bangladesh Relation since 2009

Arpon Sarki\*

*[Both India and Bangladesh share unique geography, long history of common culture, language, ethnicity and many other commonalities. One can say that it is not just strategic partnership but way beyond that on line of equality and trust. Both India and Bangladesh, as independent sovereign actors, try to maintain greater connectivity and maintaining harmonious relations with each other and these are vital factors for promoting peace and economic progress through mutual partnerships. Mutual cooperation and partnership have become more relevant factors than before in a contemporary globalised world.]*

India-Bangladesh relationship comes out of history that both the countries share. Since the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, India has stood with Bangladesh through thick and thin. Bangladesh and India are South Asian neighbours. India was the first country to recognize Bangladesh as a separate and independent state and established diplomatic relations with the country immediately after its independence in December 1971.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly, both countries understand that prosperity of a nation lies in its ability to integrate with each other in areas of mutual cooperation and assistance. Since its inception in 1971 as separate entity in international politics, Bangladesh's relationship with India has experienced several vicissitudes and demonstrated the fact that under democratic regimes in Dhaka, mutual ties have improved considerably. The relationship is having an upward curve since 2009. The end of martial law in Bangladesh with the holding of 2009 elections and ushering in of a democratic government have definitely a better sign and opportunity for India to rebuild the friendship that encompasses the wide range of areas of common interests and also to address issues of genuine mutual concern in a purposeful and focused manner that builds on the commonalities of the both country.

Even the present government in New Delhi under its election manifesto (i.e., The Bhartiya Janata

Party Election manifesto) released at the crescendo of the 16th Lok Sabha elections, bore the imprimatur of its prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi and emphasized the centrality of India's neighborhood in its foreign policy. It asserted that "political stability, progress and peace in the region are essential for South Asia's growth and development" and promised that the government would "pursue friendly relations" in the neighborhood.<sup>2</sup> This could be discerned in the high level visits to Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan among others, within the first 100 days of the government assuming office and that signaled a strong push toward reviving bilateral ties with neighbouring countries.

## **Bilateral Visits**

India foreign policy toward its immediate neighbours is mostly based on one main imperative, New Delhi wishes its neighbour to keep Indian interest in the mind when it deals with its immediate neighbour and same can be applied to India's relations with Bangladesh. India has continued to constructively engage with Bangladesh on a broad spectrum of bilateral issues since 2009. With the return of Awami League under the Prime Ministership of Sheikh Hasina the bilateral relations have improved and are showing positive trends.

This relationship is based on vision of working together in partnership based on mutual trust, respect, and shared political interests and durable foundation of this friendship continues to be

nurtured and strengthened by regular exchange of visits of successive leaders of the two countries since 2009, both under the UPA government till April 2014 and also under the present NDA government since May 2014. It is notable that in the last few years, there has been progress on issues that have eluded solution for decades.

India and Bangladesh have worked closely to strengthen bilateral cooperation on all issues including settlement of land boundary issues, security, infrastructure development, cooperation in power, trade and investments, connectivity, sub-regional cooperation and people-to-people exchange. A good official initiative in terms of regular contacts, including meetings of the top leaderships and of senior officials has been taken to strengthen relations and such visits not only help in improving the bilateralism between the two country to facilitate and to strengthen partnership in diverse areas of common interest and cooperation but also open up window of opportunity between two country for the future as well.

With the emergence of the Modi dispensation with a resounding parliamentary mandate and a professed neighborhood first policy, the bilateral relationship gained new momentum with the conclusion of Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) which effectively settled the contentious issue of exchange of enclaves in adverse possession. After coming into power in May 2014, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in India has started a process of constructive engagement with Bangladesh.

The roadmap to it was prepared during India's External Affairs Minister, Mrs. Sushma Swaraj's first stand-alone visit to Dhaka from 25 to 27 June 2014. During her 'goodwill visit'. Mrs. Swaraj interacted with the Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, leader of the opposition, Begum Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Begum Raushan Ershad, leader of the Jatiya Party etc., and attended a few public functions.<sup>3</sup> The significant developments during the year included the visit of President of

Bangladesh to India in December 2014, visit of External Affairs Minister on her first foreign visit to Dhaka in June 2014 and the up-gradation of Bangladesh Visa Office in Agartala to Assistant High Commission. The India-Bangladesh relationship has become truly multifaceted, encompassing a wide range of areas including trade and investment, security, connectivity, border management, water, power, shipping, renewable energy, development cooperation, art and culture, people-to-people level exchanges, human resource development, amongst others.

The third meeting of the Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) was held in New Delhi on 20 September 2014, wherein, the entire gamut of bilateral relations between the two countries was reviewed. During the JCC, Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation on Nalanda University with India.<sup>4</sup> Decisions taken during Prime Minister's visit to Dhaka in June 2015 have drawn the two countries closer together. Similarly, India-Bangladesh ties have witnessed a high trajectory sustained by high level interaction between the two countries which continued in 2016-17.

Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina visited India in October 2016 for the BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit in Goa. The then MoS for External Affairs, M. J. Akbar led the Indian delegation for the 9th Summit Meeting of Global Forum on Migration & Development (GFMD) held in Dhaka in December 2016. The year also saw signing of an amendment to the Extradition Treaty during the visit of Home Minister of Bangladesh in July 2016. An important development was the visit of Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar to Bangladesh in November-December 2016 which was the first visit by an Indian Defence Minister since 1971. This was in addition to mil-to-mil exchanges which saw intensification during the year.

India-Bangladesh bilateral trade has grown steadily over the last few years with total trade in the last five years (from FY 2011-12 to FY 2015-16) growing by more than 17%. Connectivity through Rail, Road, Inland

waterways, and Coastal shipping remained a key focus area for the two countries and a number of meetings related to these were held to advance specific projects in these areas. The fourth railway line between the two countries through Radhikapur- Birol is now ready. The year also saw inauguration of the Petrapole Integrated Check Post (ICP) to facilitate cross-border movement of people and goods in July 2016, and Phulbari-Banglabandha immigration check-post in February 2016. The two countries identified 11 projects to be executed under the credit line of US\$ 2 billion offered in 2015.

Training programmes have been expanded to include programmes for Bangladeshi civil servants, police officers, narcotics department officials, border-guarding forces, defence establishments, nuclear scientists, teachers etc., apart from regular ITEC courses and ICCR scholarships.<sup>5</sup> Similarly Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina paid a State Visit to India from 07-10 April 2017. During the visit, 36 bilateral documents were concluded in various areas including in high technology areas of Civil Nuclear Energy, Space, Information Technology, defence, capacity building etc. A third Line of Credit (LOC) worth US\$ 4.5 billion was also extended to Bangladesh.

Similarly, in 2018, bilateral relations have been moving forward constructively and in positive direction. The relationship so far marked by continued high-level visits and exchanges including at the highest levels between India and Bangladesh has helped to maintain the momentum of positive bilateralism between the two countries. For instance, India-Bangladesh bilateral talks, at the level of Commerce Secretary, were held on 7th-8th February 2018 at Dhaka. The Indian delegation was led by Ms. Rita Teotia, Commerce Secretary and the Bangladesh delegation was headed by Shubhashish Bose, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh. The two sides held extensive and productive discussions on a variety of issues concerning bilateral trade and economic relations, including development

and up-gradation of infrastructure at border trading points, further expansion of the Border Haats of the two countries, identification and resolution of non-tariff issues affecting bilateral trade, regional connectivity under BBIN (Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal) MVA (Motor Vehicles Agreement) and ease of investment<sup>6</sup>.

Similarly, Bangladesh President Md Abdul Hamid was on 5-day visit to India in March of which for two days he visited India's northeastern states of Tripura and Meghalaya before travelling to New Delhi to attend the International Solar Alliance and Solar Summit on March 11, 2018. During this visit, he stressed on the "shared common political, cultural and social values" with India to drive home the "importance" of ties between the countries and how to take it forward for peace and prosperity in the region. It is expected that Bangladesh President's visit has given a new impetus to bilateral ties.

President Mohammad Abdul Hamid represented Bangladesh at the International Solar Alliance Founding Conference in New Delhi from March 10 to 12, 2018.<sup>7</sup> And in April 2018, Foreign Secretary of India Vijay Gokhale paid his first official visit to Bangladesh from 8-10 April, 2018 at the invitation of the Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh Md. Shahidul Haque. Both the Foreign Secretaries reviewed the areas of bilateral cooperation between the two countries and exchanged views on issues of mutual interest. Both sides expressed appreciation for the notable progress achieved in the implementation of the decisions and initiatives taken during the visits of the Prime Minister of India to Bangladesh in June 2015 and the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to India in April 2017.

During this visit, six Memorandums of Understanding were signed and Foreign Secretary conveyed that the Government of India supports the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh to provide humanitarian assistance to the displaced persons from Rakhine State of Myanmar. He reaffirmed India's continued assistance on this issue.<sup>8</sup> This was followed by

the recent Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visit to India. This was her second visit to India in just under two months. The Bangladesh prime minister visited Shantiniketan to attend Vishva-Bharati University's convocation ceremony, and thereafter held an informal talk with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.<sup>9</sup>

Such visits not only contrive steps for areas of mutual corporation but also equally carry the strategic importance considering complex history and geography shared India and Bangladesh since the birth of Bangladesh as an independent state and is surrounded by India on its eastern, northern, and western borders. Knowing the fact that bilateral relations were not always cordial between the two neighboring states; however, in recent years (especially under present government) the tone and tenor of this relationship has changed for the better.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina at Santiniketan in West Bengal on May 25, 2018 after the inauguration of Bangladesh Bhawan. During the inaugural ceremony of Bangladesh Bhawan, Prime Minister Modi said issues such as coastal border issues, which had been once difficult to handle, have now been resolved. Prime Minister Modi further said that the Indo-Bangladesh bilateral relations are going through a phase of "Shonali Adhyaya" (Golden Era).<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, the Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee also termed Bangladesh and India's relationship as "steady as the Padma, Meghna and Jamuna." India-Bangladesh's relationship is steady and continuous, just like the flow of the waters of Padma-Meghna-Jamuna," said Mamata. "This relationship will continue further."<sup>11</sup> Mamata Banerjee held one-on-one meet with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at evening of 27th May 2018 for about one-hour discussion, of which she said: "It was a fruitful discussion and we have discussed different issues like business, education, culture in very friendly environment. We want to improve ties between India and Bangladesh, Both the countries will have to come

forward to build this relationship, I don't know whether there is political boundary between the two countries"<sup>12</sup>

It is obvious that Bangladesh figures prominently in India's Neighborhood First policy. The goodwill and warmth of this special relationship is often showcased during high-level visits. And with the landmark victory under leadership of Mrs. Hasina, the Awami League, and its allies officially won 288 of the 298 parliamentary seats and marked the third consecutive victory. The PM Narendra Modi was, in fact, among the first Heads of Government to congratulate Sheikh Hasina for her party winning the election with very credible figure. The coming of Sheikh Hasina in power with credible majority in Dhaka, will certainly provide continuity in terms of the agreement that both countries signed, the roadmap that had been structured in many seminal visits by heads and officials of both countries.

Moreover, both countries are crucial for each other, both in terms of geo-strategic and geo-economic terms. New Delhi has invested heavily in building strong relations with Dhaka. The stakes were raised considerably during the four years of the Modi government. Bangladesh is today an important player in India's 'Act East' agenda. Moreover, the paramountcy of India's relations with Bangladesh PM even during her visits to China described Dhaka's ties with India and engagements with New Delhi as "organic", saying it was "beyond a few billions of dollars of trade,"<sup>13</sup> which clearly show her intention to carry forward the ongoing mutually beneficial and stable relations that both countries share since 2009.

From the perusal of above, we can say that such bilateral visits, agreements and MoUs have certainly brought positive changes and freshness in the relationship between India and Bangladesh. The economic development and social progress of Bangladesh is in the interest of India. They will certainly address many borderland problems, which create tensions between the two countries. Also, the visit by the Indian Prime Minister and follow up actions is a sign to the other

neighbouring countries that India is not a 'big brother'; rather it is an 'elder brother'.

It may be a cliché to speak of the multifaceted nature of relations between the two countries and the historical and traditional bonds of friendship the two countries share. The two countries' closer engagement has embraced areas as diverse as joint water resources management, land-boundary demarcation, trade, power, connectivity, infrastructure development, cultural and educational exchange and poverty alleviation. The education sector reflects the friendly relation and role of higher education can be considered as way forward for continuation of cooperation between India and Bangladesh. Cultural and educational ties help in fostering the inclusion and sense of unity among the people of both the countries and also helps in cementing the relation of which both the country are anxious for further consolidation and intensification of their existing bilateralism.

### **Domestic Issue and Other Factors**

Border state is definitely better placed to enhance diplomatic relations with governments in its neighbourhood. Bangladesh has been surrounded by Indian territory as India shares 4,096 km (Assam-262 km, Tripura-856 km, Mizoram-318 km, Meghalaya-443 km, West Bengal-2,217 km) long land boundary with Bangladesh (earlier East Pakistan)<sup>14</sup>. So considering this, the Indian state does play a decisive role in maintaining Delhi's relations with Dhaka considering the changing global order that demands for paradigmatic changes in Indian foreign policy without affecting India's national interest and the primary task of our foreign policy is to ensure an external environment that is conducive to India's transformation and development and this is equally applicable to its relations with Bangladesh.

Bangladesh as a neighboring country that holds crucial geostrategic and economic significance for India. It also serves well with India's model of 'South-South' development cooperation and provides ample support to India's 'Act East Policy'. Importantly, stronger ties with

Bangladesh help India to promote greater stability in its immediate neighborhood and reap economic benefits, especially for its landlocked northeastern region, in terms of its enhanced connectivity with East Asia. With the settlement of the India-Bangladesh border, a stronger focus on LOCs and private sector investment, economic diplomacy has emerged as the major driver of India-Bangladesh relations.<sup>15</sup>

Greater integration with India will be a huge asset to Bangladesh as well, helping to develop roads, railways and trade and lifting the country's economic growth. While transit through Bangladesh would also have security benefits for India (it would simplify the military's task of bringing supplies and reinforcements to combat insurgencies in the North-East and to shore up our border defences against China), the economic benefits have clearly been uppermost in both countries' minds. In other word one, can say that from the perspective of India's Northeast region, Bangladesh is India's most important neighbour, one that India simply cannot afford to ignore.

The Northeast region continues to languish primarily since Bangladesh, on one pretext or another, refuses to give transit facilities to India.<sup>16</sup> A transit agreement with Bangladesh is in India's interest to develop both its landlocked North-East and make its Look East Policy more effective. The proposed transit agreement is a win-win proposition for both countries. But the delay in concluding transit agreement is linked to delay in inking Teesta pact. Conclusion of Teesta pact at the earliest will enable Dhaka offer transit rights to New Delhi.<sup>17</sup>

Although Indian and Bangladeshi governments maintain and are moving toward satisfactory direction and it seems from the recent visits of Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina. Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina visited West Bengal for a two-day visit on May 25-26. During her visit to Shantiniketan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also held meeting her. This was yet another opportunity when Modi, Hasina and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee were together and had discourse on revitalizing bilateral relationship.

Any bilateral relationship can be maintained on the basis of reciprocity. Economic growth also needs to look on to check immigration. Immigration is mostly there in the economic field and has often led to demographic changes, and that a kind of crisis on indigenous identity has been created. Network of illegal migration needs to be diffused. Nature of illegal and unfair immigration should be understood and should be decided through amicable negotiations. National security remains a critical task for the both countries' decision-and-policy makers. And how we accommodate Bangladesh to deal with immigration that is an important matter to be addressed first.

The political leadership from both countries has to take certain decisive steps to address their disputes and disagreements such as Teesta water sharing agreement and other illegal immigrant issue. Experts agree that relations between the two countries are in the best phase and there was significant progress in the last nine years of the Hasina government. However, the Teesta treaty remains a concern for the neighbour<sup>18</sup>

No doubt, water is state issue but boundary is international issue. Firstly, we need to have problem of consensus at domestic level and then go forward. To maintain international relations is the central concern but state do have role to play to nurture and strengthen relations. In 1996 state government of West Bengal played significant role which is missing in contemporary scenario. (In Teesta water sharing agreement). It seems that not signing of Teesta treaty is more to become an irritation in the relations between party systems at the Centre and at state level than anything else.

It is equally conducive that in international politics, structural constraints are the most important determinants of state behaviour and it seems in case of Bangladesh also who hardly pulls up a knock-back using any third power 'balancing' against Indian preponderance in the region. Like other states in South Asia, Bangladesh has tried to counter India's regional hegemony through a variety of means.<sup>19</sup> For instance the relations between India and

Bangladesh often get influenced by the role of third power, mostly to say China .One can substantially argue that China steps up its influence on Bangladesh at our expense.

Though with Bangladesh our relations have improved but; however, while maintaining good relations with us, Bangladesh will try to reach China as the latter does have foreign exchange reserves amounting to \$3.1249 trillion<sup>20</sup>, capacity in terms of infrastructure, huge connectivity projects due to which all neighbours will get benefit. And in term of resource providing, we are in comparatively less influential position. So, there will always be a challenge from China staring at us in our neighborhood policy. Chinese role in the Bangladesh economy is so designed so as to ultimately make that country economically and politically dependent on Beijing. Bangladesh has shown itself to be willing and able to seek the best terms for itself and keep a balance between various powers. The question is whether countries like India will act in time to ensure that Bangladesh retains its freedom to choose.<sup>21</sup>

### **Conclusion**

India has often faced most volatile and bitter political challenges, sometime constructed internally in the last seven decades of its independence. We often find a kind of conflict of competence between the Centre and state when even we look from the foreign policy perspective of India in relation to Bangladesh. Hence, cooperation is the essential prerequisite to reach any working solution at all. There is need to involve politics in the form of discussion, bargaining and agreement procedures. Greater practicability and political platform could solve problem more effectively.

There is also need to encourage a new political commitment which is not only necessary but also desirable and attainable if the concept of positive bilateralism could be achieved as proposed relationship can be a win-win situation for all. Border should not act as barrier rather as a connector and responsibilities to pursue this lie on the shoulder of all the stakeholder. The

challenge is now to build firm political will, a shared understanding of how dissent and disagreement on regional issue can be dealt with within countries at the official levels and define an innovative and sound theoretical framework for regional political cooperation.

India and Bangladesh have successfully bolstered their relationship to reach a new multi-dimensional and comprehensive platform. In recent times, an appreciation of common interests and working on mutually beneficial initiatives has allowed the two neighbors to improve bilateral ties. However, like any other nation, Bangladesh is also a sovereign actor and it will definitely choose that course of action that serves their national interest both in long and short terms. Hence, the Indo-Bangladesh relations need to be handled with great care and sensitivity, as public opinion and perception are of immense importance. People on both sides of the border need to understand and appreciate how this relationship is working to the benefit and advantage of both countries. Positive relations with Bangladesh will not only be beneficial for Delhi rather more beneficial for West Bengal and other North-East states that share international border with Bangladesh.

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# Women in South Caucasus after Soviet Disintegration

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*[This study intends to analyze the socio-economic and political status of women in South Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) after Soviet Disintegration. Following the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991, the states in South Caucasus experienced democratic transition and ethnic conflicts, which had a substantial impact on women. Transition and the resultant economic decline created a hardline condition for women. ]*

Women were the main victims of the collapse of state socialism and transition (Buckley 1997:4-5). Due to the break-up of the old system, women lost the Soviet era egalitarian approach to their problems and the legal guarantees for the protection of women's rights. The revival of religion and the traditional patriarchal attitude on women also hindered them from sustaining a livelihood.

The socio-economic transitions in the Independent States of South Caucasus harshly affected to the position of women in Caucasian society. Women suffered economic setback in the form of extreme poverty and unemployment, and exploitation. Margit argues that "the gaps between winners and losers in transition are large, and many women are still unable to take full advantage of the new opportunities". The battle is now being fought to make the labour market take full account of the needs of women. Low income and the re-emergence of traditional gender roles in Transcaucasia countries badly affect the condition of women. Recent UNDP survey data from Azerbaijan suggest that cultural stereotypes continue to determine gender roles in that country (United Nations Development Programme 2007).<sup>1</sup>

In addition, the daily lives of women are affected by the ethnic conflict, economic crisis, political instability, unemployment, poverty, crime, corruption, health decline and so on. In order to cope up with this situation, they engaged in petty

trade, migration, and even prostitution. The hard-economic conditions of these countries often lead them to be victims of trafficking, forced prostitution, sexual violence, etc. Lack of job, decline of living standard and poverty forced women to prostitution and migration (Dudwick 1997: 241; Cornell et al. 2002: 4). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the region of South Caucasus turned into an internationally known conflict zone. The region experienced several ethnic conflicts such as Abkhazia (Georgia), South Ossetia (Georgia) and Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) that emerged in course of independence and national building.

The large-scale unemployment, collapse of infrastructure, agricultural privatization, and male labour migration coupled with the ongoing ethnic conflicts of Georgia-Abkhazia, Georgia-South Ossetia and Armenia-Azerbaijan on Nagorno Karabakh and rising nationalism severely affected the condition of women in South Caucasian society. Many traditions are revived in independent states of Transcaucasia, which were banned during Soviet times (International Encyclopedia of Women 2000: 2001). The revival of traditions and customs increases the domestic violence, and their women experienced countless setbacks in the political and economic fields.

In economic sphere, the new market economy of the independent states of South Caucasus and the male dominated media portray women as "consumer objects", which has a demoralizing effect not only on women themselves but also on

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the society as a whole (Akimushkina 2000: 2087). Damage to large number of industries and factories caused a severe unemployment problem in the states of South Caucasus, where women are the majority unemployed.

### **Women during Soviet Period**

In 1917, the Great October Revolution and the establishment of Soviet rule brought remarkable changes in the position of Soviet women and it emancipated women. During Soviet period women enjoyed full equal rights with men (Pichugina 2002: 1). Soviet rule broke all the old traditions and customs which were maintained by the south Caucasian state. Women's issues were the most important issues during Soviet period. The full emancipation of women was the main target of Soviet regime. The Marxist ideology believed that strength women should be an indicator every development. The Soviet state followed a policy of emancipation of women.

The Marxist rule gave greater emphasis on the women's issues and to solve their problems. Lenin's party fought against economic constraints to raise the position of women in Soviet society. In 1921, on the occasion of International Women's Day, Lenin wrote: "in Soviet Russia no trace is left of any inequality between men and women under the law ... this is only the first step in the liberation of women" (Jen 1988: 1). Lenin's principle specially focused on the women's equal status with men in each and every activities of society, and so there was no discrimination against women.

The Soviet state ideology recognized the situation of women as oppressive and tried to support them both in private and public spheres. The official view of the state was that in order to bring gender equality and emancipate women in a socialist society, it is essential to ensure them economic independence, freedom from domestic work and childcare responsibilities. Therefore, the state followed an egalitarian approach to women's rights and guaranteed their rights through constitutional provisions and measures. "Article 122 of the Soviet Constitution accorded Soviet

women equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social, political and other public activity".

This declaration ensured women equal right with men in workplace, in educational institutions and in politics and other socio-economic activities of society. Women got freedom from the rigorous customs and were able to follow new ones to which they were comfortable, allowed equality before law, provided opportunities for education, and created environment in their favour to join in labour force and to participate in politics. These steps of the Soviet regime facilitated the appearance of an educated and skilled female workforce and a body of eloquent women leaders observed at present (Pichugina 2002: 1; Barbara 1974: 118). During Soviet period, women enjoyed a comparatively high level of opportunity in the workplace, educational institutions and other spheres of activities of the society.

Article 137 of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. declared: "Women have the right to select and be nominated on equivalent provisions with men." Women in U.S.S.R. were guaranteed every prospect of exercising the privileges accorded to them by law. There were a very big number of women engaged in all branches of the national economy of the Soviet Union. For the period of the two Five-Year Plans (1928-37), the figure of women advantageously engaged improved from 3,000,000 to 9,000,000 (Pichugina 2002:1). At that, time women were active in all branches of socio-economic and political activities of Soviet society.

By 1941, 12 million women, comprising 38 percent of the total number of workers and officials, were employed in the country (Zhen Shiny 1963: 100). During the same period, 29 million women were working in collective farms (Izvestia 8 March 1941). In the history of USSR, this had happened for the first time in the life of women.

New laws in the 1970s abolished night work and underground work for women. The number of women in higher education had risen from 28

percent in 1927 to 43 percent in 1960 and to 49 percent in 1970 (Jen: 1988: 6-7). The high educational status of women clearly shows that for the first time in the world women became more literate in Soviet Union as compared to other countries of the world. Lenin wrote, “in order to achieve the complete emancipation of women and to make them really equal with men, we must have social economy, and the participation of women in general productive labour” (Paul Sacks 1980: 229).

Lenin believed that the full emancipation of women is possible only when women enjoy equal rights with men in economic field and therefore became self-independent. If we look at the professional life of women, we find that the women’s representation in socio-economic and political level was good. In judicial level, women represented 25 percent of the judges. Other figures were thus: 38 percent of the Secondary School Directors, 44 percent of the Engineers, 45 percent of the Teachers in higher education, 50 percent of the specialists working in Technical Institutes, 75 percent of the doctors and dentists, 75 percent of the teachers in secondary grades and lower, 86 percent of the economists and planners, and 98 percent of the nurses.

Men dominated the professions as wood workers, transportation workers, machine operators and metallurgists (Paul Sacks: 1980: 237). Women were well represented in every field of Soviet society. In medical profession, women’s participation was very high. All of these data show the level of women’s emancipation during the Soviet period.

During Gorbachev’s period his policy of *Perestroika* brought some changes in the life of women in Soviet Union. In his book “*Perestroika*”: *New Thinking for our Country and the World*, Gorbachev declares that women in the Soviet Union have “the same right to work as men, equal pay ... every opportunity to get an education, to have a career and to participate in social and political activities” (Jen 1988: 1). During Gorbachev’s period, much debates,

conferences and discussions took place on various issues related to women (International Encyclopedia of Women 2000).

During Soviet period, women enjoyed much legal and social protection. They were bound by a comprehensive economic security and social protection system. With the disintegration Soviet Union, women lost this protection system; and socio-economic safety measures are either inadequate or absent in the post-Soviet period dominated by western liberalism, conservative nationalism. In this context, the Soviet disintegration meant for women in South Caucasus more marginalization, insecurity, vulnerability, hardships, violence, erosion of rights and compulsion to adapt to the changed situation. The impact of Soviet Union’s collapse reflected in women’s social, political and economic positions.

An equalitarian society in Soviet Union gave women wider employment opportunities in technical and medical fields. Soviet regimes promoted the interest of women in the various activities of society. However, the double burden of violence against women and inadequate representation in decision-making bodies suggests that male domination and superiority is perpetuated and maintained. So, gender asymmetry however prevailed in Soviet Socialist society. This means that the Soviet Socialism could not solve the women question (International Encyclopedia of Women 2000: 739-40).

### **Impact of Soviet Disintegration on Women**

Soviet collapse extremely affected the traditional family values of Transcaucasian societies. Post-Soviet countries aimed predominantly at the destruction of traditional family values. The male-subjugated society of Caucasian States reasonably observes the unbelievable alteration of social and cultural values, which gradually make the women the main breadwinner of the family. To cope with the difficult situation of household women searching foreign markets for goods and sexual services caused a shock of morality for women (Ali / GINSC 2006).

The disintegration of Soviet Union has given birth to the violent ethnic conflict situation in the various parts of the independent South Caucasians states, where women are principal victims of that disaster. The failure of Gorbachev's reform policy (*perestroika*) caused socio-economic and political crisis in the states of Soviet Union, which resulted in the disintegration of Soviet Union. Collapse of Soviet Union led to the rise of 15 newly independent states.

South Caucasus region survives the three independent states and breakaway territories, located between Black and Caspian Seas and in the southern part of Russia and its boarder regional powers are Russia, Turkey and Iran. These states are Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan and three autonomous regions – Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh. During 19th century, the three states of Transcaucasia were absorbed by Romanov monarchy and then came under the domination of Soviet Regime.

In 1991, after the disintegration of Soviet Union all of these three states obtained independence. The enormous amount of deposits of oil and natural gas made these three states vulnerable to external rivalries for power and regional influence. The collapse of Soviet Union has brought about devastating effects on the economic, political and social life of Georgia (Mirianashvili 1999: 1). The collapse of Soviet Union severely broke down economic and political strength of Georgia.

The three states of Transcaucasia differ in size, population, ethnic composition and political and economic characteristics (Asopa 2002: 19). These three states populate different ethnic composition in their region with different socio-economic and political status. However, they have commonalities, and accessible crossways are throughout the whole province. The fall of Soviet Union brought remarkable modification in the socio-economic and political life of Transcaucasian people.

### **Women's Economic Situation**

Women are a vulnerable group due to the instability of the region of the South Caucasus. The 70 years of Soviet regime brought remarkable changes in the societies and traditions, particularly in the daily lives of the women in the Transcaucasia states. The economic and social transformation that took place after the Soviet disintegration has resulted in poorer standard of living for the big majority of population. Before the transition, the level of female employment was high (Buckley 1997). The market economy transition brought a succession of harmful crashes in the region. The scarcity of food and other raw materials and poor standard of living increased, as employment was no longer guaranteed by the state and the people have to fight to survive and earn livelihood.

In Georgia more than 80 percent of self-employed women are engaged in agriculture. According to statistics, 87 percent of the Georgian population is poor, 57 percent of them earn salary less than the minimum survival level, and 40 percent should theoretically be unable to exist, as they even spend 100 percent of their income for food. Limits of an income or commodity became usual norm of life for most of women in Georgia (Jashi: 2000). It is clear that women are the most deprived section of the Georgian society. In Armenia, currently women constitute nearly 70 percent of the country's 20 percent of unemployed workers. Women are well represented in the fields of medicine, education, the arts, international relations and law, middle management, mid-level banking, economics, chemistry, biology, and marketing (Ishkanian 2003: 35). The revival of tradition generated gender disparities of women's involvement in the economic activities.

Women's access to social resources and access to material resources during soviet times was high, which reflected on their full participation in education, various economic activities and household. The end of Soviet regime and the socio-economic and political transitions in Transcaucasia severely worsened the positions of women in these fields.

The states of Transcaucasia have increasingly evaded from ensuring employment opportunities and enforcing existing labour laws. Private employers frequently subject women to discriminatory labour practices including firing pregnant women, avoiding hiring newly married women or women with young children and sexually harassing female employees (Gyuzalyan 2000: 35-37). Gender disparities are also noticeable in standard earnings of women. In Georgia, women's earning can be around 20-50 percent less than men's earnings. Women are engaged in the low remunerated state sector, in the rapidly escalating field of informal employment, which brings through it condensed labour rights and a small number of social profits.

Since women's economic contribution has gone down, they have lost their negotiating authority and now their role in decision-making gradually declined. At present women who are working in industries and factories are getting less wages as compared to men. In the workplace, women are highly discriminated and face violence. Soviet women got more opportunity in employment than post-Soviet women; however, Soviet women were always engaged in the lowest paying job. Due to "double burden" of looking after housework and job, women were perpetually exhausted and had no time for upgrading skill.

As a consequence, female labour was less productive than male labour. Another factor of the wage differences between the male and female was due to the fact that women workers were in low skilled and low paid occupations (Guruzdeva and Chertikhina: 1987: 77; International Encyclopedia of Women 2000; UNSC Resolution 1325, 2002; Dudwick 1997). In industrial and agricultural fields, Soviet women performed the large number of the low paying manual jobs. Now also women in South Caucasus are facing the same problem: they are earning fewer wages than men in same labour. The patriarchal societies here have always given less importance to women's labour.

### **Women in Political Field**

"The rise of nationalism in Transcaucasian states and their comeback to religion decreased the Soviet-style opportunities for women to participate in political life. In Soviet time's women themselves often supported such unenthusiastic developments, and played a crucial role in reconstituting nationalist ideologies and religion, depriving themselves of the achievements of the previous era. In south Caucasus states, at all levels of political affairs and governance, women's participation reduced sharply" (Gender Peace Audit on the South Caucasus).

Since the collapse of Soviet Union, women in South Caucasus states have recorded a low participation in politics and they lost ground in political representation. There are only a few women who represent positions of authority in the region and very few women are able to play a leading role in the political decision making. Only a few women take part in the ongoing political dialogue between the official parties concerned in the conflict.

The lack of political understanding and the gender injustice become a barrier for many women to discover a good position in the political field. Women representations in political process of Transcaucasian states are very weak; especially their representation in national government is very low. All these problems are preventing women's operation on social and economic policies and severely influence their lives (Buckley 1997: 5; UNSC Resolution 1325, 2002; Ali / GINSC 2006; Europa World Year Book: 2000, 2006).

There are presently no quotas on women's representation in public posts. On a more positive note, women are widely represented in political parties and other public associations and the one of Georgia's major political parties, the National Democratic Party, is headed by a woman. The representation of women in political fields tends to be strong in local posts relatively than as possessors of parliamentary seats.

The decentralization alterations all over the territory have improved the significance of local

government, and women have occupied stable positions in local electoral politics and this reform has a positive impact on south Caucasus women. Traditions and customs manipulate the instant and upright movement of women, whose participation in job and education remained comparatively low in Transcaucasia as compared to other regions of the world (International Encyclopedia of Women 2000; The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Women's issues Worldwide 2003).

**Table**  
**Women' Representation in Georgia from 1990-1999**

Year	Total No of deputies	Number of women deputies	% of women (MPs)
1990	250	18	7.2
1995	250	16	6.4
1999	250	17	7.2

Javakhishvili and Khomeriki (2003)

This table above shows the women's representation in Georgian government level. Since 1990 no increase in women's political participation has been reported in Georgia and also the programmes of political parties do not take into account women's issues. In Azerbaijan the Parliament has 13 women deputies, i.e., 10 percent of the total (Cornell et al. 2002: 4). Still women were under-represented in political levels of Transcaucasian states; but now there are some peace negotiations programmes that encourage women to participate in politics. In conflict resolution, women's role is most important because women are the majority suffering from these conflicts than do men.

### **Women's Social Condition**

During Soviet times, women in South Caucasus were more active in social, political and economic fields. They had no fear of their traditions and customs. During Soviet times, the gender equality was one of the most important

attainments of the socialist regime; women got equal access to schooling, healthcare, employment, and to some extent political representation. And in education women had high literacy rates and equal access to societal benefits such as pensions. When Soviet Union collapsed, the women of Transcaucasian society came again under the influence of their traditional rules and laws. They lost their past opportunities and environment.

Joblessness, incomprehension and increase in prices have also made an enormous effect on women. The three South Caucasian states are all traditional societies, in which the Soviet regime made significant progress in the emancipation of women. In particular, women had similar literacy (practically 100 percent) rates, and were active participants in the workforce of their society (Cornell et al. 2002).

Now, in Transcaucasian as well as in Georgia-Abkhazia societies, traditional and patriarchal norms govern gender roles and relations. Women who engaged in professional duties had to bear the household responsibilities as well. An economic transition had also been supplementary to women's double burden of earning an income and their caretaking responsibility in family unit. This was worsened by the decline in the number of social services accessible for working mothers, as state financial support reduced and facilities were shattered or looted. The lack of recognition women receive for the work they do at home contributes to the economic marginalization. Traditional gender roles are still strong, especially in rural areas (Cornell et al. 2002: 4). After disintegration of Soviet Union, the women in South Caucasus again entered into their strict traditional roles and regulations.

“The family carries great importance in Armenian society. Without a respected, well-connected family, people feel socially and economically vulnerable. The large scale of unemployment and underemployment, the reduction of subsidies and benefits, the collapse of infrastructure, agricultural privatization, male labour migration, ongoing war with Azerbaijan

and finally, rising nationalism which seeks to rediscover 'national' identity in the reaffirmation of traditional gender roles" (Dudwick 1997: 236-238). The Armenian family honour needs to facilitate women to perform humbly as well as engage themselves in recreation, a subsidiary position in the family's financial management and need a man to produce enough money to maintain the family's financial condition and take part in the dominant role towards their family members.

### **Female-Headed Households**

The women are generally responsible for the everyday household supervision and caring of their family members. During Soviet regime the social services such as nurseries, kindergartens and daycares were measured the components of the occupation environment, rather than a load to be placed on the family. Poverty and decline of living standard cause the male migration. Men are missing from the family for the search of job outside their country. Also, the conflict situations are responsible for the missing of male relatives from their family. The absence of male makes women the heads of the household; women are the sole bread winners of the family (Dudwick 1997; Cornell et al. 2002).

In the post-Soviet era, while the newly independent states are busy in establishing democratic societies and introducing market economy, the attention paid to women and the status enjoyed by them differ from one state to another (Mohan 2002: 42). It is true that the newly independent states of former Soviet Union are engaged with their economic and political development. Most of the states are busy with ethnic violence, civil war and border state conflict and they have no time to look after women's problems and difficulties, where women are central sufferers of these violence. Since independence the three countries of the South Caucasus have passed throughout a painful transitional phase, which reproduce in their inadequate capability to progress democratic system as well as human rights in the region.

### **Violence**

The collapse of Soviet Union shattered the life dreams of women in the states of South Caucasus. Most women became jobless, suffered sexual violence and are now victims in the general spread of pornography and increase of domestic violence (Buckley 1997: 4-5). "Even now in the Caucasus Republic there are cases in which brothers murder a raped sister with the aim of lifting the 'disgrace' from their family" (Khodyreva 2000: 2001). Because of the hardships of traditional custom and patriarchal domination, women are forced to become a toy with soul and thereby women sometimes committing suicide to protect themselves from the intolerable humiliation in the family. Collapse of Soviet Regime caused the collapse of law and order in Transcaucasian states.

With the absence of law and order, domestic violence in family gradually increased. Many people in Transcaucasian society believe that domestic violence is a private and family matter; they don't want to enter law in these cases; they think that it will destroy their family honour (Ishkanian 2003: 41; International Encyclopedia of Women: 2000; Dudwick 1997). There are no particular laws in Transcaucasia dealing specifically with domestic violence including disputes over possessions, power, and sexual freedom. The Georgian mentality believes that it is shameful to come forward against sexual violence or to impose law against sexual harassment (Javakhishvili and Khomeriki 2003: 225).

In Transcaucasian society violence against women are common and the people of these society are not seriously concerned about violence against women. Most of rape cases are not reported in public sphere. The situation of economic crisis, political transition on civil violence and ethnic conflict has a great impact on the traditional role of men and women in the families of Transcaucasian society. Their roles and duties towards society and their families underwent change.

### **Health**

Poverty and lack of medical facilities in the states of South Caucasus cause the rise of maternal mortality and spread of various infectious diseases in women. Destruction of Soviet-era hospitals and health facilities created a severe health problem in Transcaucasian states. Women and children are the main victims of this problem. The lack of reproductive health facilities for women, unavailability of medicines and their substandard quality, increases threats on women's health. In Transcaucasian states, the maternal mortality rate has doubled over the past decade and women's access to prenatal care has gone down by nearly half. Rise of mortality and decline of birth rate severely affect the demographic situation of the South Caucasus. Ethnic conflicts and financial difficulties of these countries hampered fulfilling the medical needs of women in Transcaucasia. In rural areas, women are getting very little access to health facilities. Due to poor ambulance facilities women are not capable to protect and save their life from dangerous infectious diseases (Ishkanian 2003: 38-39; Article-19 2007; Cornell et al. 2002).

### **Education**

Soviet collapse had very little impact on educational status of women in Transcaucasian states. The literacy rate of women is high in these states and the girls and boys are enjoying same educational facilities. There, women have 98 percent to 99 percent literacy and men have 100 percent literacy. In rural areas, somehow it may be just low because of strict traditions. For example, in some parts of eastern Georgia with Muslim population, parents take their daughters out of school believing that girls should stay home and do the household work within family (UNDP: 2000-1; CIA 2008; Javakhishvili and Khomeriki 2003; Ishkanian 2003: 35, 224). In educational sphere women occupied high status.

During Soviet times women obtained very high degree of education and still there is no gender discrimination in educational institutions of states of South Caucasus (UNSC Resolution 1325 2002: 13). Due to poverty the high educated

women are not able to get good jobs for their survival. The overall literacy rate among urban women is still high, whereas the literacy rates are decreasing among rural women.

### **Governments' Commitment on Solving Women's Issues**

The governments of South Caucasus countries have passed extensive legislation creating new roles and responsibilities for local and regional governments providing almost all services, including provision of housing, road repair, transportation, childcare, cultural, and social assistance such as improved medical facilities (The Social Development Team, ECSSD June 2001). The three south Caucasian states have signed up to all the international instruments relating to women's equality and human rights. These issues are: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, and Convention on the Political Rights of Women (UNSC Resolution 1325, 2002).

In 1995, Georgia was among the countries that agreed to develop a national plan to improve the conditions of women in order to act in accordance with the 1995 UN Women's Conference in Beijing's Platform. The most important parts of this plan were: establish a women's issues department; increase women's participation in decision making institutions; help women to establish small and medium-size business; strengthen legislative protection mechanisms to reduce prostitution, poverty, and starvation; and include gender equality issues (Javakhishvili and Khomeriki 2003: 226). Georgian government had also acted on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Women's Anti-Discrimination Committee) soon after the independence and government had begun a plan for women's advancement (WOM/1129: 9 June 1999).

In July 2006, the parliament of Georgia approved the state concept of on Gender Equality. The aim of this concept is to promote the effective

realization of women's rights and opportunities (UN Committee 2002, 36th session). This entire step taken by the government of Georgia to develop gender equality is the most encouraging step towards women's empowerment.

All the steps taken by the governments of South Caucasian states concerned the issues to decrease domestic violence, discrimination at workplace, and health issues, and also most of NGOs are involved with to solve these problems. Collapse of infrastructure, industries and rise of ethnic conflict severely hit the development programmes committed by south Caucasian state governments. Still the governments are unable to provide the security and protect the rights of their people. "The dangerous shuttle trade in the former Soviet Union is fundamentally a woman's sphere of influence. Herein the activities of women are appeared with aggressive boundary regimes and harassment by corrupt law-enforcement agencies" (Matveeva December 2007).

Women are performing all these roles and responsibilities against their will and facing the various types of gender-specific violence, sexual violence, domestic violence and insecurity. Unbearable economic circumstances have led to mass migration to large cities in Russia and Ukraine (Stachowiak 1998). Unemployment, poverty and conflict situation increase the migrations to other countries, and the ongoing conflict condition of the region has harshly hit the political and economic condition of the states of South Caucasus. Now more than fifteen years following the end of the Marxist rule, the practice of democratization in the province is still challenging, and a dictatorial state of mind is the devastating aspect of the political existence.

The controlling ruling elite in the states of South Caucasus are not prepared to shift their authority to the fresh political or civil society leaders. The method of the Soviet period political headship is still continuing in legislative composition of the entire states and societal disparity is rising inside the region. The public segment is still dominant and the lack of control as well as

influence of illicit mafia organizations persists to terrorize the day-by-day protection of the public (UNSC Resolution 1325, 2002: 3).

"A demographic disaster is becoming more dramatic in all three Transcaucasian republics: wars, emigration, high mortality among men, large-scale labour migration abroad. Gender situation in the region is extremely destabilized; women start to play against their will new social roles, quickly filling empty niches. Women's aggressiveness, observed currently, which is often forgiven (and sometimes encouraged) by opposing political opponents, leads, as a rule, to victory of interests of those, being far from the climax of victory of gender symmetry" (Ali / GINSC 2006: 3).

Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, the countries of South Caucasus have been passing through a complicated transition period to a new type of society. The patriarchal mentality, severe economic difficulties and political instability have become serious obstacles on the way of women's development. This incidence is particularly severe in country areas. Today, the conflict situation of Transcaucasia empowers women, in a sense paradoxically, in their socio-economic and political grounds, but however women enjoy limited scopes than men in socio-economic activities. The absence of male relatives within the family increases women's authority to make decisions about their family matters and their productive, and other socio-economic activities.

The people of these three states are still suffering from the effects of conflict and are facing the threat of fresh armed aggression. The warfare situation of these regions has damaged the economic condition, accommodation and transportation. The conflict situation in Caucasian states worsens the position of women in the region and it generates stress on women, as women are the main caretakers of their household.

In South Caucasus, large parts of women experience poverty and joblessness, increasing economic ambiguity and exploitation. In South

Caucasus, gender challenges are visible through low earnings and the recurrence of customary gender roles and responsibilities. Even at present, the traditional stereotypes still make decisions on gender roles and responsibility in the states of South Caucasus. The modern attitudes regarding gender roles are a combination of Soviet and pre-Soviet beliefs, as men and women attempt to redefine their roles within the family and in society in the context of a constantly changing socioeconomic and political climate. The status of women in Transcaucasia is far different today as compared to the soviet period (Ishkanian 2003: 42). The present condition is contributing to women's empowerment. These women are not ready to accept the traditional barriers, which restricts their freedom. They are struggling to be more courageous, confident, powerful and active in the field of socio-economic and political spheres.

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#### Notes

1. UNDP is the UN’s global network to help people meet their development needs and build a better life. This programme works in 166 countries worldwide, as a trusted partner with governments, civil society and the private sector to help them build their own solutions to global and national development challenges.



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# Human Resources Development in Tajikistan

Imran\*

*[The National Human Development Report of Tajikistan builds on the tradition of reviewing the key factors contributing to country's actual development progress in the socio-economic area. The concept of human development is immensely multifaceted and offers an abundance of possibilities that can be applied to many different aspects of human life and society in general. To reduce inequality and ensure sustainable human development, individuals must have access to diverse resources which are found in the interrelation and interdependence of capabilities and needs of an individual and society. This also contributes to the mitigation of a number of global concerns that humankind faces: addressing hunger and poverty; resolving environmental issues and promoting nature conservation; ensuring a satisfactory population policy etc. ]*

The concept of human development focuses on disadvantaged people and the overall assessment of development depends on whether their situation changes for the better or for the worse. This is why Tajikistan's policies and strategies need to be further refined and targeted in order to ensure a more sustainable and long-term effect on people's capabilities by influencing their incomes and prospects for improving livelihoods, as well as for health, education and other components of the Human Development Index.

## **The development of human resources during the period of independence**

Tajikistan, along with the other former Soviet republics, was able to achieve a high level of human capital in Soviet era. The ideologies of reform during the initial years of the transition see this factor as the chief condition for successful reforms in Tajikistan. It was assumed that both educated and patriotic people would make every effort to build an independent nation state with a democratic government and market economy. Simon Kuznets's theory serves as the foundation for these views.

According to this theory, having sufficient human resources at the beginning is the most important

factor for economic growth in countries going through industrialisation.<sup>1</sup> The transition from the Soviet period, however, was accompanied by significant difficulties, which, first and foremost, include the civil war of 1992-97 and the human and material losses, as well as the mass forced emigration that came along with it.

Moreover, Tajikistan, with its limited resources and very small domestic market, was much more dependent on the USSR than the other Soviet republics, and thus suffered from the fall of the Soviet Union more than the others.<sup>2</sup> Along with the loss of subsidies from Moscow and the emigration of qualified Russian technical personnel, scholars and managers, Tajikistan was also dealing with the quick dissolution of its institutes and the weakening of the state during this transition.

The fall in economic activity, the growth in joblessness, the majority of the people being plunged into poverty, the unprecedented increase in poverty and the overall decline in the social and economic situation plagued the country during its transition to a market economy. This all served as the backdrop for political, social and cultural reforms. They determined the areas for developing HC in post-Soviet Tajikistan. If we are to look at Human resource development in Tajikistan over the past 20 years, then we will see that it has been gradually declining.<sup>3</sup> If during

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the Soviet era all children were provided with an education, there is now a group of people who have never gone to school and are illiterate. The censuses from 1989 and 2000 do not have information on people who have no education at all, although the 1989 census showed that 0.3 per cent of people ranging in age from 9 to 49 were illiterate. The number of such people in the 2000 census was equal to 0.2 per cent.<sup>4</sup> In 2007, however, 0.7 per cent of the Tajik population 15 years of age or older said that they never went to school and are not literate.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, from 1989 to 2007, the share of people with higher or secondary professional education shrank by 1.8 per cent and 2.1 per cent, respectively<sup>6</sup>.

The labour force's level of education is currently limited to general secondary education, which poorly encompasses all levels of professional education. Therefore, around half of the economically active population has only a secondary education, while a third of the working population have a professional or higher education. At the same time, the USSR census of 1989 showed that 87.7 per cent of the working population in Tajikistan had a professional or higher education.<sup>7</sup>

The level of education has noticeably fallen, and there is a discrepancy between the length of study (number of years) and its quality (the knowledge and skills learned while studying). When keeping a relatively long study period (the average is 11 years), students obtain a significantly smaller aggregate of knowledge and skills than before.<sup>8</sup> The decline in the quality of education leads to a growth in the inequality of access to education, which is especially noticeable among rural residents, the poor and girls. The low quality of education available for the poor rural population and women limits their chances to make the transition to higher levels of education and, as a whole, leads to the stagnation and stammering of the country's development.

### **The Decline in Human Resource**

What helped cause the decline in Human resource in Tajikistan? In studying the different

factors impacting the development of Human resource, we have highlighted four chief ones: a) a decline in the education system as part of the removal of state services; b) the effect of the economy's structural rebuilding; c) the impact of large-scale labour migration; d) the development of social and economic inequalities, and inclusion.

### ***The Decline in Education during the Transitional Period***

The problems with education in Tajikistan, as a rule, are linked to the aftermath of the civil war that took place during 1992-97, and to the emigration of the most educated people during the initial years after the fall of the Soviet Union. While recognising the importance of these circumstances, it ought to be pointed out that the following factors aided in the decline of education in Tajikistan: The drop in state investment in education and the overall contraction of the share of GDP invested in education, from 9.7 per cent of GDP in 1991 to 4.1 per cent of GDP in 2008.<sup>9</sup> The demographic pressure: The fall in the average age of the total population of Tajikistan and the growing share of younger age groups creates a heavy demographic burden on the public education system.

### ***The Impact of the Economy's Structural Reconstruction.***

The structural transformation of Tajikistan's economy has had the biggest impact on Human resource. This very transformation was accompanied by de-industrialisation, de-urbanisation, social stratification and inequality. If, in 1991, 21 percent of the Tajik population was in working industry, then in 2009 only 4.8 per cent of all workers were employed in industry. The changes to the structure of Tajikistan's GDP, which took place between 1995 and 2007, caused the share of sectors with more qualified labour to shrink and the share of sectors with less qualified labour to increase.

All this together has resulted in changes in the quality of workers in the labour market and in a

drop in the demand for human capital in terms of professional or technical qualifications. The number of students in technical schools shrank from 40,700 in 1992 to 34,000 in 2008. Moreover, the biggest decrease was seen in the first five years after the fall of the USSR: 1992-1998.

Even when taking into account the civil war, which caused the student population in all types of educational institutions to decrease, the recovery in student numbers in vocational schools and primary schools went much slower than in other educational institutions, and still have not reached the level attained in 1991. Low-qualified workers continue to be in demand, while the demand for highly qualified labour has fallen, even though it has not been satisfied over the past seven years.

### ***The negative Impact of Migration on Human Resource***

The materials from the latest studies show that labour migration has a significant impact on the development of Human resource in Tajikistan by having a full-circle influence, both positive and negative, on education.<sup>10</sup> Migrants with a higher education send home more money more often than migrants with a lower level of education; however, since they rarely work according to their profession abroad,<sup>11</sup> their knowledge and skills that they obtained before they left go waste.<sup>12</sup> Migrants that return home make a definite contribution to the development of small business and agriculture by using new technology, tools, instruments, knowledge and skills; however, this contribution has little effect on the country's technological development.<sup>13</sup>

The increase in migrant household incomes, and, consequently, the improvement in the diet and health of these families' children, is the most positive impact that labour migration has. The proliferation of child labour in migrant households, nonetheless, is a negative side effect from the increase in income from migration.<sup>14</sup> Overall, migration's negative impact on HC in Tajikistan is greater than its positive aspects.

### ***Social and Economic Inequality as a Barrier for Development.***

Just like in other Central Asian countries, Tajikistan saw a significant rise in the public income differentiation during the first decades after the fall of the Soviet Union. The growing social and economic inequality has led to inequality in education when young people from high-income families have much more incentive and many more opportunities to receive a professional and higher education than people from poor parts of the population. Income inequality has become a significant hurdle for developing Human resource. Even with a relatively low Genie index, income inequality is still a barrier to access professional, and especially higher, education that cannot be overcome.

Therefore, the conclusion can be made that the growing social and economic inequalities in Tajikistan do not stimulate, but rather hinder, the accumulation, redistribution and effective use of Human resource. Gender inequality in access to education has an especially negative effect on Human resource. Higher education is one of the areas where gender inequality is most evident. Women made up only 29 per cent of university students in the 2009-2010 academic years. The gender imbalance during the transitional period led to a decline in Human resource not only in the short term, but in the long term as well.

### **Conclusions**

In examining the development of human capital in Tajikistan during the post-Soviet era, features can be found that are characteristic of all post-Soviet countries: the decline in Human resource during the first decade after the collapse of the USSR stemming from armed conflict, the exasperation of massive social and economic difficulties, the fall in economic activity, the dismantling of the state, the degeneration of the structural transformation of the economy, which led to a change in the employment structure, and the waning of demand on the labour market. Tajikistan continues to see high economic growth

rates that started at the beginning of the 21st century, which as a result has led to growth in the accumulation of Human resource, although the trend of its decline in terms of professional skills is continuing.

Despite the specific quantitative increase in Human resource over the past years, Tajikistan has still not reached its level from back in 1991. When comparing the development of Human resource in Tajikistan with other countries, then we should denote that it is lagging behind Indonesia, China and Vietnam, which had the worst starting points at the beginning of the transitional period.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, Tajikistan continues to have a significantly higher level of human capital than countries with a similar level of GDP, such as sub-Saharan region countries.<sup>16</sup>

The government of Tajikistan has already launched reforms in the sphere of education with the support of donor institutions. These reforms include rebuilding of the education infrastructure, changing the budget allocation system from a per school to per student basis, the establishment of parent associations and introduction of the adult education centre system. These measures have already led to positive results, but there are still more problems awaiting resolution especially in terms of inequity of access to education.

Greater equity in access will only occur with more efficient education management and improved strategic planning and coordination between state institutions, donor institutions, businesses and social organisations. The partnership between state and private educational institutions must also be developed as far as possible.

**(Footnotes)**

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# Human Rights and Values in Education

Dr. Dipen Saikia\*

*[Human rights education has a fundamental role to play to ensure the full realization of all human rights. Human rights education equips learners with knowledge of human rights and the mechanisms that protect them and instills values and attitudes that uphold human rights. It empowers people to become active participants in their communities, taking action for the realization of their rights and the rights of others. Thus, human rights education contributes to social transformation towards rights-respecting societies, sustainable participative democracy and social justice.]*

All components and processes of education must reflect human rights values and principles. This includes not only the curricula, but also extracurricular activities, educational processes and teaching methodologies, school policies, school governance structures and practices, opportunities for participation, and the environment within which education takes place. Human rights education must be learned through experience, through being exposed to human rights in practice. This means that the how and where human rights education is taking place (the context and methodology) must also reflect human rights values.

In contemporary education, the deterioration of value in day-to-day life has been a matter of great concern to educationalists all over the world. Generally, in teacher education the values are viewed as socially approved goals and desires, those are internalized through the process of conditioning, learning or socialization and become subjective preferences, standards and aspirations. They are classified as physical mental, emotional, economic, aesthetic, moral, religious cultural and spiritual. Conceptually, 'Values' refers to those guiding principles of life which are conducive to one's physical and mental health well as to social welfare and adjustment and which are in tune with one's culture and environment.

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## Categories of Values

Psychologists have categorized the values in terms of domain of behaviour to which they refer. Allport, Vernon and Lindzey (1951) have classified values based on Spranger's (1928) "Types of man" this includes theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political and religious aspects of human life.

The word 'value' is being used in secured contexts e.g. moral, aesthetic, spirited, economic and Social values etc., with various shade of meaning Zavalloni (1980) considered 'Values' as orientations towards what is considered to be desirable or preferable by social factors.

Value education programmes are needed in all types of educational institutions. These may focus on life experiences related with the immediate environment leading to moral judgement. The sources of content at School level may be folk-tales, stories, poems and parables. Besides, biographies of great men may also be useful source for inculcating proper values. In addition to these music, drama and other co-curricular activities may also provide the messages more aptly. It is worth-mentioning that an effective programme of value education must have values, which are universally accepted. These may include love for truth, righteousness, peace, love and non-violence. The eternal value of truth will lead to quest for knowledge and result in right conduct to fellow beings as well as to the environment.

Growth of human values is now being emphasized as a very significant objective of the process of education. There is no doubt that the schools play a pivotal role for the inculcation of values. Through their various activities can make a deliberate attempt for propagating the desired and cherished values for the holistic development of and individual. It is quite important that during the teacher education programme, the teachers are introduced to the concept of value development and also made aware of the methods and techniques keeping in view the physical and psychological development of the students to promote the human values.

We have to inculcate human values. This is possible, when our teaching community realizes its duties, responsibilities, and obligations. It appears that teachers themselves have lost the excitement of a searching mind and therefore fail to inspire students. Our teachers are also responsible for not transmitting the desired values, which are essential for all-round development of an individual. Among the psychological factors affecting the child's adjustment, progress in learning, and academic performance none is as important as the teacher's behaviour and his interaction with the pupils. A positive self-concept is essential for personal happiness, which is possible through the educational institutions responsible for value development.

Through developing human values, we should develop the attitude towards cultural and natural heritage of India. Preservation of the cultural heritage is a great treasure to be valued. The India Constitution also highlights the need to value and preserve the rich cultural heritage of our composite culture. Educational institutions have, therefore, great responsibility in preserving the best of our past as well as passing on the same to the future generations through developing the human values. It is the sacred responsibility of all educational institutions to preserve the wisdom of Indian '*rishis*' and '*munis*' in order to develop human values.

Human values are not simply related to the welfare of human beings, these should be considered equally significant for saving animals and plants kingdom. There should be proper ecological balance to maintain the human values. The role of the educational institutions and teacher education in preserving and conserving the human values as related to the welfare of humanity is to be encouraged, so that, the students can understand properly about the changing scenario of the environmental hazards in relation to the changing value pattern of the modern democratic set up.

Education for peace should be covered in all institutions from primary to university levels. Discussions may also be held on topics like-discrimination, apartheid, oppression, conflicts, and exploitation at all levels. And individual is to be recognized as the central point of world peace. Children should be helped to rise above the self. They should also be helped to understand relationship with the animal kingdom, with the plant kingdom and with the inanimate world. Importance of peace and harmony may also be understood. Children may also campaign against threats to world peace. Songs, stories, debates, discussion and dramas with humanistic themes may be used. Biographies or persons who have devoted themselves to peace will be inspiring. Use of slides, documentary, cultural exchange programme may also be quite helpful in developing human values.

The students should not confine their learning process to the physical boundary of schools, rather they should fully exploit the educational resources in the community like – museums, exhibitions, centres of science and arts, historical places, wide-life sanctuaries etc. The morning assembly, celebration of festivals, national days, birthdays of great men, teaching s of selected sermons from scriptures and yoga and meditation make the whole atmosphere vibrant with values and the students imbibe the values from these unconsciously. The values are also reflected in school procedures, practices, programmes and other dealings.

Proper and timely action should be taken in order to inculcate the human values in education, as erosion of human values is taking place at all levels of society and education, that is an alarming situation to all the educational thinkers, administrators, policy-makers and planners at various levels of educational institutions. Inculcation of appropriate values not only needs institutional reforms and efforts but also warrants the holistic social support including students and their parents.

Sustainable development is nowadays frequently referred to in social, economic, scientific, legal, business and political circles. It conveys or rather carries different meanings to different people. The process, in which development can be sustained for generations, is termed as sustainable development. In broader sense sustainable development means to improve the quality of human life and living in harmony with nature without affecting or deteriorating the carrying capacity of the life supporting ecosystem. The notion of the sustainable development comes into existence in the zone where circles of economics and ecology overlap each other. In a sustainable world, environmental protection, economic objectives, and social justice should be linked in harmony.

Broadly speaking, four different but interrelated aspects of human life can generally be recognized: Viz, the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual. Holistic value-oriented teacher education should cultivate all these aspects in full measure. Physical education should include not only the performance of physical exercises to keep the body fit, but also the training to use the senses and physical framework wisely.

Emotional education should emphasize the type of straining of mind that develops the positive human emotions of universal love, compassion, forbearance, humility, equanimity, etc., and eradicates the baser instincts such as greed, envy, pride, aggressiveness, etc. Intellectual education should require not only the development of the ability to think, but also the ability to act

independently, rationally on the basis of a deep understanding of the various phenomena of nature and spiritual education should cultivate a refinement of the mind, to manifest that elusive “fourth dimension” of the human personality from which springs forth an intuitive understanding of the very purpose of our existence and a clarity of what ought to be done to achieve it.

The twin issues of inclusion and equity need to be given due importance while making policies for expanding access to higher education. Imbalances in system whether related to gender, caste, religion or regional need to be addressed so as to provide opportunities to students belonging to disadvantaged sections.

Quality teacher education with human values is an important aspect of education, which can be ensured through regular review of the functioning of the institutions either through self-assessment or through outside agencies and by accrediting the institutions. It ensures transparency to the quality of higher educational institutions.

### **Education as a tool to eliminate human rights violations**

A growing consensus holds that human rights education can both help reduce human rights violations and contribute to build free and peaceful societies. Human rights, as inscribed in the Universal Declaration, form the common language of humanity.

The objectives of the United Nations in its human rights educational efforts is to teach the “common language of humanity” to people everywhere. The organization strives to make humankind fluent in the vocabulary of human rights, and to enable students, farmers, police officer, soldier, cabinet minister or a teacher etc. to apply that vocabulary and meaning to their daily conduct. Through education, the UN proposes to build a universal culture of human rights.

Through the years, United Nations efforts to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedom without regard to race, sex, language or religion, have ranged from

standard-setting to monitoring, from facilitating international dialogue and cooperation to providing technical assistance and from commissioning technical studies to deploying large-scale peace keeping missions.

There are three dimensions to the promotion of human rights through education.

- Knowledge providing information about human rights and the mechanisms that exist to promote and protect those rights;
- Values, beliefs and attitudes promoting a human rights culture through the development of these processes; and
- Action encouraging people to defend human rights and prevent human rights abuses.

#### **The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004).**

In response to another World Conference recommendation, the UN General Assembly in December 1994 proclaimed the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). The Assembly appealed to all governments to contribute to the implementation of a global Plan of Action and invited contributions from the UN system. Equally important, the Assembly called upon non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to increase their involvement in human rights education and requested human rights monitoring bodies to emphasize the obligations of Member States in pro-monitoring human rights education. The plan has five objectives:

- Assess needs and formulate strategies for the furtherance of human rights education;
- Build and Strengthen programmes and capacities for human right education at international, national, regional and local levels;
- Coordinate the development of effective human rights education materials;
- Strengthen the role and capacity of mass media in the furtherance of human rights education; and

- Disseminate globally the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The decade starting from the year 1995 to 2004 has been declared by the United Nations as the decade of Human Rights Education. India has been a party to the Human Rights concerns ever since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Charter was adopted way back on 10th December, 1948. India was also a signatory to the two International Covenants viz., Civil and Political Rights and Socio Economic and Cultural Rights and Several International instruments. In the same spirit India welcomed the United Nations decision on human rights education.

As a part of this commitment, the National Human Rights commission has been engaged in this task. Several institutions, research organizations and universities evinced interest in the effort.

The twentieth century is a century which has witnessed ups and downs in human assertions for dignity and freedom. This perhaps, no other century earlier has experienced. This is also a century which witnessed Russian and Chinese Revolutions and various struggles of subaltern socio-economic groups. Several individuals and groups made great sacrifices to ensure a life, to put in Thomas Paine's words. "With comfort, happiness, protection and security" for succeeding generations. This is also a century which had experienced devastating consequences of two world wars, most heinous crimes, mass killings, genocide, rapes, gang rapes, terrorism and unprecedented use of brutal force unleashed by Fascism and Nazism.

It has to its dubious credit the highest destructive power of nuclear and chemical weapons. The legacy struggle for freedom and dignity of human person as also the increasing forms of brutality have thrown the human species at cross roads. This is the time to make a choice, of direction both at the individual and collective levels. It is this context that informs and reforms human rights education.

Education is a tool to spread awareness, information and knowledge amongst its

recipients, education can play a crucial role for the promotion of human rights culture. Without education, we cannot see beyond ourselves and our narrow surroundings to the reality of global interdependence, we cannot realize how people of other races and religious share the same dreams and the same hopes. Without education, we cannot recognize the universality of human aims and aspirations.

The need for human rights education has been emphasized in the universal declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other international documents and treaties. Provisions from these instruments state that human rights education consists of efforts to build a universal culture of human rights through imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes.

Human rights should be directed towards strengthening respect for human rights, and ethical values fundamental freedom fully developing the human personality and its sense of dignity. Promoting understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups.

Enabling everyone to participate effectively in a free society. Furthering United Nations activities for maintaining peace.

The Society needs the following from higher level teacher education to promote and protect Human Rights Values in Education:

- To train a skilled, intelligent, creative and responsible workforce with ethical values.
- To transit, sustain and extend the arts and humanities, the scientific the historical record and other aspects of our living culture.
- To support a citizenry that participates responsibly in community affairs including public governance and cares about our country and the world.
- To provide forum for integrating a multitude of people and synthesizing a weal of ideologies, political and scientific problems.

- To give individual access to lifelong learning in a changing world.

### **Problems in higher level teacher education in India**

- Mushroom growth of ill-equipped, ill-provided and inadequately staffed colleges and universities year after year.
- Posturing many problems such as social tensions of economic growth violence, and crimes.
- Conflicts and violence in the campus and the consequent closure of institutions.
- Destructions of college property or public property during student agitations and consequent disturbances.
- In the appointment of teachers, many considerations other than merit influence decision-making. Money plays a major role in the appointment of teachers in private colleges as well as government institutions. Cast and communal consideration have decisive influence in the appointment of teachers.
- Indiscipline among teachers has been widespread.
- Poor quality of teaching, poor performance by college teachers and generally most of them have poor motivation.
- Negative attitude towards research among college teachers.
- Politically-oriented trade unionism among institution makes both teaching and college administration very difficult and at times impossible to handle.
- Poor finances of college and universities consequently they are unable to provide adequate facilities to students, teachers and non-teaching staff.
- Poor libraries, laboratories, play grounds, hostel facilities etc add to the all-round degradations.

- Political interference in the autonomy of higher educational institutions such as in the appointment of top functionaries of the universities and the constitution of the different authorities of the universities.
- Poor relationship at higher level of administration both in the colleges and the universities.
- Indifferences on the part of parents and public.

### **Suggestions**

- We need the highest of teacher education for a few to master existing knowledge, as well creating new knowledge and basic education for all the society to be able to absorb and apply knowledge to social, political and economic development.
- For achieving the goals and results in the education system, suitable steps at international, national, regional level have to be envisaged with a view to make the system viable for progress of the society.
- Participation of various segments of society, like academicians, legal and financial experts and information technology professionals, experts from the fields of industry should also be included.
- Academic councils may be entrusted to revamp the syllabi keeping it and tune with modern requirement with human values.
- Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach should be an imperative in the designing of the syllabi, instead of pure sciences and humanities alone, stress is needed on applied sciences and humanities.
- Syllabi must be periodically renewed and be flexible enough to incorporate according to

changes taken place in the present social, economic, and political needs.

### **Conclusion**

We can meet the challenges of higher-level teacher education by broadening our vision, developing skills with human values and integrating all these aspects which have their direct or indirect bearing on human resource development and promotion of human rights in India. It needs an integrated effort at society, state, national and international levels along with individual contribution and attitudinal change in the society.

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# Exploitation of Indian Women in Surrogate Motherhood

Dr. G. Sangeetha\*

*[In India, women have come a long way from the rare women scholars and the sages of the Vedic age to women in the different sectors of the society and civilization in the modern times. Today women are employed in the armed forces, arts, information technology and a number of similar sectors which had traditionally been male dominated, while simultaneously balancing the roles of wife, mother and daughter. The Modern India has also a large number of great women leaders. Vijayalakshmi Pandit was the first woman in the world to rise to the high office of the President of the United Nations General Assembly in the early 1950s. Indira Gandhi led the country for seventeen long years as its Prime Minister. ]*

From being on a par with men in the social structure during the Vedic age, women's status hit a nadir during the medieval age in India. Since then, because of continuous social revolution, women's status had been very slowly but surely improving.

While Indian women had fought against the patriarchal Indian society and triumphed at many levels, evils such as rape, dowry death, and female infanticide as well as sexual harassment at the workplace, female illiteracy and such other problems are found to be still rampant in the Indian society.

## Exploitation of Indian women

Modes of exploitation of Indian women were many, ranging from Female Infanticide to Dowry, Lack of Education, Exploitation of Women in Media, Exploitation of Women Egg, and Surrogate Motherhood etc., today 85 percent of the cases of infertility can be taken care of through medicines, surgery or through the new medical technologies such as In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF) or Intra-Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI).

## Surrogacy

*Surrogacy* refers to a contract in which a woman carries a pregnancy "for" another couple.

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"*Surrogacy*", means an arrangement in which a woman agrees to a pregnancy, achieved through assisted reproductive technology, in which neither of the gametes belong to her or her husband, with the intention to carry it and hand over the child to the person or persons for whom she is acting as a surrogate.

"*Surrogate Mother*", means a woman who is a citizen of India and is resident in India, who agrees to have an embryo generated from the sperm of a man who is not her husband and the oocyte of another woman, implanted in her to carry the pregnancy to viability and deliver the child to the couple or individual that had asked for surrogacy.

## Surrogacy Agreement

"*Surrogacy Agreement*", means a contract between the persons availing of assisted reproductive technology and the surrogate mother and her husband.

Surrogacy is a prearrangement, often supported by a legal agreement, whereby a woman, the surrogate mother agrees to become pregnant and give birth to a child for another person(s) who is or will become the parent of the child.

People may seek a surrogacy procedure when pregnancy is medically impossible, when pregnancy risks are too dangerous for the intended mother, or when a single man or a male

couple wish to have a child. Surrogacy is considered one of many assisted reproductive technologies.

In surrogacy arrangements, monetary compensation may or may not be involved. Receiving money for the arrangement is known as commercial surrogacy. The legality and cost of surrogacy varies widely between jurisdictions, sometimes resulting in problematic international or interstate surrogacy arrangements. Couples seeking a surrogacy arrangement in a country where it is banned sometimes travel to a jurisdiction that permits it.

### **Surrogate Motherhood**

Surrogacy, as we know is an arrangement of carrying a pregnancy for intended parents. Over a period of time this technique has gained pace and has become a blessing for childless parents to have children of their own. “Surrogate motherhood” or “rent-a-womb”: the reproductive practice or procedure in which a woman becomes pregnant and gives birth on other people’s behalf. The people who hire the surrogate are also known as the “intended parents”. Beyond raising bioethical questions, “surrogate motherhood” is a practice that lends itself easily to exploitation of women, especially those belonging to the poorest strata of society.

### **Surrogacy - World second in India**

The world’s second and the India’s first IVF baby, Kanupriya alias Durga was born in Kolkata on 3rd October, 1978 about two months after the world’s first IVF child was born in Great Britain on 25th June, 1978. America celebrated the birth of its first IVF conceived baby Miss Elizabeth Carr born in Norfolk, Virginia on December 28, 1981 and since then surrogacy has become one of the mainstream options for childless couples across the world, who have a strong desire to have a child of their own but do not desire to adopt one. Such couples resort to surrogacy because of medical conditions that prevent natural childbirth. Such conditions include infertility, danger of the pregnancy harming the woman or the child etc. The infertile couples who are not

able to conceive a child of their own take the help of reproductive technologies like artificial insemination.

### **Exploiting a motherhood**

As the title options to ‘Exploiting a motherhood’, a woman, cannot imagine of a woman’s body being used as a machine for baby making. But if her womb is used to give a life to someone in the form of a baby, then it can be accepted, as is also recognized by the guidelines provided by the Indian Council of Medical Research in 2005, which includes that surrogacy as a mechanism is used to help the people who cannot have children in the natural way. As also the inability to produce is considered a personal misfortune and an obscenity for the couple, creating an impact on the entire family and even the local community.

In the year 2008, a surrogacy case came forward named as ‘The Manji case’ in which a baby Manji was born through surrogacy to a Japanese couple. The couple got separated before the birth of the child. The father was barred from taking the custody of the child as Indian Law bars single man from taking custody of a girl child and the Japanese Law did not recognize surrogacy. However, the baby after that got the visa but the case underscored the need for a framework to regulate surrogacy in India. Therefore, the above case can be said to be the genesis of the Assisted Reproductive Techniques (Regulation) Bill, 2014.

The existing rules state that any foreign couple seeking to enter into a surrogacy arrangement in India must be a ‘man or woman who are duly married and further the marriage should be sustained at least for two years. The number of foreign couples approaching India, looking for legal and uncomplicated methods of parenthood has risen in the recent years. The cost of surrogacy in India is generally \$18000 to \$30000 out of which the surrogate mother gets around \$8000. One of the reasons for surrogacy being an easy process in India is poverty, as overseas couples find it very easy to rent a womb in India

as many women earn a major part of their livelihood through surrogacy only.

### **Exploitations of surrogacy in India**

Surrogacy has become a very difficult issue in India due to non-enactment of laws on the subject. Anand town in State of Gujarat is a center of surrogate mothers. Not only this, Indore city in Madhya Pradesh, Pune, Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Thiruvananthapuram are also emerging as surrogate centres because many childless foreigners from all over the world are flocking here due to low cost, less restrictive laws, lack of regulation of ART clinics and easy availability of poor Indian surrogate mothers. Generally, surrogacy arrangements are drawn up in a random fashion and can be exploitative especially since surrogates are mostly from weaker socio-economic sections of the society. It is essential that the practice of surrogacy should be legally regulated to prevent victimization of both the surrogate and intended commissioning parents.

A number of issues relating to technological, medical, physical, moral, ethical, emotional, biological, and socio-legally are involved in a surrogacy arrangement. These aspects need a scientific investigation in an interdisciplinary approach. Though, artificial fertilization or non-coital procreation is against the order of the nature, but it is a boon to the childless parents to satisfy their desire of parentage with the help of technology.

### **National and State Surrogacy Boards**

The central and the state governments shall constitute the National Surrogacy Board (NSB) and the State Surrogacy Boards (SSB), respectively. surrogate mother to bear child, agreement of her husband and other family members for the same, medical procedures of artificial fertilization, compensation of all reasonable expenses for carrying child to full term, willingness to hand over the child born to the commissioning parent. However, such an arrangement should not be for commercial purposes. The surrogacy arrangement should also provide for financial support for surrogate child

in the event of death of the commissioning couple or individual before delivery of the child, or divorce between the intended parents and subsequent willingness of none to take delivery of the child.

### **Surrogacy rules**

Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019 was introduced in the Parliament. The Bill defines surrogacy as a practice where a woman gives birth to a child for an intending couple with the intention to hand over the child after the birth to the intending couple.

The central and state governments shall appoint one or more provisions of authorities within 90 days of the Bill becoming an Act. The Bill prohibits commercial surrogacy, but allows unselfish surrogacy. Selfless surrogacy involves no monetary compensation to the surrogate mother other than the medical expenses and insurance coverage during the pregnancy. Commercial surrogacy includes surrogacy or its related procedures undertaken for a monetary benefit or in cash exceeding the basic medical expenses and insurance coverage.

### **Conclusion**

The national and international perspectives on surrogacy and to understand the root cause of the problem and provide a comprehensive legislation including the rules and regulations for combating and controlling the use and misuse of surrogacy practices in India. The focus needs to be given on legalizing altruistic surrogacy and at the same time prohibiting commercial one. The irony is that, certain unfair practices are accompanying surrogacy resulting in its misuse, which needs to be restricted and regulated through the enactment of proper laws in India.

It seems ironical that people are engaging in the practice of surrogacy when nearly 12 million Indian children are orphans. Adoption of a child in India is a complicated and a lengthy procedure for those childless couples who want to give a home to these children. There is a strong need to modify and make the adoption procedure simple

for all. This will bring down the rates of surrogacy. Altruistic and not commercial surrogacy should be promoted. Laws should be framed and implemented to cover the grey areas and to protect the rights of women and children.

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## Women Empowerment and Political Awareness

Dr.K.Madeswaran\*

*[Women’s empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location (urban/rural), educational status, social status (caste and class), and age. Policies on women’s empowerment exist at the national, state, and local (Panchayat) levels in many sectors, including health, education, economic opportunities, gender-based violence, and political participation. However, there are significant gaps between policy advancements and actual practice at the community level. One key factor for the gap in implementation of laws and policies to address discrimination, economic disadvantages, and violence against women at the community level is the largely patriarchal structure that governs the community and households in much of India. As such, women and girls have restricted mobility, access to education, access to health facilities, and lower decision-making power, and experience higher rates of violence. Political participation is also hindered at the Panchayat (local governing bodies) level and at the state and national levels, despite existing reservations for women.]*

**D**uring the independence movement, women were visible and active as nationalists, and as symbols of “Mother India”. Gandhi, in particular, was instrumental in creating space for women through his non-violence (and some would argue feminized) mode of protest. Gandhi’s legendary salt march initially excluded women, but due to demands from women nationalists he later realized the power of women organizers at the local level. His inclusion of women, however, was not located within a gender equality framework, but was a means to achieving a stronger and unified Indian state. The inclusion of women in the

nationalist movement was also to debunk the British colonial assertion of “needing to save the poor, vulnerable women” of pre-independence India.

As in many nationalist movements, women in India took part in the struggle, in turn propelling a women’s rights movement. And, as seen historically in many post-colonial countries, the nationalist women’s movement in India was confronted by the rebuilding of a patriarchal nationalist state. Women revolutionaries gave way to their male counterparts who (as a result of Partition politics) created a strong, male, and Hindu “New India”. The first post-independence Lok Sabha (the People’s Council or the Parliament) had 4.4% women. The period between the early 1940s and the late 1970s saw

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an emergence of the Indian women's movement, but it was not until the 1980s that the women's movement gained real momentum.

### **What is Empowerment?**

- Women's empowerment entails increasing the economic, social and political strength of women;
- Women's Empowerment has one prerequisite – gender equality;
- Women's empowerment can be divided into three stages.

### **How are Women Empowered?**

- By decreasing the gender disparities in all education;
- By decreasing the inequalities between men and women in aspects of economics, political and social life;
- Educating girls and women.

### **What Statistics Indicate Women's Empowerment?**

- Ratio of girl to boys in education;
- Ratio of literate females to males 15-24 years of age;
- Share of women in paid employment in non-agricultural sector;
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments.

### **The Role of Women Empowerment in India**

Empowering women usually involves giving them opportunity for better education. Focus on the overall development in India is the main work of women empowerment commission in India. Basically, as per the human rights there should be the same place to men and women but society doesn't accept this situation and made the discrimination in society. When we study the evolution of man, it is noticed that gradually women tilted towards secondary place and started the exploitation through various problems.

To stop and eradication of these problems, the Women Commission has been established by Government of India. After independence, the direction has been fixed and various acts, plans have been started for women development in India. Definitely, we can say that India has done the improvement in social, economic and political status of women. Again, there is need to strictly implement development schemes and plans started by Government of India.

### **Components of Women Empowerment**

Four components of women's empowerment are identified:

- Acquiring knowledge and an understanding of gender/power relations and ways in which these relations may be changed;
- Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life;
- Gaining the ability to generate choices and thereby acquiring leverage and bargaining power; and
- Developing the ability to generate, organise or influence the direction of social change to create more just social and economic orders nationally and internationally.

### **Empowered Women's Characteristics**

- Empowered women define their attitude, values and behaviours in relation to their own real interest. They have autonomy because they claim their freedom from existing male hierarchies, whether they live in traditional societies or modern industrial societies.
- Empowered women maintain equal mindedness. They act out roles that challenge male dominance. They respond as equals and co-operate to work towards the common good.
- Empowered women use their talent to live fulfilling lives. They not only survive the harshness of their own subjugation but also transcend their subjugation.

- Empowered women maintain their strength on the face of pressures from the religion and work and contribute towards the empowerment of all women.
- Empowered women define their values and formulate their beliefs themselves; they do not derive their sense of being from male authorities nor do they live vicariously through men.

### **Barriers**

Many of the barriers to women's empowerment and equity lie ingrained in cultural norms. Many women feel these pressures, while others have become accustomed to being treated inferior to men. Even if men, legislators, NGOs, etc. are aware of the benefits women's empowerment and participation can have, many are scared of disrupting the status quo and continue to let societal norms get in the way of development.

Research shows that the increasing access to the Internet can also result in an increased exploitation of women. Releasing personal information on websites has put some women's personal safety at risk. In 2010, Working to Halt Online Abuse stated that 73% of women were victimized through such sites. Types of victimization include cyber stalking, harassment, online pornography, and flaming. Sexual harassment in particular is a large barrier for women in the workplace. It appears in almost all industries, but is most notable in the following: business, trade, banking and finance, sales and marketing, hospitality, civil service, and education, lecturing and teaching.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), sexual harassment is a clear form of gender discrimination based on sex, a manifestation of unequal power relations between men and women. Furthermore, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is urging for increased measures of protection for women against sexual harassment and violence in the workplace. 54% (272) had experienced

some form of workplace sexual harassment. 79% of the victims are women; 21% were men.

Recent studies also show that women face more barriers in the workplace than do men. Gender-related barriers involve sexual harassment; unfair hiring practices, career progression, and unequal pay where women are paid less than men are for performing the same job. When taking the median earnings of men and women who worked full-time, year-round, government data from 2014 showed that women made \$0.79 for every dollar a man earned. The average earnings for working mothers came out to even less—\$0.71 for every dollar a father made, according to a 2014 study conducted by the National Partnership for Women and Children. While much of the public discussion of the “wage gap” has focused around women getting equal pay for the same work as their male peers, many women struggle with what is called the “pregnancy penalty.”

The main problem is that it is difficult to measure, but some experts say that the possibility of having a baby can be enough for employers to push women back from their line. Therefore, women are put in a position where they need to make the decision of whether to maintain in the workforce or have children. This problem has sparked the debate over maternity leave in the United States.

However, despite the struggle for equal pay in the United States, the tech industry has made progress in helping to encourage equal pay across gender. In March 2016, tech career website Dice released a study of more than 16,000 tech professionals that found that when you compare equivalent education, experience and position, there is no pay gap—and hasn't been for the last six years. This new industry is paving a way for other companies to do the same. However, this industry also struggles to employ women in executive positions. This is partially due to the barrier of sexual harassment and pregnancy that was aforementioned. Such barriers make it difficult for women to advance in their workplace or receive fair compensation for the work they provide.

## **Five Challenges, One Solution: Women**

From unprecedented population ageing to increasing unemployment, from global leadership imbalances to persisting conflicts, from resource scarcity to volatile global food supplies, the world faces a series of interconnected challenges. The Global Agenda Council on Women's Empowerment aims to highlight how women's empowerment is a part of the solutions to these challenges.

Consists of five concise issue descriptions and links each challenge to women's empowerment and gender parity, with an emphasis on action items and recommendations. By shedding light on the link between women's empowerment and a specific challenge, this compendium aims to provide non-experts with a stronger elementary understanding of the impact that empowering women and girls can have on their area of interest.

### **Objectives**

#### **The objectives of the study are:**

1. To examine the fact as to whether inadequate representation and participation of women in the political process is one of the major factors that has contributed to the low status of women in the rural areas.
2. To examine as to how far the participation of women has been successful in integrating the issues concerned with the women community in the mainstream of decision making.
3. To substantiate the existence of disparity and disadvantages faced by women in their participation.
4. To identify the causes and obstacles that infringes the participation of women in the political process.
5. To examine the complementarily of the legislative measures and developmental measures in raising the status of women.
6. To examine as to how far the participation of women in the political process has made a

dent in the grim issues and challenges before women.

### **Political Participation and Empowerment**

There is low representation of women at all levels of political institutions. Women still face major obstacles in seeking higher positions in society. Political participation is a human right, recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Women are poorly represented at different levels of political life and decision-making. Thus, there is widespread neglect of women's priorities by politicians and bureaucrats. As per the Human Development Report, 1999 women hold only 12.7 percent of the world's parliamentary seats and only 8.7 percent of those in the least developed countries.

In India, the process of politically empowering through reservation in the local bodies has helped in the wider mobilization. On many occasions, elected women have provided the leadership for organizing women and get their legitimate demands fulfilled like, widow pensions, gas connections, etc.

There is a growing realization among the women that local elections are a means to bring positive change in their lives. In different parts of the country, the SHGs have jointly put a women candidate for the election in the local bodies such as Zila Parishad, Gram Panchayat, etc. Women are motivated to change the traditions. The women's political campaigns refer to solving the issues that affect their daily lives like safe drinking water, schools, health centres, roads, etc. some women have taken the agenda further by displaying a mature understanding of the contexts in which the political economy functions.

In our society men, having attitudes resist the political empowerment of women. There is a feeling that women should only contest the reserved seats and not the general seats. In some parts of our country, there is some change, for example, women in the villages of the hill state of Uttarakhand are waging their own political battle of assertion and articulation of

identification. Several NGOs working in the area tries to educate women about the voting behaviour and election procedures. Elected women members learn to negotiate their newfound positions in an inherently male dominated system, fighting the adverse institutionalized practices like, corruption. Women face many obstacles while contesting election such as sabotage, threats, boycott and pressure from family. However, women on gaining the political power can bring rapid change in the lives of other women and attain equality.

### **Caste and Class Politics**

The complexities of politics in India are embedded in class, caste, and religious identities. An analysis by International Idea of women in the Indian Parliament between 1991 and 1996 found that among the small number of women Parliamentarians, a disproportionate number represented the Brahmin caste (the higher caste in the Hindu caste system). Most local governments remain largely patriarchal and caste-based institutions, hindering inclusive governance. Furthermore, social mobility remains a privilege of members of higher classes and caste, although this is dramatically changing as a result of reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in politics and education.

For women politicians, class, age, and caste all have significant impact in their political lives. India is one of the few countries in the world that has elected a woman leader. Indira Gandhi was among the very few women leaders in the world during her time in office. However, her role as the Prime Minister was not seen as a win for the women's movement in India. She was the granddaughter of Jawaharlal Nehru and represented the political dynasty of her family. Additionally, her controversial political moves during the declared period of Emergency (1975-1977) suppressed dissent, forcing many of the radical women's rights movements to go underground.<sup>43</sup> In 2007 India elected its first female President, Ms. Pratibha Patil. While the President holds a mostly ceremonial role in

Indian politics, Ms. Patil's election was deemed a symbolic move towards a more equitable representation of women at the highest levels of government.

Although representation of women and members of the lower castes in Indian politics is rapidly changing, complexities of caste politics continue to govern representation. An interesting case study is that of Mayawati, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Mayawati, a woman and a member of the Dalit caste, was the youngest Chief Minister when first elected, and the only woman Dalit to be elected as a Chief Minister. Although Mayawati represents transcendence of India's caste system, her political career is regrettably tainted with corruption charges, extravagant spending, and little positive impact on the realities of caste and class barriers for men and women in her State.

The reasons to why women aren't politically active in their countries are because of:

- The type of electoral system in place in a country;
- Women's social and economic status;
- Socio-cultural traditions and beliefs about a woman's place in the family and society.

### **Reservation for Women**

The Women's Bill in April 2010, which gives 33.3% reservation for women in all levels of Indian politics, took 14 years after its introduction to be finally pass by the Rajya Sabha (the upper house of parliament). It is yet to be passed by the Lok Sabha (the lower house of parliament). The reservation bill will ensure 181 out of the 543 seats at the Parliament level, and 1,370 seats out of the 4,109 seats at the State Assembly level. This is a historic move in the Indian political landscape, as currently women occupy less than 10% of seats in the national Parliament.

The Women's Bill will also significantly change the demographics of class and caste among women politicians in leadership positions in the

Indian political structure. It will create a path for women from lower classes and castes (who are currently confined to local-level governance) to enter state and national level governments. In addition to the existing reservations for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, one third of the SCs and ST candidates must be women. Other Backward Class (OBC) members are not included in the reservation due to the wide disagreement about who constitutes OBC and a lack of existing data on the OBC population.

The two main arguments against the bill are that it will only benefit elite women (particularly in national level politics) and that there should be reservations for Dalit, minorities (particularly Muslim women), and OBCs. However, supporters of the bill do not agree with creating quotas within the existing 33% women quota in parliament, as SC and ST quotas already exist. The bill mandates that all political parties reserve one third of their electoral ticket for women, including in the already mandated reservations for SCs and STs.

This will inadvertently create spaces for lower caste and class women to enter state and national level politics. The passage and implementation of the Women's Bill, and its impact on the existing gender, class, and caste barriers, is yet to be realized, but one thing is clear: India's politics is moving closer to equitable inclusion than ever before.

### **Reservation at The Panchayat Level**

In 1976 the Committee on the Status of Women in India was established and published a report recommending an increase in elected women at the grassroots level, which led to the introduction of the 33.3% reservation at the Panchayat level in 1988. It was only in 1993 that an amendment in the constitution made the proposed reservation at the Panchayat (village level governing councils) a reality.

In the last two decades since the reservation for women in elected Panchayats was passed, many studies have been conducted to look at the impact

of this policy. A survey conducted in 2008 yielded that women made up close to 50% of all the village councils across India. The number of women representatives has certainly increased at the grassroots level; however, questions still remain regarding their decision-making power within the councils. A study in West Bengal and Rajasthan by the Institute of Management Studies (Calcutta) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) found that where women Panchayat members were active, there were more robust programs on water, irrigation, and infrastructure. The study conclusively states that in Panchayats where women were present policies were more beneficial to the community than in Panchayats where women were absent.

A study by The Accountability Initiative also states that in Panchayats with female presidents, the participation of women in the larger council rose close to 3% in one year. The reason for the increase in women's participation is correlated to two possible factors: first, women representatives exemplified new possibilities for change; and second, women leaders took up issues that would have a positive impact on the community as a whole.

### **Suggestion**

- The first and foremost priority should be given to the education of women, which is the grassroots problem. Hence, education for women has to be paid special attention.
- Awareness programmes need to be organized for creating awareness among women especially belonging to weaker sections about their rights.
- Women should be allowed to work and should be provided enough safety and support to work. They should be provided with proper wages and work at par with men so that their status can be elevated in the society.
- Strict implementation of Programmes and Acts should be there to curb the mal-practices prevalent in the society.

## Conclusion

Community awareness on the benefits of empowering women should be carried out in order that the empowerment may be supported by the community as whole. For the suitable construction of society, there is need to give special attention on women empowerment in India. Also, traditional attitude has to change regarding women. Awareness programme, education and positive role of every individual will help to develop the status of women in India. Strict implementation, creation and support of legislative measures and judiciary will be beneficial to sort out the women-related problems in India. To stop the women exploitation, rape, sexual harassment, acid throwing, domestic violence, child marriages and female feticide need to be prevented with effective instruments to control these problems.

Despite the fact that women's effective participation in the PRIs leaves much to be desired and also recognising that women representatives are mostly either subservient to the militantly dominant male class or at best dummy surrogates planted to serve the vested interests of their masters, to conclude that women's reservation in the PRI ( and the subsequent enhanced political participation of women ) has not made a mark in terms of improving the grim scenario faced by women in general and poor and low caste women in particular, would be an exercise in fallacy. More so if we take into account the short period of time that has elapsed since reservation for women in PRIs was initiated and particularly when reservation for women at the state and Union levels is still elusive.

To quote Tennyson in ' From the passing of Arthur "The old order changed yielding place to new" the old order gradually makes way for the new order the transition is going to be a slow one, the need of the hour, then, is to nurture and protect the process of transition not make attempts to hasten it for we must realise that the orthodox

mindset of the people ( more so in rural areas ), the rigid social institutions with their traditional male bias, the inhibitions of the society, political and administrative institutions and the stereotyped pathetically vulnerable woman cannot be wished away by a mere wave of the constitutional wand.

It is perhaps here that the NGOs can step in as a major player. Although the NGOs are without a vestige of doubt, actively involved in the empowerment exercise, they ought to assume a more dominant position, given the crucial role they have to enact. They need to equip women with capacity and the confidence to empower and motivate them to enter the political domain, to facilitate horizontal and vertical interaction of women elected at different levels of governance to enable the sharing of experiences and building solidarity and networking and last but by no means the least, to conduct political education and political training for women to realise the power of their vote, the need to seek and be accountable and to gender stream the political agenda (an essential recommendation of the Baseline report on women and political participation in India.)

Thus, roadmap for women empowerment is there but still we have miles to go on this path of empowerment. We hope that in coming years women empowerment will prove its worth. Women are an integral part of a society. They play an important role in determining the destiny of a nation. It has been rightly said by Swami Vivekanand, "The best thermometer to the progress of nation is its treatment of women". Therefore, due recognition to them in the society and their greater involvement in socio-economic and political affairs becomes all the more important. Every person should come forward to ensure equal status for women in all spheres of life.

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**To our Contributors.....**

**& Original articles are welcome.**

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**& Please check up grammatical & typographical mistakes before sending. Editor will not be responsible for these lapses.**

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# Health Schemes for Scheduled Castes in India

Dr. Deepan Das\*

*[Health has been declared a fundamental human right. This implies that the state has a responsibility for the health of its people throughout the world. National Governments are striving to expand and improve their health care services. ]*

**T**his cell has been functioning in the Department to look after the service interests of SC/ST Category employees. The SCT Cell assists the Liaison Officer in the Department to ensure that representations from Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and Persons with Disabilities in the establishment/ services under the Department receive proper consideration. The salient aspects of the scheme of reservation are emphasised to the participating Units/Offices. Suggestions are also made to streamline the maintenance and operation of rosters in the institutes/ organizations under the DoHFW. The defects and procedural lapses noticed are brought to the attention of the concerned authorities.

Health services are designed to meet their health needs of the community through the use of knowledge and resources. It is not possible to define a fixed role for health services when the socio-economic pattern of one country differ so much from another. The health services are delivered by the 'health systems', which constitutes the management sector and involves organizational matters.

It has been functioning under the ministry of health and family welfare, Directorate General of Health Services since 1981 to coordinate the policy, planning, monitoring evaluation of the healthcare schemes for welfare and development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In India, 30% of all deaths in the country are attributable to unhealthy environment, according to the latest global assessment of the burden of disease from environmental risks.

What is polluting the environment? As more people move to cities seeking better opportunities, the problem is expected to escalate. Globally, more than 1 in 2 people live in cities. By 2050, it is expected to grow to 2 in 3 people. Heavy traffic, limited green spaces, air pollution, noise and violence all impact our health. Rural areas, known for environmental tranquility, are also being subsumed in this expansion. Indoor cooking, especially in rural and peri-urban households, is a major health hazard.

In India, rapid urbanization and economic growth has resulted in increased need for energy. For its energy needs, the country is over- dependent on coal, a potent source of air pollution. Untreated pollutants from industry, unclean domestic sources and agricultural practice extensively pollute our air, land and water bodies. Unsafe disposal of biomedical and e-waste too contribute to environmental pollution.

Scheduled castes are a constitutionally declared collection of castes, which suffered from the practice of untouchability. Scheduled tribes one identified on the basis of criteria such as primitive traits, distinct culture, geographical isolation and general backwardness. The term 'scheduled caste' and 'schedule tribe' are nowhere defined in the Constitution of India. India is a welfare state committed to the welfare and development of its people in general and of vulnerable sections in particular. Population of SCs according to the census of 2011 is 19.47 crore. Rural-Urban breakup of SCs and total population presented below indicates that a higher proportion of SCs live in rural areas.

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## **Health and Nutrition status of Scheduled Castes**

The Dalit (formerly “Untouchable”) community of India, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, are subject to many disadvantages in healthcare access. Among individuals belonging to Scheduled Castes healthcare utilization tends to be lower and mortality rates tend to be higher than among members of higher castes. According to a study on healthcare seeking behavior and healthcare spending by young mothers in India, women from lower castes spend less on public sector practitioners than higher caste women. Some lower caste women also spend less on private practitioners and self-medication than higher caste women and non-Hindu women; yet experienced more self-reported morbidities than women from higher castes.

On utilization of antenatal care among women in southern India, women belonging to Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes were 30% less likely than women from higher castes to have received antenatal care in the state of Andhra Pradesh even when potential confounding factors such as age, birth order, and education level, were held constant. While controlling for other factors, women belonging to scheduled castes or scheduled tribes in the state of Karnataka were about 40% less likely to have had antenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy than women belonging to scheduled castes or scheduled tribes were less likely to give birth at hospitals and to be assisted by a health professional during delivery than women from higher castes.

Infant mortality Rate is defined as the number of deaths in the first year of life per thousand live births, while the mortality rate is defined as the number of deaths in first five years of life per thousand live births. It has also been found that lower caste members face higher mortality rates during the earliest and latest part of life, especially among children and adolescents (i.e. 6 to 18 years of age) and the elderly.

## **Health programmes introduced by the Government of India**

Accordingly, programmes for the development of scheduled caste were undertaken by the Central and the State Government. Emphasis was laid, in particular upon the family and individual beneficiary-oriented programmes within the general framework of the schemes.

During the seventh Five-Year plan period, special component plan for scheduled caste was implemented. Substantial increases in the flow of funds for scheduled castes was ensured resulting in extension of infrastructural facilities and enlargement of coverage for the accelerated economic development of scheduled castes.

During the tenth Five-Year plan the development of the scheduled castes and other sections of the society groups can be brought at par with the rest of the society in all spheres of national development. Priority was given to elimination of exploitation of scheduled castes and removal of all forms of oppression. The issues relating to the untouchability, denial of civil rights, spurious money lending, land alienation and non-payment of minimum wages were also given top priority. In order to provide institutional support for the proper plan formulation monitoring and evaluation, separate cells have been established to deal with the issue of scheduled castes' development in more effective manner.

In terms of health expenditure, the burden of health care spending is greatest among those living in rural and economically poor areas, with members of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes being the most affected by health care spending.

### **Central schemes**

The Indian government sponsored initiatives to improve health care access among Dalits includes a state government – funded health insurance scheme called the ‘Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana’ (RSBY). It means ‘Health Insurance for the poor’. It works by sharing the risk of a major health catastrophe by pooling the risk across many households.

This scheme was first implemented on April 1, 2008 by the Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Government of India in order to provide health insurance coverage to families living below the

poverty line (BPL). Its main theme is to protect BPL households from financial liabilities that often result from major health catastrophes that involve costly hospitalization.

The National Rural Health Mission too implemented some schemes in rural and urban areas. Its focus is on primary health care, especially in rural areas, with increased opportunities for referrals and improvement in secondary and territory referral facilities. The formation of public – private partnerships to improve service delivery, more strategies for reaching distant and isolated populations, such as through the use of

- Mobile health clinics
- e- health
- Telemedicine
- 102 Thallibidda Express

The implementation of a conditional cash transfer scheme to encourage facility-based births was launched aiming at reducing infant and maternal mortality rates.

The State Governments have been advised to introduce schemes for compulsory annual medical examination of scheduled caste/scheduled tribes' population in rural areas. Under the scheme, it is envisaged that mobile health checkup teams would be deputed to village according to a schedule drawn-up annually and in case of need for further investigation. They would be entitled to free facilities in Governmental/Referral hospitals.

#### **Other Centrally Sponsored Schemes**

- National Malaria Eradication programmes, including Filaria control, Japanese, Encephalitis Central and State Kala-azar control are implemented by states/UTs with 50% Central Assistance for spraying insecticides, supply of anti-Malaria drug etc.

In tribal and SC areas under TSP and SCP cent percent central assistance is being provided to North- Eastern states dominated by tribal population from the year 1994-95 onwards. 100 hardcore identified tribal districts in the states of Andhra Pradesh, 19 identified urban areas

and one is covered under the Enhanced Malaria Control project with world Bank support.

- National Leprosy Eradication programme is implemented with 100% assistance for detection and treatment of leprosy cases. This programme is ongoing in all the districts of the county and covers the entire scheduled caste population.
- National Tuberculosis Control Programme is implemented with 100% Central Assistance for supply of anti-TB drugs, equipment etc. in tribal and SC areas under TSP and SCP.
- National Programme on Centre of Blindness was launched in the year 1976 with cent percent assistance for strengthening of ophthalmic infrastructure, training of personnel, etc. in tribal and SC areas for treatment of eye ailments and control of blindness under TSP and SCP.
- National AIDS control programme, a centrally-sponsored programme, is implemented in tribal and SC areas. The National AIDS control programme was launched in November 1999.
- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) New Delhi have set up 5 Regional Medical Research Centres in the tribal areas in the country, one each at Jabalpur, Bhubaneswar, Jodhpur, Dibrugarh and Port Blair to carry out research on health problems of scheduled castes.

#### **Health Programmes of Scheduled Castes**

The Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) had been introduced for the first time in the 7th Five-Year plan under the sub sector “Medical and Public Health”. In accordance with the policy of the State Government, special emphasis has always been given to the weaker sections of the society in all developmental activities, including Health Services.

#### **Janani Suraksha Yojana**

Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) is a safe motherhood intervention under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) being implemented with the objective of reducing maternal and neo-natal mortality by promoting institutional delivery among the poor pregnant women. The Yojana, launched on 12th April 2005, by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, is being implemented in all states and UTs with special focus

on low performing states. JSY is a 100 % centrally sponsored scheme and it integrates cash assistance with delivery and post-delivery care.

The Yojana has identified ASHA, the accredited social health activist as an effective link between the Government and the poor pregnant women in 10 low performing states, namely the 8 EAG states and Assam and J&K and the remaining NE States. In other eligible states and UTs, wherever, AWW ((Anganwadi workers) and TBAs or ASHA like activists have been engaged in this purpose.

### **Eligibilities**

It is applicable for women belonging to BPL and SC/ST category are eligible for JSY payments for given institutional deliveries @ Rs.1000/- including Sukhibava to the rural pregnant women.

### **Janani Sishu Samarakshaka Karya Kramam**

The Government of India has launched JSSK programme at state level on October 22, 2011. It provides cashless maternity services deliveries including caesarian operations of all pregnant women approaching the public health institutions. Free treatment to all sick new born without any user charges or packet expenses is made available till at least 30 days after birth.

1. Free drugs and consumables @Rs.300/- per normal delivery, @Rs.1600 for caesarian cases.
2. Free diagnostic services @ Rs.40/- for normal delivery.
3. Free diet @ Rs.50/- pending for three days. Now it is enhanced to Rs.100/- per day.
4. Free blood @ Rs.300/- provided for caesarian cases only.
5. Free transport will be provided for early pregnant women @ Rs.500/- when there are no facilities of 108/104 services.

### **Asha's Accredited Social Health Activists**

It is one of the important activists in Andhra Pradesh state. It is intended under the National

Rural Health mission to have strong focus on the under-served population groups particularly the SCs and STs.

### **Objectives of Central and State Schemes**

The NRHM has designed by Government of India in the entire country its objectives are

- Reduce Infant mortality Rate
- Reduce Neonatal Morality Rate
- Reduce maternal mortality Ratio
- Reducing total fertility rate
- Increase institutional delivery Rate
- Improve tribal health, urban slum health, adolescent health
- Focus on underserved SCs/ST population groups.

### **Conclusion**

Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCSB) was evolved with a view to expedite socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes. The Scheduled Castes sub plan is not a scheme by itself, but is an umbrella under which schemes implemented by state and central government are dovetailed by appropriating funds exclusively for scheduled Castes for addressing their need and problems. The scheduled castes sub plan is thus a plan within a plan, where each Department formulates need – based programmes to effect direct flow of benefits to scheduled castes through family and individual oriented programmes as well as benefits of the services like provision of drinking water, health services, irrigation, roads & bridges etc., by earmarking state plan outlays at least in proportion to scheduled castes population of the state.

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# Child Labour Issue and Remedies

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*[When you realize how long problem of child labour has been around, anyone who ventures into the terrain of remedies obviously needs a long memory and not a little optimism – What have we tried? what has worked? And what has not worked? – to find answers to these questions. We must first look at how we have diagnosed the problem. Some say that the return of child labour is due to the present recession. Hard pressed businesses are looking for cheap and cheaper labour. Sweetshops proliferate. When the recession recedes, so will child labour. If it were that simple, we could all congratulate ourselves on having conducted this enlightened symposium and go home without worrying much more about the problem. The magic hand of the market, in due course, will straighten in all out. They are subjected to toilsome work and they are devoid of opportunity to grow.]*

The existence of child labour is a slur on a modern welfare state which seeks to promote the all-round development of its citizens. Children are the future hope of the society. They are like buds which need to be properly nursed and well taken care of, so that they bloom fully and grow into able human-beings and contribute their worth to the future development of the society. The children are subjected to work at a tender age, when they require the utmost love, affection, care and proper education. They are the direct victim of the existing exploitative self-up and due to denial of minimum basics they are forced to join labour force.

In this paper, therefore, an attempt is made to analyse the meaning of child labour, history of child labour, cause of child labour effects of child labour, extent of child labour, educational status of child labour, workforce participation of child labour in the rural economy of India, right of the child, health of children, laws protecting the child, policy prescriptions etc.

## Definitional Aspect of Child Labour

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The Factories Act, 1948 prohibits children below the age of 14 years from working in any factory, the minimum age in the Mines Act (1952) is years and it is 12 years in the Plantations Labour Act (1951).

Article 24 of the Constitution of India states: “No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.” The most recent legislation: “The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, defines child labour as a person who has not completed his fourteenth year of age.”

M.S. Subramaniam (1991) defines child labour thus: “Child labour means the employment of children (5 to 14 years of age) in gainful occupations, which are injurious to their physical, mental, moral and social development.

According to Indradeo Sharma (1941) “Child labour includes all those aged 14 years or below, who are engaged in some productive work, whether paid or not, within the family or outside.”

## Child labour Issue and Remedies

The causes of child labour are many and varied. Thus, a variety of factors can be attributed for the employment of child labour. (1) Easy

availability of child labour without many obligations for employers. (2) Poverty is the single important reason for child labour. The poor parents in order to supplement their income allow the children to work even on unremunerative jobs. Abject poverty and unemployment force the children to take up unremunerative jobs. Thus, “economic compulsions weigh heavily on the consciousness of the poor parents and they would not mind colluding with their children’s employers in violating the law and putting their children under the risks of inhuman exploitation.

Parents want their children to fend for themselves as early as possible, much better, if they become a source of income to the family’. Since the child is put to adult role at an early age, he/she also marries early and breeds early, thereby increasing the liabilities of his/her family and also of the whole nation. A recent study conducted in three big cities of Tamil Nadu by the students of Madras School of Social Work revealed that 55% of the children employed belonged to families with the income less than Rs.300/- per month and 72 per cent of total children had sought employment to augment the family income.

(3) Many employers prefer to engage children, because they are cheap. Moreover, children tend to be less troublesome, more disciplined and highly adaptable. (4) School dropouts. (5) Loss of an earning member of the family. (6) Absence of any state-sponsored scheme of family allowance in India. (7) Non-existence of any general scheme of compulsory education up to a minimum age. (8) slow advance of protective labour legislation. (9) The evasion of the existing laws for the protection of children. (10) Introduction of the factory system. (11) Death of mother. (12) Death of parents. (13) Ill-habituated father spending money on drinking etc. (14) Illegality of child. (15) Sometimes social structure of the society becomes responsible for child labour. The social structure in our country is characterized by caste system. The members

of low castes and down-trodden communities are supposed to be for the services of the upper castes. Thus, they are deprived of their aspirations. (16) Ignorance of the parents.

Thus, the problem of child labour in India is rooted in the exploitative socio-economic set-up and poor and backward economy. Ignorance, lack of job opportunities and other socio-economic institutions perpetuate this evil. Mass awareness does not prevail in our society which is also an important cause of child labour.

### **Effects of Child Labour**

While some healthy work in childhood may be social good and a national gain, child labour in general is a great social ill and a national waste, as the economic necessity for wage earning to support the family, deprives the child of an opportunity for education, play and recreation, stunts his physical growth, interferes with the normal development of child’s personality and thwarts his preparation for responsibility. The hazards suffered by the child workers are of no one’s concern. Among the main hazards is the health hazard which causes the following diseases in various occupations.

- a. Tuberculosis and bronchitis
- b. Muscle atrophy
- c. Weakening and malformation of bones
- d. Eye diseases
- e. Stunted growth
- f. Finger Arthritis
- g. Damage to the finger nails
- h. Excessive fatigue and mal-nutrition effects, functioning of endocrine glands.

### **Economic and Social Evils**

- a. Child labour gives birth to numerous economic problems such as the use of labour

at its lowest productivity implying thereby an in-efficient utilization of labour power.

- b. The practice of employing children permits unfair competition with adult labour with the result that there may be an excessive unemployment of adult labour, low wages and less satisfactory working conditions.
- c. Child labour tends to interfere with normal family life and encourages the break-down of the social order. Child used to early economic independence starts an early sex life acquiring venereal diseases and addiction to intoxicants. Generally, he/she also marries young and starts early procreation.
- d. The worst effect of child labour is that it interferes with their education and minimizes the chances for their vocational development. They neither acquire any skill nor do they receive any education thereby condemning them to a status of illiterate, oppressed and trampled worker for the rest of their lives.
- e. The effects of poor and unsafe working conditions in working children take the form of fatal accidents or accidents that result in deformities.
- f. The vulnerability of children is increased by the high incidence of mal-nutrition and under-nourishment and making them less resistant to debilitating diseases.
- g. Children in some work situations are exposed to physical and mental abuse. This involves long and often permanent separation from parents and isolation, sometimes amounting to virtual imprisonment and physical cruelty. Child participation in labour force activity reduces the potential for schooling and educational development. Given the low educational or skill content of many of the jobs in which working children are involved, the possibilities for acquiring remunerative or satisfying skills become still more remote, children, thus, find themselves locked in

unskilled, low-paying situations and permanently disadvantaged in the labour market.

- h. There are also other kinds of deprivations from which child labourers suffer, including the absence of clear and written contractual agreements, the dearth of feeding programmes, healthcare facilities and other welfare services and the lack of insurance and social security. The regulation of employment of children by law covers only a fringe of these occupations and even where regulation has been sought, the enforcement is extremely half-hearted and tardy.

Unless a systematic evaluation is made from time to time in respect of jobs in which children are employed and certain purposeful policy decisions are taken to meet the deficiencies, the existing situation is not likely to undergo any dimensional, qualitative or quantitative change.

### **Remedial Measures**

1. Medical and Health Support: In order to ensure good health of working children a system should be evolved in such a way that every child worker is periodically checked. In the organized industries health checking should be made compulsory by enacting proper laws wherever it is not available. In case of unorganized sector, particularly in agriculture, this could be linked with the National Health Scheme. A drive to keep working environment hygienically clean and to provide airy working place, particularly for child workers, should be attempted. The provision of supplementary feeding programmes for children should be given a primary place in efforts directed at enhancing the nutritional status of children and the improvement of their working conditions.
2. Proper housing facilities: Lack of proper housing facilities affects adversely not only the health and growth of children, but also

drag them to join the group of undesirable elements leading to delinquent behavior. Efforts should, therefore, be made to provide housing facilities with necessary basic amenities both in the organized and unorganized sectors. Attempts should also be made to provide library and reading facilities which they can make use of in their leisure time.

3. **Research and Cultural activities:** If facilities for recreation and cultural activities are provided either at the place of work or at the place of residence, the workers can take advantage of these facilities and rejuvenate themselves. This will help in keeping the workers fresh and thereby increase their efficiency leading to increased production. This could also be integrated with a counseling programme for providing guidance to the working children.
4. **Family Planning:** It is often found that large families exist in poor sections of the society who are unable to bear the burden of a large number of dependents and therefore the children are compelled to join the labour force early. This increases the number of working children to a very large proportion. Therefore, a very well- organized family planning programme both in the organized and un-organized sectors is bound to give rich dividends in the years to come.
5. **Role of media:** Evils of child labour have so far been given a lip-sympathy. The community has yet to feel it's shocking implications on the national development in the long run. There is a surprisingly high degree of ignorance about the consequences of child labour in general and the ill-effects of unsafe working conditions in particular. Child work is often accepted as part of the natural state of things, and the rights and needs of the child are not always fully appreciated. A great deal of effort, therefore, needs to be made to

generate and promote public awareness of the consequences of child labour and the rights of the working child to expose unacceptable conditions by mass media.

6. Efforts should also be made by the voluntary organizations to involve the local public and parents/guardians of child labour so that they become aware of the efforts made by the Government for the upliftment of child labour.
7. Trade Unions of child labour should be formed through which the child labour can raise their voice and can represent their problems to the employer directly.
8. At present there is no adequate and reliable information on the problem of child labour. Therefore, there is an urgent need to set up a permanent Board to study, identify and establish and catalogue the nature and extent of child employment and also to focus on the needs and working conditions of children.

Moreover, the provisions of the Act prohibiting the employment of child labour should be strictly followed. According to National Commission on Labour: "Quite often, it is the feeling of sympathy rather than the desire to exploit which weighs with employers in employing child workers. Ironically enough, it is the same feeling which makes the inspecting officers to take a lenient view of breaches of the legal provision in this regard.

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