



## An International Journal of Ideas

Vol. 28 No. 334 DECEMBER 2014 Rs. 20. 00

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## Whither SAARC!

The trends emerging from the recently concluded 18th SAARC summit in Nepal have presented a mix bag of hope and despair, with despair outweighing the hope. The Indian Prime Minister's 'invitation diplomacy' to the SAARC leaders at the inaugural ceremony of his assuming office came at a time when India's relations with its neighbours were at low ebb. The so-called 'SAARC moment' launched in May this year has seemingly ended in a fiasco just before the end of the year as can be discerned from outcome of the summit which has not produced more than a few face-saving agreements forged at the last moment. The fact of Nepal being the host of the summit was interpreted by some observers as an opportunity for India to 'squire the event' to a more substantial outcome and culminating it into a 'show of real solidarity.' However, it didn't happen.

Indian Prime Minister's avoidance of the Pakistani Prime Minister as the latter walked up to the podium during the inaugural session reportedly proved instrumental in casting a pall of chill over the entire summit which could not be dispelled even after the 'very warm' handshake between Indian and Pakistani premiers at the closing session. The summit's endorsement of India's call to combat terror, except Pakistan, is one of the important takeaways from the 18th SAARC summit. Terrorism is a common regional threat, and it can only be effectively tackled when all parties join hands. This has been proven time and again through cases of bilateral cooperation.

There were expectations that two important agreements on road and rail connectivity would be signed at the SAARC summit. However, this did not happen as Pakistan said that it did not have the necessary internal arrangements in place. The power agreement, which was eventually signed, however, may lead to more cooperation and improve the availability of power in the region. This would be an important step towards providing energy security for the region. The estranged relationship between India and Pakistan has always cast its shadow over the SAARC summits and the Nepal summit is no exception. In the absence of any fruitful talks between Indian and Pakistani Prime Ministers at the summit, the Indian Prime Minister did have talks with all other leaders who attended the summit. The substantial interaction that he had with them is expected to improve bilateral relations, since some of the matters that could not be brought to fruition will now be discussed bilaterally. India's announcement of a slew of measures, including visa facilitation, and a Special Purpose Facility to finance infrastructure projects in the region is likely to have a salutary impact in enhancing bilateral cooperation.

Undoubtedly, India has succeeded temporarily in foiling China's bid to enter the SAARC grouping; nevertheless, it is not a permanent solution because there are differences between member-states over the issue. As has been pointed out, India would do well to counterpoise China's economic weight by engaging its neighbours more deeply to formulate a consensus, instead of being seen as obstructing a closer SAARC-China engagement. India's proposal of a SAARC satellite is a right step in that direction coupled with the proposed project of connectivity with an added emphasis on "it is not enough to be close, but there is need to come together."

It is worth mentioning here that India should exploit the provisions of the SAARC Charter, especially those which allow two or more member states to work out agreements for 'Sub-regional Cooperation.' China, Japan and the United States, which enjoy Observer Status at the SAARC Summit, are keen to actively promote 'trans-regional' cooperation involving members of the SAARC and neighbouring regions such as East Asia and Central Asia. This brings the ball in India's court and in any case, if India signs bilateral agreements with its neighbours on connectivity and offers overland transit to all of them, a large part of the subcontinent will automatically get integrated. Apart from Pakistan holding up regional cooperation, India's own domestic politics in the form of opposition from West Bengal and Tamil Nadu has often undermined the possibilities for regional cooperation. The SAARC meet has facilitated more regional interaction. It remains to be seen how much will be achieved by the next summit, which will be in Pakistan in two years. — BK



# India-Australia Relations: Recent Trends

Dr. Dipen Saikia\*

*[This article briefly appraises recent upsurge in bilateral relationship between India and Australia which had maintained a low profile for the past three decades. While examining political interaction, it also deals with economic ties and defence and security cooperation between the two countries. Ed.]*

India and Australia share several commonalities, which serve as a foundation for closer cooperation and multi-faceted interaction between the two countries. Both countries have strong, vibrant, secular and multicultural democracies; a free press and an independent judicial system. Besides, the English language as an important link, the game of Cricket, and now the large numbers of Indian students coming to Australia for education, are significant elements in bolstering bilateral relations.

Over the decades, this relationship has grown in strength and importance, especially in the aftermath of India's economic reforms in the nineties and has made rapid strides in all areas - trade, energy and mining, science & technology, information technology, education and defence.

Bilateral ties, which had hitherto been constrained by slow progress owing to some reasons, received a fillip in the wake of Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott's visit to India in September 2014 and the recent visit of Indian Prime Minister to Australia, thereby, scripting a new moment in India-Australia ties putting to rest the fitful gestures of drawing closer in the past.

## Political Interactions

The high-level exchange of visits of leaders between the two countries has been instrumental in cementing the friendly relations between the two countries.

While there has been a regular exchange of visits at Ministerial level, bilateral visits at Head of Government/Head of State level have been limited.

From the Australian side, Prime Minister John Howard visited India in July 2000 and again in March 2006. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd visited India in November 2009, when it was agreed to take the relationship to the level of a strategic partnership.

The then Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard paid a state visit to visit India from 15-17 October, 2012, which culminated into signing of four MOUs between the two countries, namely, cooperation in Wool and Woollen Products; Student Mobility and Welfare; Civil Space Science, Technology and Education; and cooperation between Skills Australia and the National Skill Development Corporation of India.

Australia participated in the IOR-ARC Council of Ministers' meeting held in Gurgaon, India on 2 November 2012. India's then Foreign Minister Salman Khurshid visited Perth in end October/beginning November 2013 for FMFD and IORA meets.

The Australian Trade Minister Craig Emerson visited India to co-chair the 14th Australia-India Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) held on 28 January 2013 at New Delhi. Australian Trade Minister discussed trade and investment relationship between the two countries, as well as global issues such as food security, poverty alleviation and trade liberalization. Both sides also reviewed the progress

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on the CECA negotiations between our two countries.

A delegation led by Sachin Pilot, MoS (IC) for Corporate Affairs visited Australia between 3-8 June 2013. Dr. M. Pallam Raju, Minister for HRD, visited Australia for the Annual Education Ministers' Dialogue in July 2013. Beni Prasad Verma, Minister for Steel visited Australia in end January 2014. India's then Finance Minister P Chidambaram visited Australia on the eve of G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meet in February 2014.

The Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbott's visit to India in early September 2014 set the tone for infusing vitality into the bilateral relationship. This visit was utilized to sign a bilateral nuclear safeguards agreement, thereby, paving the way for Australia to sell India uranium.

Recent visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has proved instrumental in further expanding the scope of bilateral cooperation to several fields. Prime Minister Modi has wooed Australian investors to India, saying the environment that is prevailing in the country is "welcoming" and easy to do business, besides having transparent and predictable policies.

Until recently, Australia was strategically of little relevance for India for it is so removed from most strategic theatres that concern India—and relations were adrift and deep economic engagement was missing.

Besides, the political leadership in both the countries has underscored the significance of each other and therefore the exchange of visits at the highest level has commenced in the wake of the present Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott's visit to India within three months of Modi government assuming charge. The Australian Prime Minister's urgency in signing the much-stalled uranium deal with India was perhaps a sign that he was willing to take the initiative to make India-Australia ties meaningful.

India and Australia co-operate in various multilateral fora. Australia supports India's candidature in an expanded UN Security Council. Both India and Australia are members of the G-20, Commonwealth, IORA, ASEAN Regional Forum, Asia Pacific Partnership on Climate and Clean Development, and have participated in the East Asia Summits. Both countries have also been cooperating as members of the Five Interested Parties (FIP) in the WTO context. Australia is an important player in APEC and supports India's membership of the organisation.

### **Economic Relations**

Economic interaction between India and Australia is gradually picking up the momentum and in the wake of recent highest level exchange of visits of the prime ministers of the two countries, a fresh boost in economic relations is expected to take place.

In 2012-13, Australia's trade in goods and services with India stood at A\$ 16.50(US\$17.68) billion with Indian exports of goods amounting to A\$ 3.38 (US\$3.59) billion. Australia's exports of goods to India were to the tune of A\$ 13.27(US\$14.09) billion. However, Australia's exports of goods to India had declined by an annual average of nearly 11 percent over the past three years.

This period was also characterized by drop in India's ranking among Australia's export destinations from fourth to fifth. India's exports of goods and services to Australia had increased by an annual average of 9 percent over the past 3 years. India's main exports to Australia are gems and jewellery, machinery and textiles while our major imports are non-monetary gold, coal, copper, crude and fertilizers.

India is Australia's largest export market for gold and chickpeas, second largest market for coal and copper ores and third largest market for lead and wool. Four products – coal, non-monetary gold, copper ores & concentrates and petroleum – accounted for over 80 percent of India's imports

from Australia, with coal and gold being the dominant imports in 2012-13. India's major exports to Australia in 2012-13 were pearls and gems, jewellery, medicaments and passenger motor vehicles.

The India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission, established in 1989, has held fourteen meetings, the last one held in New Delhi on 30 January 2013. Negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) are already underway. In the aftermath of recent visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Australia, the economic relations between the two countries are likely to witness upsurge, especially in terms of increased investment bilaterally.

### **Defence and Security Cooperation**

Recent years have witnessed significant expansion of defence cooperation between India and Australia. Both the countries have signed a MoU on Defence Cooperation as well as a Joint Declaration on Security Co-operation. There are frequent exchanges of visits including at the level of Service Chiefs, regular Naval, Air Force and Army Talks; joint naval exercises; regular exchanges at each other's training institutes and seminars.

The Australian Defence Minister Stephen Smith visited India in December 2011 for Defence Ministers' Dialogue. Subsequently, on June 4-5, 2013 India's then Defence Minister A. K. Antony paid the first ever official visit by an Indian Defence Minister to Australia and in the talks with Australian Defence Minister Stephen Smith, the two Ministers recognised the rapid progress made in Defence relations through the framework of bilateral talks.

In addition to annual summits, India and Australia will have meetings of foreign and defence ministers, senior diplomats, service chiefs, Track 1.5 dialogues, separate consultations on East Asia, regular maritime exercises and high-level dialogue on counter-terrorism, maritime security and cyber security.

During the course of his recent visit to Australia, the Indian Prime and his Australian counterpart have agreed on a landmark framework for security cooperation across the spectrum in defence, cyber and maritime security and combating terrorism, including the threats posed by foreign fighters joining extremists groups.

Prime Minister Modi in his speech to a joint session of Australian Parliament while making a pointed reference to the need for expanding security cooperation and deepening international partnerships in the region, said: "But, what we do need is to work together and with others to create environment and culture that promotes the currency of co-existence and cooperation; in which all nations, small and big, abide by international law and norms, even when they have bitter disputes. We should collaborate more on maintaining maritime security. We should work together on the seas and collaborate in international forums. And, we should work for a universal respect for international law and global norms."

### **Conclusion**

Australia's geostrategic location being at the heart of the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean region augments its strategic importance for India. Australia can be a major partner in every area of India's national priority, including infrastructure, skills, education, agriculture energy, manufacturing, finance and technology. India's high trajectory of growth can be the answer to Australia's search for new economic opportunities and its desire for a more diversified global economic engagement.

Significance of India for Australia was aptly summed by the then Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith in his key note address in September 2008 at the University of Western Australia: "It is under-appreciated that Perth and Chennai are closer to each other than Sydney is to Seoul, to Shanghai, or to Tokyo...As the world sees the potential of an Asian/Pacific century unfolds, Australia sees India

at the heart of this historic shift in political and economic influence.”

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# Politics of Nuclear Power in India

Dr. Anilkumar B Halu\*

*[An increasing emphasis is being stressed upon energy security worldwide and India is no exception to this phenomenon. However, in view of the fast depleting resources of fossil fuel, coal and water as well as the adverse impact being cast by the ongoing process of climate change, added emphasis is being put on harnessing nuclear power. This article briefly deals with the prospects of nuclear power in India and the obstacles it currently faces. Ed.]*

There has been an increasing global penchant for harnessing nuclear energy for promoting economic growth and industrial development. However, in the aftermath of the Chernobyl incident in 1987, the growth in the nuclear power industry has been lagging globally. For the past two decades, installed nuclear power capacity has reportedly recorded an annual growth rate of 1.3% amidst annual growth in electricity demand of approximately 3%. In the decade 1996-2006, while total global primary energy consumption increased by 26%, the aggregate increase of installed nuclear power was a mere 15%.

Concomitantly, some renewable energy technologies, notably wind and solar energy, recorded annual growth rates above 30%. However, fossil fuel price volatility and international pressures to abate CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have revitalized nuclear power industry prospects.

## Scenario in India

Broadly speaking, India’s primary energy consumption has more than doubled between 1990 and 2011 to nearly 25,000 PJ. Undoubtedly, power production in India has registered more than three-fold increase with 1052 billion kilowatt hours gross produced in 2011 as compared to the 1990 output; nevertheless, it is not keeping in correspondence with the growing demand. With about 21%

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transmission losses, electricity represented only some 750 kWh per capita for 2011.

According to broad estimates, in 2011 gross generation of electricity comprised 836 TWh from fossil fuels, 33 TWh from nuclear, 131 TWh from hydro and 53 TWh from other renewables. Currently, coal provides 68% of the electricity, but reserves are effectively limited. In 2013, India imported 159 million tonnes of coal and 533 million tonnes was produced domestically. Gas provides 15% of the electricity and hydro-electricity accounts for 12%.

Broad estimates show that the per capita electricity consumption in India is expected to double by 2020, with 6.3% annual growth, and reach 5000-6000 kWh by 2050, requiring about 8000 TWh/yr then. There is an acute demand for more and more reliable power supplies. One-third of the population is not connected to any grid.

While a 2007 KPMG report put the transmission and distribution (T&D) losses at worth more than \$6 billion per year, another 2012 report put the losses at \$12.6 billion per year. Another 2010 report showed big differences among states, with some very high, and a national average of 27% T&D loss, well above the target 15% set in 2001 when the average figure was 34%. Installed transmission capacity was only about 13% of generation capacity.

### **Nuclear Power**

In India, nuclear power is the fourth-largest source of electricity after thermal, hydroelectric and renewable sources of electricity. Currently, India possesses 21 nuclear reactors in operation in 7 nuclear power plants, having an installed capacity of 5308 MW and producing a total of 30,292.91 GWh of electricity while seven other reactors are under construction and are expected to generate an additional 6,100 MW. The Government of India in October 2010 chalked out 'an ambitious plan to reach a nuclear power capacity of 63,000 MW in 2032.'

Rapidly growing demand for electricity to keep up the momentum of economic growth coupled with the ever growing problem of fossil fuels, increased attention is being paid to the nuclear investment for electricity, and 25% nuclear contribution is the ambition for 2050, when 1094 GWe of base-load capacity is expected to be required. Almost as much investment in the grid system as in power plants is necessary.

A target for nuclear power to provide 20 GWe by 2020 was fixed in 2004 by the Government of India and by 2007 it was realized that it was a 'modest' target which could be doubled with the opening of international cooperation necessitating substantial uranium imports. In July 2014 the new NDA government urged DAE to triple the nuclear capacity to 17 GWe by 2024.

In the aftermath of liability legislation starting to deter foreign reactor vendors, early in 2012, the Government of India said it wanted to see coal production increase by 150 Mt/yr (from 440 Mt/yr) to support 60 GWe new coal-fired capacity to be built by 2015. This entails huge new investment in rail infrastructure as well as substantial import of coal.

### **Nuclear Fuel Reserves**

India is endowed with small reserves of uranium and it is dependent on uranium imports to fuel its nuclear power plants. According to one source, India's uranium resources are modest, with 102,600 tonnes U as reasonably assured resources (RAR) and 37,200 tonnes as inferred resources in situ (to \$260/kgU) at January 2011. In February 2012, 152,000 tU was claimed by DAE. Accordingly, India expects to import an increasing proportion of its uranium fuel needs. In 2013 it was importing about 40% of uranium requirements.

Russia has been a major supplier of nuclear fuel to India since early 1990s. In the wake of dwindling domestic uranium reserves during 2006-2008, electricity generation from nuclear power in India declined by 12.83%. However, a waiver from the

Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in September 2008 proved instrumental in facilitating India to commence international nuclear trade.

Subsequently, India has signed bilateral deals on civilian nuclear energy technology cooperation with several other countries, including France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and South Korea. India has also uranium supply agreements with Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Argentina and Namibia.

### **Anti-nuclear Protests**

The occurrence of nuclear disaster at Fukushima (Japan) in March 2011 triggered a wave of protests around proposed Indian nuclear power project (NPP) sites. There have been mass protests against the French-backed 9900 MW at Jaitapur in Maharashtra and the 2000 MW Koodankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu. The Government of West Bengal has denied permission to a proposed 6000 MW facility near the town of Haripur that intended to host 6 Russian reactors.

According to media reports, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed in October 2011 against the government's civil nuclear programme in the Supreme Court, which specifically asked for the staying of all proposed nuclear power plants till satisfactory safety measures and cost-benefit analyses are completed by independent agencies. However, the Apex Court said it was not an expert in the nuclear field to issue a direction to the government on the nuclear liability issue.

One observer has opined that the recent protest movements in different parts of the country show as to how 'national' nuclear power projects are increasingly coming into clash with 'local' stakeholders' livelihoods and land rights. As with power plants, local people are also becoming restive about uranium mining and milling.

### **Nuclear Liability**

Since all civil nuclear facilities are owned and must be majority-owned by the Central Government, the liability issues arising from these installations are the responsibility of the Government. The Civil Liability

for Nuclear Damage Act related to third party liability passed by the Parliament in August 2010, places responsibility for any nuclear accident with the operator, as is standard internationally, and limits total liability to 300 million SDR (about US\$ 450 million) "or such higher amount that the Central Government may specify by notification". Operator liability is capped at Rs 1500 crore (about US\$ 285 million) or such higher amount that the Central Government may notify, beyond which the Central Government is liable.

Media reports in October 2010 indicated that NPCIL proposed to set up a fund of Rs 1500 crore (\$250 million) for nuclear liability "with the Centre addressing anything over this level". Subsequently in March 2014 India reached some sort of agreement with Russia to provide liability insurance through the government-owned General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC), though the actual arrangements for a nuclear liability insurance product had yet to be worked out. GIC apparently discussed reinsurance with international companies, but without any agreement, due partly to the unlimited provisions of the 2010 Act, so was unable to proceed.

In April 2014 DAE approached the Ministry of Finance to urge the setting up of a nuclear insurance pool as a high priority, since insurance risks for third party liability alone amount to Rs 1500 crore. NIAEP-ASE, contracted to supply Kudankulam units 3&4, has insisted on the government providing reinsurance. In September 2014 the DAE and Ministry of Finance asked the GIC again to contrive a model for circumventing the right of recourse under the Civil Liability Act.

There is a need for making this Liability Act more viable to attract foreign investment and technology in India's nuclear power sector while safeguarding the national interests as well.

### **Conclusion**

India's priorities of economic growth and poverty alleviation require accelerating the pace of development by harnessing energy resources. However, India's dependence on imported energy

resources and the inconsistent reform of the energy sector are challenges to satisfying rising demand.

In order to meet the energy crunch, India's dependence on coal has increased and accordingly the Government of India has declined to set targets ahead of the 21st Conference of the Parties on Climate Change to be held in Paris in 2015. India's environment minister in September 2014 said it would be 30 years before India would be likely to see a decrease in CO2 emissions.

It is in this backdrop that nuclear energy is likely to emerge as the symbol of progress and power. India's non-accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty had generally hampered its development of civil nuclear energy until 2009. Foreign technology and fuel are now expected to provide a fillip to India's nuclear power plants considerably.

However, a fundamental incompatibility between India's civil liability law and international conventions limits foreign technology provision. Nevertheless, India has a vision of becoming a world leader in nuclear technology due to its expertise in fast reactors and thorium fuel cycle.

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## PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN

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# State-building in Kyrgyzstan

Subrat Biswal\*

*[This article deals with the task of state-building in post-Soviet Republic of Kyrgyzstan located in Central Asia. The author provides a brief overview of the introduction of democratic and economic reforms in the state on the eve of attainment of independence in 1991 and the subsequent developments that occurred in the state up to 2009 by portraying the obstacles that impeded the process of state-building there. Ed. ]*

**D**emocracy is a worldwide phenomenon. It is nothing but just a form of state. It is quiet conspicuous that hails from the people, exercised by the people and works for the interests of the people. And Representative is nothing but just an agent that presents the views on behalf of the people and works for their benefit. They are also held accountable for their each act to the state.

Democracy is a system of government by which political sovereignty is retained by the people and exercised directly by citizens. The essential idea of it is that the people have the right to determine who governs them. Freedom is only possible in democratic political systems in which the governments are accountable to their own people, the rule of law prevails, and freedom of expression, association, and belief, as well as respect for the rights of minorities and women, are guaranteed.

## Democracy in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan is the first country in Central Asia which declared itself as a full-fledged democratic country in the post-Soviet period. Its only belief was that democracy can bring reforms in politics and economy in the country. It started to provide all the privileges and amenities to the citizen as a welfare state. It is properly guided by the democratic principles.

The post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan is termed as the bulwark of democracy in the region or Switzerland of Central Asia. It is the consequence of adoption of political and economic liberalization and

democracy after the dissolution of the erstwhile Soviet Union.

In the independent Kyrgyz republic, Askar Akayev was elected as president who was a pro-West. His adoption of democratic principles proved instrumental in transforming the market economy which made him complacent to the Western world and helped in fetching economic aid to strengthen deteriorating Kyrgyz economy.

In the early period, he ensured the freedom of speech and media and liberalized the language policy. Parliament functioned well due to the separation of powers between the legislatures and executive. However, the democratic system did not last long.

It started to breakdown like the proverbial house of cards owing to deterioration of economy in mid-1994. So Akayev decided to dissolve the house in September 1994 and he justified that the democratic process was impossible in a multilingual and multi ethnic state and authoritarianism was the only solution to the violence.

Through a constitutional amendment effected in October 1995, he vested enormous powers in the presidency under him. He curtailed the powers of the Parliament and used his veto power to suppress the opposition. He introduced the hierarchical and patriarchal structure of family in the government which was opposed by the people.

The power at all level was personalized and based on the family and clan and this in turn led to corruption and lack of people's participation in

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inclusive party system. It seemed a clear trajectory from democracy to authoritarianism (Paul Kubicek, 1998).

This paper mainly starts with the discussion from the second president's assumption of power in 2005. Unlike Akayev, Bakiev was a reformist leader. Before and after the 'Tulip Revolution', he consistently supported the changing of constitution and delegated the powers of the President to Parliament. But he also failed to play the card well.

However, he failed to implement the contemplated reforms and by 2006 his stance also underwent a change. In late 2006 he opted for the amendment of the constitution and consolidated more powers in president like Akayev. People started protesting against the cumbersome powers of the President and the replication of Akayev era.

Many protesters showed placard quoting "for reform" (Barro: 1996). Taking this opportunity of protesters, he supported them and forced the exit of Kulov the then prime minister of the party who was trying to overcome the powers of Bakiev. After Kulov's vanquish from the political scene, Bakiev was certain that nobody in the country could compete against him and which is why he did not try to maintain the balance of power.

So again it seemed as the formal institution with the formal president was shaping an informal power structure around him. Thereafter he also supported in 2007 for the referendum of the constitution to augment his power (Burnell: 2004). As expected, power structure zoomed drastically around his single pyramid system.

Later Atambayev, being the opposition leader, forged into the squad. People even started to think that there was no difference between the government and the opposition. By 2009 the parliamentary system, media freedom, and independent judiciary had already been in worse condition as it were before the 2005 Tulip Revolution (Hale, 2011).

### **State Consolidation in Kyrgyzstan**

State building has been a far cry for Kyrgyzstan since its independence. There have been some

sporadic amendments in the constitution in an attempt to bring stability. But the hegemonic role played by the president makes it tough to materialize; despite various actors' unprecedented role in embarking on to the consolidation of state.

The unprepared independent Kyrgyz republic faced much political turmoil since its independence. In order to bring stability, the reformist president Akayev adopted enormous provisions but unluckily all seemed short before the threat to the state (Diamond: 2004).

Opposition primarily came from his own party in the parliament which was opposed to the reforms of Akayev. They wanted to embed with Soviet policies in the small, land locked and mountainous state faced with economy fall out. But the president was chained helplessly in his hand. And by and large the economic condition was also demolished by the president himself.

After independence he followed the language policy which made learning of Kyrgyz language compulsory (Bunce: 2005). So there was huge migration of Russians, Kazakhs, Jews, Turks, and Uzbeks to their own states. Importantly, they were contributing to the development of the state being residents in urban areas.

Akayev's this step was as axe on his own leg. Ethnic conflict predominantly contributed for the upheaval of the state. Uzbeks are mainly concentrated in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan (Li: 2005).

The reasons behind the violence between the south and north are apprehensive nature among them. The division between the north and south is fueled by the dominating and treacherous role of the north. For instance, the governance of the south oblast is filled by the north leader. Similarly the land policy, external security, intra-ethnic differences also exacerbated the conditions in the state (Anders Olofsgard, 2012).

Since the gaining of independence in 1991, the Kyrgyz republic has undergone a difficult transition from a command economy to market economy, embracing a democratic system of governance. The government had strongly promoted decentralized

local governance and community development through the formation of local self-governing bodies and emphasis on intensive mobilization of human resources and local capital at the grassroots level (Matlosa: 2006).

Effective and sustainable local governance requires effective participation, not only at the institutional level rather at the community level as well. Community dynamism can be ensured by full participation through the local self-governing institutions at the grassroots level.

Sustainable institution promotes socio-economic development (Przeworski: 1999). This helps people to enhance their capacities and work together for household and community initiative. Decentralization initiatives in Kyrgyzstan were geared toward developing the capabilities of local communities and local self-government at the village level (Kalyan Pandey, 2001).

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# ADIS of Arunachal Pradesh

Dr. Nabo Kumar Pegu\*

*The Adi tribe refers to a group of tribes who have common belief pattern, language, customs and social tradition and also distinct territorial area in Arunachal Pradesh. 'Adi' means hill. The tribes who call themselves an 'Adi' were living in the erstwhile Siang and Subansiri districts of Arunachal Pradesh.*

There are varied narrations with regard to the origin of the tribal groups living in the northeastern region of the country. The Adis are also no exception. The 1961 Census of India, long back recorded that all the tribes living in the areas of Arunachal hill region claim their origin from one race or tribe settled in Killing in China and subsequently journeyed through Siyom river and occupied the hilly country between the river Subansiri and Brahmaputra (Census of India 1961).

Again, some other scholars described that they migrated from Tibet and settled permanently in the areas covered by the district of undivided Siang and Subansiri of present Arunachal Pradesh. Some sections of them again moved from Siang district and migrated to the plain areas of the Assam (Elwin 1959; Pinggam 1971; Bhattacharyyas 1977; Nyori 1993).

The sections of people who have migrated towards the plains later on identified themselves as 'Miris' or 'Misings'. These tribes speak the same language, follow the same faith and believe in the same cult related to the Sun and Moon God (Donyi-Polo), common social customs and practices and way of life.

## The term 'Adi'

For a long past, the Adis of Arunachal had been known as 'Abors'. But in the present times the Adis themselves have discarded the appellation 'Abor' and have instead wanted that they be called 'Adis'.

Tai Nyori, an Adi scholar, is of the opinion that the word 'Abor' is generally believed to be of Assamese origin, and is a compound of two

Assamese words- *A* and *Bori*, 'A' is a negative particle means 'not', while 'Bori' means 'submitted' or 'subjected' and together they form 'Abori' or 'Abor', which means one who does not submit or one who does not owe to any allegiance to anybody, and is thus an independent.

There are however, various explanations with regard to the term Abor. It appears that 'Abor' is an Assamese word meaning 'non-submissive', 'insubordinate' or 'inaccessible for victory'. But during the British period some writers had used the term 'Abor' in the senses of 'barbarous', 'rude', 'unruly', 'savage' etc, besides 'disobedient'.

Such derogatory sense borne by the term is one of the reasons why the Adis of today do not like to call themselves as Abor. However, the main reason of their disliking of the term Abor is that they never called themselves by the term, but always called themselves and have preferred to be called as 'Adi' which in their own language, literally means 'hill' and thus in its extended and final sense 'the people living in the hills' or briefly 'Hillmen'.

Accordingly, the Adis have discarded the old term Abor in favour of Adi, and have insisted that they be called by this name and not by the term coined for them by others (Nyori 1993:4).

## Migration

There are diverse viewpoints about the migration of the Adis. Many scholars are of the opinion that the original homeland of the Adis has not yet been studied. Some have attempted to trace out the early home of the Adis and tried to determine the period of migration. The Adis comprise various sub-tribes and so, scholars put their opinion that each of these

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sub-tribes has migrated from their original homeland in different periods of time.

The social historians believed that the legends, myths or stories associated with the origins of the tribes and sub-tribes are also the individual respective history of migration. For such reasons there are varied interpretations about migration of the Adis.

However, Sachin Roy came to a conclusion that the Adis came to India from the north across the Himalayan barrier. The real cause of their immigration cannot be ascertained at present. It may have been occasioned by some great natural upheaval of their homeland or by large-scale racial movement set in motion by political happening in these regions. Nor can it be said whether they came in a single mass or gradually in small batches in successive waves through centuries (Roy 1960: 16).

According to Lego- 'The Tibeto- Burman sub-family of the Tibeto-Chinese race might have first migrated from their cradle land on the upper courses of Yang- Tse Kiang and of the Howang – Ho river towards the Irrawady river and of the Chindwin and external Tirap and Changlang district by the Tirap river after crossing Patkai Hill ranges' (Lego 2006:3).

T.K. Bhattacharyya (1977) noted that the ancestors of Tani group including the Adis and the Misings followed one of the tributaries of Salween and Irrawady towards Rieng (upper vicinity of Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh). From there, they pushed on and followed the course of a river, which the Adis called *Nylun Siang* which is the Zayul river in China and Lohit river of Arunachal Pradesh (India). They stayed in Zayul valley for sometimes.

It is stated that from Zayul valley, the *Tani* group moved further along the river called *Chindruk* and reached the high pass called *Dojing-La* in Chinese language and *Dojing-Ego* in Adi language. They crossed it and came upon the *Po* river which the Adis called *Mamgong Siang*. *Po* is a large tributary of the *Tsang-Po* (*Siang*) river, which flows through the area, which is known to the Adis as *Taro* country.

From there, they moved down south and ultimately settled in the present area of Arunachal Pradesh.

Thus, the Adis and the Misings have their chequered history of origin and migration.

### **Social groups**

The Adis are divided into two broad groups on the basis of some differences viz. (i) the Padam-Minyong and (ii) the Galo. The first group comprises the sub-tribes such as – Padams, Pasis, Panggis, Minyongs, Milangs, Karkos, Shimongs, Tangams, Ashings and Bori. The second group comprised of four sub-tribes viz. Galos, Pailibos, Ramos and Bokars (Nyori 1993:4).

These two groups occupy almost two equal halves of the total area of the Adi- inhabited districts. The river *Sido* and *Siyom*, form the dividing line between the two groups, leaving the first group on the eastern and the second group on the western halves. Thus, on the basis of distribution and the location, the Adis can be again called the 'eastern Adis' and 'western Adis' (Nyori *ibid*, p. 4).

### **Social System**

Like any other tribal society of northeast India, the Adi society of Arunachal Pradesh is constituted by clan, family, marriage, economy, polity, religion and cultural systems.

### **Clans**

Each sub-tribe consists of a number of clans and sub-clans. For example, according to Nyori, the Lego is a clan of Padam sub-tribe and this clan again has a number of sub-clans such as – *Sike*, *Rankong*, *Rapok*, *Limong*, *Kopak*, *Lakku*, *Lagrang*, *Lagbing*, *Lombe*, *Lomsar*, *Raik*, *Iksing*, *Sik*, *Serne*, *Manyear*, *Nadbul* and *Nane*. Again, in the *Paktu* clan of the Galo Sub-tribe, there are sub-clan divisions namely – *Bagra*, *Doje*, *Ete*, *Echi*, *Nyodu*, *Kyorak*, *Ado*, *Lollen*, *Loya* and *Logi* (Nyori 1993:203).

Practically, the Adi society is based on the clan organizations. Each clan and its sub-clans normally trace their descent from one common ancestor.

The sub-clans are usually exogamous. Any sexual relation between the members of the sub-clans is considered as incest, and in the past they were strict in maintaining this principle. The members who are

involved in violating such affairs are punished severely and are even excommunicated. But today, however, some clans do not maintain this custom very strictly. For instance the *Loyas* and the *Loyis* who are the sub-clans of the Paktu, now intermarry (Nyori 1993: 204)

Besides the division of the tribe into groups, sub-tribes and clans on the basis of their genealogies, the Minyong and the Galo sub-tribes have some divisions of their own. The Minyongs are divided into two divisions called *moities*- the *Kuming* and the *Kuri*. Similarly, the Galos are also divided into two groups called- *Nyiji* and *Nyira*.

### **The Family System**

The smallest unit of the Adi family is the married couple and their offspring. In the joint family the parents and their brothers with their children living in the same house, possess the same paddy fields and granaries. A joint family may also be composed of unmarried and married uncles with their wives and children, unmarried sisters of the father, married and unmarried brothers, sisters, nephews, cousins, grand children, slaves with their wives and children. But presently, such types of families are usually not found in existence among the Adis society.

The society of the Adis is matrilineal and patriarchal. The sons inherit the property of the family and take the title of the father. Daughters do not get any immovable property.

### **Marriage**

Marriage system of the Adis varies slightly from one group to another, but both monogamy and polygamy forms of marriages are prevalent among them. The Adis do not allow polyandry form of union. The consent of both boys and girls through love affairs in *rashengs* (Youth dormitory) is accepted and ultimately recognized in form of marriage.

The Adi people consider marriage as a sacred bond, which cannot be broken by any human action. The widows are either inherited by the brother of her deceased husband or allowed to remarry, particularly, if they were without a child (Mibang 1994:41).

Among the Adis, marriage is generally negotiated between the presents of the boys and the girls. The groom has to pay the bride price to the guardian of his wife. Among the Minyongs, the parents have to consult all the elders of their clans as soon as the boy proposes to marry a girl.

Marriage by exchange is also prevalent among the Minyongs. According to this system the family of the boy marrying a girl from a family has to give a girl of its own to the family of the bride in marriage.

The Galos also follow the system of arranged marriage. In this system, the parents of the boy approach the girl's parents asking for their daughter for the son of the former.

### **Religion**

Religious institutions in the tribal world are peculiarly complex. The religion of the Adis is also shrouded in numerous myths and traditions of the tribe which are as old as the tribe itself. The history of origin, the routes of migration and adjustment thereof, the ways that the tribal population discovered to be freed from all sorts of diseases, misfortunes, sufferings etc. have unfolded immense curiosities to overcome such hurdles in life and gave birth to a number of explanation in the form of myths.

These were embodied in the ballads called *Aabangs*. The high hills, rocky mountains, snowy peaks, rough rivers, deep gorges, dense forests, heavy rains, storms, landslides, earthquakes, wild animals, disease, epidemics etc. are all considered as natural factors which as they believe always stood against the normal life of the people.

For the tribal people these always remained mysterious to them and the curious mind of the tribal people searched for ways to overcome them. The origin of the Adi religion also rests on such explanations (Nyori 1993:266).

The Adis believed that all beings and things of the universe have been created by a supernatural power or a god, which they called *Sedi-Melo*. According to their beliefs, the *Sedi-Melo* disappeared after creating the universe including the sun and moon. To their utter belief, the other things, both animate

and inanimate, came into existence by the forces of the sun and moon.

In popular pantheon, however, the name of Donyi-Polo (the sun- moon god) comes next to Sedi- the creator. The Adis called the sun and moon as their progenitors and they themselves called the progenies of the sun and the moon, which they called the *Ane Donyi* (mother sun) and the *Abu Polo* (father moon).

As the belief goes, the creator becomes obscure and silent after the creation, so no sacrifice is offered to him. They (Adis) on the other hand, give popular divine dignity to Donyi-Polo. It is a combined divine figure of Donyi (the sun) and Polo (the moon) who is regarded as the protector or saviour, thus, Donyi-Polo becomes their God.

Different groups or sub-tribes have different beliefs and practices, but one common system is that all of them believe in the existence of same malevolent and benevolent spirits, which do harm or good to man respectively. Accordingly, they worship the spirits by offering live sacrifice. They have also a number of regular rituals and festivals performed in connection with death, birth, diseases, accident, sufferings and for wellbeing of family, village, community etc.

As mentioned earlier, the different sub-tribes or communities have their own deities and they (the tribes) worship and offer sacrifices to these deities at regular periods and intervals. The gods and goddesses like- *Donyi Bote*, *Yidum Bote*, *Pedong Nane*, *Kongke- Bote*, *Boki-Mone*, *Bomong-Mone*, *Kine-Nane*, *Dadi-Bote* are prominent among the Padam Minyongs and they worship these as benevolent deities.

The Adis have their own priest called *nyibo* or *nyibu* or *miri*. He performs all sort of religious rites and ceremonies of the tribe. He is considered mouth-piece of the people to communicate their grievances and sufferings to the spirits and to request them for redress. Thus, the *nyibo* is the intermediary between the spiritual world and the human world. He performs the divination, offers sacrifices to and invokes blessings of the spirits on behalf of the people (Nyori 1993:272).

The Adis believe that death was not the part of the original order that was planned by the maker of the world. It has to come to man for his disobedience to the divine order, his greediness and wrong deeds.

The Adis believe that the life of a man does not cease with death. It only changes the material life for the spiritual one. They believe that there is a land beyond the grave where man continues his existences in the form of the *uie* (spirit). Thus, the Adis believe that everybody has a soul called *yalo*.

The Adis bury their dead. The graves are dug at the outskirts of the village, or at the place earlier chosen by the deceased and such practices are still continuing among them.

### Rites and Festivals

Like many other groups of Arunachal Pradesh, the Adis also perform a number of rites and rituals through their life cycles. Some of them are performed at individual family level in connection with personal problems like suffering from disease, accident, death, birth etc.

Again, many other rituals are performed on community basis. Some of the community- based festivals are – *Dongen*, *Dolung*, *Etor*, *Mopin*, *Aran*, *Solung* and *Mopin* festivals. It is to be noted that the various sub-tribes of the Adis are intimately connected with some of festivals like- *Dongen* or *Genne* festival, which is performed very enthusiastically by the Boris.

*Dolungs* is a main festival of the three major sub-tribes like the Padams, the Boris and the Minyong groups, *Mopin* is an important festival of the Gallong group etc. The Padam and Minyong groups of the Adi society celebrate their socio- religious *solung* festival annually.

### Dongen Festival

The Boris, a small group of the Adis inhabiting the upper central region of Siang district, celebrate *Dongen* festival usually during February-March of every year. Usually, this festival runs for a period of two fortnights and performed after harvesting and storing in the granary. Another significant feature of this festival is that the newlywed couples of the

previous year of the village perform the festival in order to solemnise their marriage.

### **Dorong Festival**

*Dorong* is a festival of the Padam-Minyong Adis of East Siang district. This is a festival of community hunting and usually celebrated during winter months between December and February. Before the commencement of the festival, a *Kebang* (council of village elders) is held to decide the date of the festival.

### **Aran Festival**

This festival is generally celebrated during the months of March- April and it lasts for about 15-20 days. As per Padam – Minyong legends, the name of the festival has been derived from the name of *Siki-Nane's* son – *Kiran* or *Aran*. Before the commencement of the annual festival, the male members organize a community hunting.

*Aran* is a concluding festival of jungle clearance of plot for jhum cultivation. In other sense, the celebration of *Aran* festival is the worship to the household deity, which guards the family, the dwelling house and the granary, as they believe.

### **Mopin Festival**

Of all the festivals celebrated by the Adis of West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh, *Mopin* is one of the most important agricultural festivals of the Gallong group. This is the festival of worshipping the goddess of wealth held in the period between the months of March and April. The goddess is prayed for food harvest, good wealth and prosperity and the festival lasts for about five days.

### **Solung Festival**

Solung festival is one great annual festival of the Adi sub-tribes like- Pasis, Padam, Minyong, Milan, Komkar, Karko, Simong, Panggis, and Boris. Solung festival may be said as the life-blood and constituting the main feature of Adi culture (Rukbo 1986: 1-5).

In this festival the Adis worship *Doying Bote* (the divine protector), *Kiine-Naane* (the mother goddess of prosperity) *Dadi Bote* (the god of

domestic animals) and *Gumin soyin* (the god of household and family or the village).

Solung is the youngest festival- according to the genealogical list of the Adi festivals. Literally, the word 'Solung' denotes combination of two words- *Eso* (mithun) and *Alung* (a flock). To combine these two words into one, the first syllabi of two words is dropped, then it comes as ESO + ALUNG = SOLUNG (Rukbo 1986). This festival is celebrated during the month of July-August annually. Now, the Solung festival is celebrated as one of the greatest festivals among the Adis.

The above description shows clearly that the world of Adi religion is shrouded with great variety of faith, beliefs, practices, habit and behaviour. These not only provide the fundamental values and qualities of life, but are transmitted from generation to generations. From the available writings and perception, the gist of Adi religion can be specifically outlined thus-

The Adis believe in a supreme God, creator- the *Sedi-Melo*, who is just benevolent and good. The supreme God is silent and invisible; the Donyi-Polo (sun-moon god) is regarded as the great witness in the sky and upholder of truth (Nyori, 1993: 286).

The Adi religion is a genuine emphasis on the spiritual realities. The Adis believe in an unseen world, in which gods and men, the living and the dead, are one great family (Elwin 1959:212).

The Adi religion is built up on an elaborate mythology and these myths are considered as foundation of thought and philosophy. Oshong Ering established the idea that the teaching of Donyi-Polo is to unite the tribes and to make a sense of discipline. Faith in Donyi-Polo is a teaching to follow a truthful path, to cultivate wisdom and justice, to enjoy the warmth of equality, to cultivate selflessness, to follow path of continuity and straight forwardness, to cultivate kindness and mercifulness (Ering 1983: 25-26).

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## Secularism and Communalism

Harpreet Kaur\*

*[In this article the author provides a cogent overview of secularism and communalism in the Indian context. Apart from providing definitional parameters and legal aspects of the two concepts along with the factors responsible for their emergence, the author also suggests remedial measures to curb the growth of communalism. Ed.]*

Secularism is a difficult and complex phenomenon particularly in a country as culturally diverse and multi-religious as India. In India, secularism acquires added significance keeping in view the crucial fact that Indians have been deeply weeded to religious considerations in the past and hold on to such considerations even today.

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, was a great believer in communal harmony, national integration and secularism as “Sarva Dharma Sambhava” i.e. equal respect for all religion. In 1946 the communal strife became very acute, he declared: “All those who are born in this country and claim her as motherland whether they are Hindu, Parsi, Christian, Jain or Sikh are equally her children and are therefore, brothers united together with a bond stronger than that of blood.”<sup>1</sup>

The debates in the Constituent Assembly affirmed that secularism was not a religious or anti-religious concept. Sarva Dharma Sambhava is the central

idea of Indian Secularism, which means equal respect of all religious communities by the state. The concept of secular was first used in Europe where the Church had complete control over all types of properties and nobody could use property without the consent of the church. Some people raised their voice against this practice. These people came to be known as ‘Secular’, which meant “separate from church” or against church.

The word secularism is derived from the Latin word “Sacculum”, which means “not concerned with the religion,” “not sacred”, “not monastic.” Although the term secular was not included anywhere in the Constitution as it was originally passed in 1949; nevertheless, the framers of the constitution were clear in their mind as to what they meant by secularism.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, while participating in the debate on Hindu Code Bill in 1951 explained the secular concept as thus: “It (secular state) does not mean that we shall not take into consideration the religious sentiments of the people. All that a secular state

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means that this parliament shall not be competent to impose any particular religion upon the rest of the people.”<sup>2</sup>

The word secular did not first occur either in Article 25 or 26 or anywhere in the Preamble of the Constitution. The 42nd Amendment of the Constitution of India (1976) sought to make the position explicitly clear by inducting the word secular as a part of the Preamble of the Constitution of India.

In State matters, secularism is neutral. It neither endorses nor disapproves of religiousness. The provisions would indicate that our constitution endeavours to build in India the philosophy of secularism based on freedom, equality and tolerance in the field of religion.

It is neither anti-God nor pro-God. It eliminates God from the matters of the state and ensures that no one shall be discriminated against on the ground of religion. The Constitution guaranteed freedom of conscience and the right to profess and propagate religion. States will have no religion; all citizens irrespective of their religious faith will be equal.

Secularism implies equal respect for all religions because Indian citizens have equal rights to follow a religion of their choice, or not to follow any religion. It does not mean banning of religion from social or public life. The concept of secularism has been defined by various scholars.

Encyclopedia Britannica defines secularism as “non-spiritual, having no concern with religious or spiritual matters.”<sup>3</sup> According to D.E. Smith: “A state which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion deals with the individuals as a citizen irrespective of his religion is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion not does it seek either to promote or interfere with religion.”<sup>4</sup>

The Webster New World Dictionary defines it as “the belief that religion and ecclesiastical affairs should not enter into the functions of the state especially into public education.”<sup>5</sup>

It can be said that it is separation of religion from the functions of the state which means that the state should not be linked to any particular religion or

denomination and there is no official religion. It does not mean negation of religion. It is full of subtle shades involving internal contradiction but there are discernable common ideas embodied in all of them.

There are certain basic principles of secularism that all the divergent shades of secularism seems to have in common.

1. Its essential principle is to seek human development and progress through material means alone.
2. Secular knowledge is founded upon the experience of this life and can be maintained or tested by reason at work with experience.
3. The relation of secularism to religion is defined as mutually exclusive rather than hostile.

Secularism serves as the oxygen without which a multi-religious nation like India cannot survive. It overcomes the negative effects of religions. It is the consummation of a nation building process in the pursuit of a cherished national goal.<sup>6</sup>

The different parties are using religion as a vehicle to come to power. This has led to the new debate between Secularism and Communalism. Let us examine whether these two terms are contradictory to each other or can a party which is branded as communal party can be also a secular party? Can these two terms co-exist? If not what are the ways in which we can make distinction between the two? Such questions are bound to arise in India as each individual looks at these concepts with a different perspective. It has to be examined as to what is communalism and secularism.

Why these terms are emotionally surcharged and politically misused. The word ‘communal’ is derived from the word ‘commune’ striking the meaning of a feeling of oneness or consciousness or friendliness.<sup>7</sup> The word communal means mistrust, hatred, rivalry etc. among the people of different religions.

It is characterized by tension or conflict between culturally distinct, but geographically mixed communities.<sup>8</sup> It is the belief because a group of people follow a particular religion they have as a

result of common social, political and economic interests.<sup>9</sup>

Each individual being born in a community naturally has a closer relationship or connection to the community members, their customs and practices and to love that community and think of the welfare of that community is branded as being communal.

Secularism is a Western concept which means to think of the secular interests without being influenced by religious considerations. In Communist states it may mean even the absence of religion in the functioning of the state and concentration on economic or material welfare of citizens.

Till today, thousands of communal clashes have taken place as a result of which thousands of people have died and property worth billions of rupees has been destroyed. Communal violence erupted in Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and other parts of the country as a result of which the people got frightened. Many people died as a result of communal violence which took place in Gujarat in March 2002 and such incidents have become quite frequent.

The Gujarat communal massacres and violence that followed shortly thereafter were also carried out according to carefully prepared plans, which resulted in the burning alive of men, women and children; the selective looting and burning of shops and homes and call for boycott of persons belonging to minority community.

Parties in power have frequently used the government machinery to further communalize society. The communalization of society is being done at a time when people of all religions are facing problems of poverty, unemployment, lack of access to education, health, communal division and decline in values.

Several communal organizations are found in India which create hatred among the people of different religious communities through their propaganda. These inter alia include Shiv Sena, Hindu Mahasabha, RSS, VHP etc. Socio economic and educational backwardness is also responsible for communal behaviour in a given situation.<sup>10</sup> The mutual distrusts and apprehensions, along with the

so-called hate campaigns between the two main communities, leads to upsurge in communalism.

### **Preventive measures to curb communalism**

Communalism is a disease which wraps the mind. It is, in fact, the irreligious exploitation of religious doctrine to safeguard certain interests. The menace of communalism threatens the very fabric of our society. The threat of communalism is very real and requires immediate attention. Following suggestions can prove helpful in eradicating the polluted atmosphere of communalism.

1. Communal harmony should be made compulsory syllabi in schools and colleges so that the citizens are fully sensitized to this problem from the childhood.
2. Instructions to T.V., Media to avoid coverage of news and views likely to promote communal prejudice.
3. Severe punishments like life imprisonment for instigating communal riots and death sentence for committing communal violence must be prescribed in the law.
4. Educational institutions should serve as 'agencies' to extend this message to all the communities. These institutions should encourage the celebrations of festivals among various communities.
5. The communalization of civil society also needs to be checked because it leads to more communal riots and violence.
6. Communal press should be banned and legal actions can be taken against communal writers.
7. Preventive measures include educative efforts to inculcate among the people mutual respect and tolerance towards all the religions.
8. Communalization of the state and of the political elite in power has to be checked because it leads to inaction against communalism.
9. Every community which prevails in society should learn to separate religion from politics.

10. Communal parties should be banned and peace-keeping samities should be appointed.
11. There should be special courts to try cases of communal violence so that those who indulge in them may be punished.
12. An anti-riot force with substantial minority representation should be set up.
13. Strict watch must be kept on places of religious worship and they should not be allowed to be used by communal elements.
14. Political parties must look to the citizens not as voters but as people and people must consider each other belonging to same nation and be compassionate with each other and also part of humanity in the interest of communal harmony.

Thus, multi pronged measures are needed to contain the communal tensions and bring about communal harmony in the country. The practice of religion in accordance with these provisions cannot be called communalism. But the activities in the name of religion beyond these parameters are communalism.

Secularism is an antidote to communalism in our country. It is not an entity by itself. Even the members of the Muslim and Sikh communities are convinced that the growing tension can be stopped if politicians are somehow prevented from exploiting people for their narrow interests. Social scientists and intellectuals have to evince serious interest in controlling the national malaise of communalism and in related issues like religious violence, terrorism and separatism.

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# Problems of Child Labour in India

Dr. Ravi Dalawai\*

*[Just looking around one can see a babe washing heaps of plates or lifting up building materials or throwing away grubby garbage or serving tea and coffee at a canteen, who is certainly not an amateur but working for existence. This is the plight of a child labour which puts the adults to shame.]*

Unequivocally, child labour is a social crime, where a child is compelled to invest his childhood to earn bread for himself and family, remaining far away from playground, school, healthcare and his childhood loves in search of money. Children are the only kind of workers who have no union; hence no unrest, demanding facilities and wage hike. As a result, they are the most low-paid ceaseless workers in a labour market not only in India, but also all over the world, particularly in the developing countries.

Who is responsible for such a plight of innocuous children? The whole system, including the inequitable socio-economic-political ambience, makes children vulnerable to punishment for no fault of theirs, but of their elders. This issue of child labour, which is hitherto subsided, has recently started creeping into the gamut of the Governments and people's major concerns like many other problems.

## Background of the problem

In the good old days we hear of boys going to Gurukul, where they would do all kinds of work, like milching the cow, collecting fuels in the woods, washing clothes in addition to other mental and physical training. That was considered a vital part of their learning and essential to catch them young.

The English had not only introduced capitalism in India, but also let the prevailing village economy to be swept away by it. India was linked up with the ongoing Industrial Revolution in Europe with all its symptoms and effects. Consequently, indigenous, self-sufficient villages with existing cottage handicrafts gave way to opening up of small and heavy industries, big business houses and centers.

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More and more workers were needed for textile industries, tea and coffee processing, finishing of raw material, indigo and jute plantation due to commercialization of agriculture and in the transit of goods. Subsequent scarcity of food materials and price hike of commodities obliged the villagers to come out of their cells towards newly made towns to try their luck in the labour market to make a living.

## Historical purview

The British who looked down upon Indians as low-paid workers soon found children more sincere and tireless lot than their elders, who could be paid still further less. Making the best use of Indian children's simplicity and penury the English employers got them engaged in deep mines, factories and chemical production centers and forced them to work 12 to 13 hours at a stretch paying very meager wages.

Naturally, the children got preference over their parents in the labour market. Picking up the issue of the *modus operandi* of such employers and exploitation and abuse of children, Lord Ripon, the then Governor General and Viceroy of India, passed the resolution of 1st Factory Act in 1881.

The Act envisaged that children between the ages of 7 to 12 years could not be made to work for more than 9 hours a day. By and large, the trend of employing children passed on though the years and it is in vogue even today, after 65 years of independence. It is getting the bulwark of success for profit-seeking industrialists and businessmen.

Two-fifths of India's population is reported to have been below 14 years. A considerable number of them are working from dawn to dusk at houses, hotels, building sites and rumbling factories. In rural areas, the girls work more in numbers than the boys, because the parents prefer sons to daughters to

send school, thinking that girls' education is a wild goose-chase.

Remarkably, while the elders do not get any work, the children are flooded with offers. Because to employ an elder is less profitable as he often demands fixed wages and fixed working hours, while the children could be made workaholic even at a tender age. Despite their income and the same of their parents put together, children can seldom raise their status beyond poverty line.

In the metros and other cities, child workers come from the stock of slum dwellers and even some stay on the footpaths. The sight of boy with pants hardly fitted and gripped to his waist, with an odd-size and odd shaped upper garment or sometimes without, totally unkempt, rushing towards a factory or a construction site at sharp 6 a.m. and coming back fatigued with utter exhaustion and slow paced walk would hardly go unnoticed.

What sort of impact does this have on the society in general and persons concerned in particular? The girls as child workers do a lot of strenuous work. After having grown to an age, they get married, while some of them continue to do the job, give birth to traditional five to six children or more, do all the domestic work and suffer the lot of a woman in a male dominated society. Then, she sends her daughters to work elsewhere as she herself was doing as child.

Thus, the vicious circle gets completed. Same is the case with boys. A boy gets ample scope of employment as a child, but dramatically the offer ceases to him in his manhood. As a result, he sits idle at home, caviling at his wife and children and beating them up, picking quarrels with his neighbors since idle brain is devil's workshop, while the kids are out to earn money.

Thus, the whole system goes paradoxical in making child the father of the man. Rousseau's legendary remark: "Man is born free but every where is in chains" is also applicable more to kids than the adults.

Child labour hijacks the world of their imagination, kills their creativity by putting them into a mechanized way of life. It deprives them of education, the most

precious possession of human being, and hinders their mental and physical growth. As per data collected by some voluntary agency, the common health hazards among such children are asthma, tuberculosis, rupture of eardrums, in addition to chances of losing limbs while working.

### Laws

Several constitutional and humanitarian moves have been taken at international and national level to do away with the child labour. First international consciousness for redeeming the rights of the children was called for in 1924 in the Geneva Declaration, revised in 1948.

It resulted in the ten-point declaration on the rights of the children, defining how they ought to be handled by the society, loved and cared for by the adults, looked after by the Government, was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20th November 1959. On November 20, 1989 exactly thirty years after, the UN adopted another convention providing an international package of basic rights for children making out education as their birth right and raising heavy funds for the fulfillment of obligations towards them.

The framers of the Constitution of India had not let the 'little ones' issue go as little issue. They incorporated important provisions for the redemption of the rights of these upcoming citizens, affirmed their faith on the dictum – children are the wealth of the nation.

India's constitution has made the protection of the children below 14 years as guaranteed and enforceable fundamental right under Act 24 which reads "No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or engaged in any other hazardous employment". The Advisory Committee on Minorities and Fundamental Rights headed by Sardar Patel desired for embodiment of some more directives in this regard which find its expression through Article 39-e and -f and Article 42 of the constitution.

Article 39 (f) of the directive Principles of State Policy requires the state to direct its policy that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in healthy manner and in conditions of

freedom and dignity that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation”.

Another directive of the constitution that paves the way to repel child labour is Article 45 which reads, “The state shall endeavor to provide by the year 1960 free and compulsory education for all children until they complete age of 14.”

Owing to the lack of sincere implementation of above constitutional clauses in our country, these shrink to the category of unkept promises. There are no children’s representatives in the form of MPs and MLAs to make their *cri-de-coeur* heard in the legislation.

However, our Government had passed the Child Labour Bill in December 1986, followed by a New National Policy concerning the same in 1987. Both of them seek the strict enforcement of the provision of the Child Labour- Prohibition and Regulation Act, the Factories Act, 1948, the Mines Act 1950, the Plantation Labour Act 1951 and other Acts related to employment of children.

But all these are not enough to counter the prevailing plight of working kids, as mere legislation will not work. Social awakening as well as the Government’s will and endeavour to boldly carry out the existing laws and working out some new ones are essential.

Shakespeare remarked, “you are taking away my life by taking the means whereby I live.” There are several other important steps which may be followed by the Government and voluntary agencies dealing with such problem of child abuse. Besides encouraging the children to go to school, promotion of a single meal system there, giving books free to such students etc., will reduce the financial burden of such families. So, poor parents would not hesitate to send their children to school. Orphans should be allowed free boarding facilities in the campus.

Proper care needs to be taken that there is ample scope for the recreation for students, with specific emphasis on learning through playing and demonstrations, using electronic media, vocational training, lessening the number of textbooks in the curriculum, so that instant interest to study develops in the children. Concerned organizations have to make area-specific research-oriented action plan

to get mostly the tribal children to schools and rehabilitation centers.

The children in the age group of 12 to 14 years, apart from providing education facilities, should also be imparted training for two to three hours daily in learning handicrafts like toy making, bead making and other non-hazardous work, which can be marketed and may act as a financial help to the organization concerned.

Side by side, the students skilled in various crafts would find an easy way of self-employment in their future. The children in the age group of 12-14 years can be employed, in some cases, in non-hazardous works at a wage rate on par with their adult counterparts. Exactly, these are the things which are under consideration by the Orissa Government.

Freedom of life and liberty guaranteed by Article 21 is not only violated when physical punishment scars the body; but that freedom is also violated when it scars the mind of the child and robs him of his dignity.

By and large, the removal of the child labour would facilitate the urge for small family norm among the masses. Parents would no longer assume that more the children they have more the bread-earners they get. The programme can be further beefed up by the impeccable functioning of various employment guarantee schemes of the Government.

It devolves on the authorities to see that the poorest of the poor families are being covered by such schemes, since merely depriving them of their children’s income will not be justified. The Government may impose ban on products of particular companies that are allegedly employing children.

Individually, we may report about an employment of child labourer to nearby voluntary or Government organization dealing with such cases, or may even extend personal attention and help at least some working children to get them out of the rot. It is better to light the candle than to curse the darkness.

### **Conclusion**

While summing up, pointing the effects and aftermath of child labour to the parents, tightening the grip of

the law by reducing the time taken in the course of law in dealing with such offences, raising voices against the system far and wide are to be done, not by the suffers themselves, but by the elders as well. Otherwise in the light of Shakespearean adage, when the children are born they cry, because they have come to this great stage of fools and the fools would be none others than we the elders, if we fail to remedy this stigma.

The need is now felt to create an enabling environment to improve the plight of the child workforce and quantify their economic contribution to the nation's income. The unorganized sector is a large chunk absorbing child workers. Creation of necessary training and vocational institutes to upgrade the skills of child workforce and provision

of critical economic assets to enable them to carry out economic activities independently would go a long way in bringing improvement to their economic status

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## IBSA in Perspective

Dr. Md. Tarique Anwer\*

*[IBSA marks the beginning of a new era of South-South cooperation and is described as a 'unique forum' as well. It has come to be seen as a viable strategy. It is an attempt at presenting a workable model of South-South cooperation. Its decision making is simple as compared to other South-South forums such as the G-77 because it involves less number of countries.]*

**I**BSA was set up following agreement between the Heads of State/ Government of India, Brazil and South Africa when these three states met at the G-8 meeting at Evian in 2003. Subsequently, IBSA was launched through the adoption of the 'Brasilia Declaration' at the trilateral meeting in Brasilia, which called for removing protectionist policies and trade distorting practices by improving the multi-lateral trade system.

### Background

After the failure of Cancun Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the developing countries felt the need to strengthen their cooperation in trade, investment and economic diplomacy. The IBSA forum provides the member countries with a

platform to engage in discussions for cooperation in the field of agriculture, trade, culture and defence. It plays an increasing role in the foreign policies of India, Brazil and South Africa.

The three large multi-cultural and multi-racial democracies of Asia, South America and Africa have become instrumental for promoting ever closer coordination on global issues and contributed to enhancing trilateral India-Brazil-South Africa cooperation in sectoral areas. The then Foreign Minister of India, Yashwant Sinha; Foreign Minister of Brazil, Celso Amorim; and Foreign Minister of South Africa, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma met in Brasilia on 6 June 2003, where the IBSA forum was formalized through the adoption of 'Brasilia Declaration'.

The foreign ministers of the three countries agreed on the urgent need for reforms in the United Nations,

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especially the Security Council. IBSA forum facilitates regular consultations at senior officials' level, government (Summit) levels as well as amongst academics, intellectuals and other members of the civil society.

The Declaration asserted that the UN Security Council should reflect the current world scenario. It also touched upon the subjects of international terrorism, trans-national crime and illegal arms dealing, stating that such threats to international peace must be effectively tackled with respect for the sovereignty of states and for International Law.

### **Objectives of IBSA**

The main objectives/ aims of the IBSA Dialogue Forum could be summarized as follows:

- 3 To promote South-South Cooperation and build consensus on issues of international importance.
- 3 To promote trade and investment opportunities among the three countries of which they are part.
- 3 To promote international poverty alleviation and social development with focus being on equitable development.
- 3 To promote family-run farms, food security, health, education, human rights and environmental protection.
- 3 To promote the social empowerment makes better use of human potential, contributing to economic development in a significant manner.
- 3 To promote the importance of elimination of racial discrimination and gender bias while framing.
- 3 To promote and develop Small-Scale agro-industry and improve production and diversify horticultural crops.
- 3 To promote clean and efficient sources of energy such as bio-fuels, giving an opportunity to exchange information about renewable energy and use of non-conventional energy sources.
- 3 To promote the trilateral exchange of information, international best practices, technologies and

skills, as well as to complement each other's competitive strengths into collective synergies.

- 3 To promote cooperation in broad range of areas, like agriculture, climate change and global warming, culture, defence, education, energy, health, information technology, science and technology, social development, trade and investment, tourism and transport.

### **Role of IBSA**

As already discussed about, IBSA is known as a 'unique forum' and it marks the dawn of a new era in South-South cooperation. Decision-making process of IBSA is simple in comparison to other South-South fora like the G-77, owing to the involvement of less number of countries. The largest three fast growing democracies of the World on three different continents is brought together by IBSA.

India, Brazil and South Africa are well known for their multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural characteristics. They are also known for their mega-diversity. At the regional level, these three countries play an important role in regional forums also. Brazil is a member of MERCOSUR. South Africa is a member of SACU and AU. India is a member of SAARC, BIMSTEC and other forums.

The IBSA Forum affords an opportunity to the three to discuss regional and international issues. These countries are engaged in enhancing mutual cooperation in multi-lateral fora and speak in a common voice representing the views of developing countries.

These states have identified several concrete areas of cooperation. The location of these three is separated by great distances on three different continents. Therefore, a major theme of IBSA cooperation is improving connectivity among the three countries. This includes air, shipping, visa and people-to-people connectivity. It has also improved the contacts between parliamentarians and women. Furthermore, the world is changing fast and diverse interests are emerging daily.

To grow in an environment of varieties of regional cooperation, global impacts, etc. must be learnt by India. All three have ambitions of playing an important role in global affairs. These countries are also contenders for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council from their respective regions. There is a need for the expansion of Security Council membership in the permanent as well as non-permanent seats.

The issue gains even greater importance with regard to India, Brazil and South Africa, which are the most important mega diverse countries. The IBSA provides a forum for these countries to organize their efforts and take unified, coordinated and a concerted effort in mobilizing the support in the international forums.

Also, the agreements individual members have signed with other international organizations or entities can have an impact on the coordination and functioning of the forum. Moreover, South Africa sought to join BRIC starting August 2010 and in December 2010 was officially invited to join. South Africa attended the April 2011 summit and the group is now known as BRICS, with S standing for South Africa.

BRICS now represents a superset of the countries that IBSA represents. Furthermore, lack of political will and funding have been the reasons for under performance of such multi-lateral organizations. Therefore, such initiatives are usually run top-down by bureaucracies.

### **Areas of Cooperation**

IBSA has recognized education as a vital instrument for achieving social equity. In the education sector, India is the lead country. Three major areas of cooperation have been identified for collaboration like open and distance education, higher and professional education, and universal education with focus on gender equality.

One Round Table Conference on one of the themes was hosted by IBSA in which India adopted universal education, Brazil chose higher and professional education, while South Africa adopted open and distance education. Furthermore, science

and technology has been identified as one of the key areas of tri-lateral cooperation.

A list of approved areas of research cooperation and the corresponding lead countries has been charted out. India opted in the area of HIV/AIDS and Nano-technology, Brazil opted in the area of research like Malaria and Oceanography while South Africa opted for the research field in Tuberculosis and Bio-technology. Activities in each area are implemented by Area Coordinators, who are experts in their respective disciplines. Workshops in the above mentioned disciplines have been held in the three countries regularly.

The fundamental character of IBSA fund aims at disseminating the best practices in alleviation of poverty and hunger. The member countries have reaffirmed the importance of participation of institutions – governmental as well as non-governmental – in projects financed by the fund. They also recommended that UNDP, as an administrator of the fund, will find means to make it possible.

IBSA reviewed the progress made with regard to the operationalisation of the IBSA Facility for Hunger and Poverty Alleviation. They also agreed to commit an additional amount of US \$ 1 million to the IBSA fund and launch of the facility in Guinea-Bissau, which they hoped would raise the profile of the fund amongst private sector and members of civil society.

They also received and accepted the recommendations of Technical Monitoring Committee (TMC) to Guinea Bissau. It urged the UNDP office in Bissau to work closely with UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation in New York, the coordinator of the project and Guinean Bissau national authorities.

The IBSA countries exchanged their views on UN Security Council reforms and reiterated their stand that representation of developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America as permanent members in the council was essential. The IBSA were of the view that the current composition of the UN Security Council is not representative of the current world scenario. The need for bringing about reforms which

would make the Security Council reflect the contemporary realities was also highlighted.

They emphasized the need for expansion of Security Council membership in the permanent as well as non-permanent seats. They welcomed the creation of Peace-building Commission and United Nations Human Rights Council, adding further that now UN reform process must include Security Council reforms. With respect to Security Council Reforms, the leaders of the IBSA welcomed the General Assembly's decision of September 15, 2008 which determined that the negotiations for Security Council reforms shall begin not later than February 28, 2009.

IBSA recognized the need to put people at the centre of development. They emphasized the need to formulate people-centric policies which would ensure equitable development. In Brazil, IBSA organized a trilateral cultural fair of music, dance and cinema, as the three countries have a rich cultural history with strengthening of cultural ties.

Recalling the Brasilia declaration, the ministers agreed upon sharing of expertise in diverse areas such as food security, health, education, human rights etc. Brazil also endorsed a proposal to host a seminar on "Economic Growth with Social Equity" with the aim to promote better knowledge among IBSA members of their national policies and strategies in promoting economic and social development.

IBSA reviewed the working of sectoral working groups and decided to add agriculture and culture as two new sectors. In the context of Information Technology, IBSA was of the view that their governments had many e-governance schemes having many similarities, owing to which they might share some information, best practices and identify projects for cooperation.

They promoted the production and use of bio-fuels as a clean and eco-friendly alternative. More emphasis will be placed on exchange of information in areas of energy conservation and hydrogen energy. Specific areas of agriculture have also been identified for trilateral cooperation.

IBSA was of the opinion that trade relations between the three nations can strengthen the South-South cooperation. As a feasible solution towards attaining the said objective, it was suggested for substitution of imports from northern countries by imports from southern countries. Logistics, custom procedures, lack of information and distances were identified as main barriers which needed to be eliminated for the trilateral trade to flourish.

The logistics problem was sought to be solved by suggestion of a study to further address the issue. In order to simplify many regulations and streamlining the process, problems regarding customs procedures were sought to be tackled by ensuring more cooperation among the governmental institutions. The private sector was also of the view that number of flights between India, Brazil and South Africa need to be increased, which eliminate the barrier of distances and lack of information.

IBSA agreed on mechanism to identify and eliminate non-tariff barriers which impede mutual trade. Some of the mechanism considered inter alia included customs cooperation, food processing and agriculture, sharing of expertise in the field of energy, tourism and financial and banking services.

IBSA aims at cooperation between the three countries in the areas of air-link expansions, trading and knowledge exchange in airports and airspace management, port management, including capacity building in ship-building. For creation of a South-South highway, development of trans-shipment facilities which integrate sub-regional connection between Mercosur, Southern African Customs Union and Indian region, is a priority area for the working group.

IBSA also agreed to intensify their cooperation in the WTO multi-lateral trade negotiations in the lead-up to the WTO Ministerial Conference of 2005 held in Hong Kong. This cooperation aimed to realize the Doha development agenda and to enhance trade opportunities in a free and fair manner with transparent rules based multi-lateral trading system.

The leaders of IBSA reiterated the importance of development objectives of Doha Round and called upon the developed countries to demonstrate greater flexibility to address the development concerns so that members could collectively achieve a positive and development oriented outcome.

### **Challenges**

The leaders of IBSA forum face severe challenges and competition from other countries of their respective regions for the leadership role. For example, India faces challenges from Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia; Brazil from Argentina and Mexico and South Africa from Nigeria and Egypt. With the passage of time, IBSA needs to be evolved. Thus, excessive expectations from IBSA would be misplaced.

Third IBSA summit held in Delhi in October 2008 adopted Delhi Declaration which underscored the importance for urgent action on climate change. It highlighted the imperative of priority action with scaled up resource allocation and transfer of advanced clean technology to developing countries, given their vulnerabilities and low capacity to cope with new changes.

IBSA countries took stock of the global security situation and renewed their commitments towards non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. IBSA members agreed to intensify their cooperation at the IAEA with a view to ensure growth and development of use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under appropriate safeguards. They also agreed to consider enhancing international civilian nuclear cooperation with other nations who share similar objectives of non-proliferation. IBSA hoped for a peace resolution of the Iranian nuclear programme, within the context of IAEA.

On the Israel-Palestine issue, these countries urged for an early resumption of dialogue on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions, Arab League peace initiative and Quartet roadmap. Their support was reaffirmed to the settlement postulated in the UN Security Council Resolution 1397 of two

sovereign states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secured and recognized borders.

IBSA nations also had common views with respect to Iraq. They stressed the need to maintain the unity and integrity of Iraq and favoured the transfer of full sovereignty to the Iraqi people. They emphasized that United Nations need to play a vital role in this context and also the urgency of reconstruction in Iraq under democratically elected sovereign government.

IBSA took a serious note of international financial crisis that had spread from the United States to European Union and began to impact developing countries too. This unprecedented turbulence in financial markets and the resulting instability threatens global prosperity.

The explosion of new financial instruments, unaccompanied by credible and systematic regulation is the root cause of this crisis. Developing nations are not immune from this and many would be very seriously affected. This crisis has created the need for a new international reform in the world's financial system.

### **Conclusion**

Since its inception in 2003, the sixth IBSA summit held in May 2013 in New Delhi. The year 2013 marked the tenth anniversary of IBSA as a formal group. IBSA is a group of three large developing democracies which have witnessed high economic growth in the past decade.

Broadly speaking, the Indian and Brazilian economies are much larger than that of South Africa even though the latter has the highest per capita income among the three. Asymmetry in economic size should not be allowed to come in the way of developing IBSA cooperation. IBSA will need to avoid these pitfalls if it has to grow into a meaningful organization. The IBSA grouping is very much trans-regional and represents the changing world order and the basic debates and issues of the developing world.



# Impact of Corruption on Indian Economy

Dr. Jayanta Kumar Dab\*

*[Corruption has deeply struck roots in every soil from macro to micro level .The literal meaning of corruption is moral deterioration of fraudulent activity which comes from the Latin word “corrupts.” The term denotes all forms of improper or selfish exercise of power and influence attached to a public office or to the special position one occupies in public life.]*

**A**ccording to World Bank and Transparency International, corruption is operationally defined as the misuse of entrusted power for private gain or the use of public office for private gain. In fact it is a multi-faceted evil, which gradually kills a system. It is considered to be one of the greatest impediments on the way towards economic progress and development for developing countries like India.

Corruption in India has become pervasive and cancerous which distorts welfare goals, marginalizes development process and material progress, and brings disaster to the wellbeing of the country. Extensive academic research over many years and across many countries supports the view that corruption in its many forms is an evil which negatively impacts overall economic development and hurts the poorest of those in our societies.

In India, economic growth and development is affected negatively by corruption activities such as bribery, fraud, stealing in public resources, nepotism, misappropriation, patronage and seizure of public assets for private use etc. in a number of ways. A mistrust of government will have negative consequences for ‘international trade relationships’ and ‘Foreign Direct Investment’ (FDI) , both of which are key drivers of long term economic growth, especially in developing and emerging economies.

At the same time corruption within the government sector encourages greater bureaucratic hurdles that lead to an overall rise in the burden of conducting business-- contrary to the view of some commentators that it can serve to ‘grease the wheels

of commerce.’ However, from the point of view of economic growth and development, there seems to be a clear cut correlation between corruption and the economic development.

## **Negative Impacts of Corruption**

Corruption in India is a serious issue as it adversely affects the country’s economic development and achievement of development goals. It promotes inefficiencies in utilization of resources, distorts the markets, compromises quality and destroys the environment. It adds to the deprivation of the poor and weaker sections of the economy.

In this context, various attempts have been made to indicate the impact of corruption in quantitative terms. Some estimates show that government loses about Rs. 2 lakh crore annually due to tax evasion while about Rs. 40,000 cores is lost due to delay in projects. Transmission and distribution losses in the Power Sector are estimated to be about 50%, out of which about 30% is attributed to theft in connivance with the Electricity Boards employees.

According to one estimate if corruption was not there, the Public Sector Enterprises would have improved their profit margin by almost 20%. According to Paolo Mauro, a renowned economist, if corruption in India is reduced, then investment would rise by 12% annually and GDP would grow at an additional 1.5 per cent.

In the book *Corruption in India : DNA and RNA*, authored by professor Bibek Debroy and Laveesh Bhandari, it is stated that the public officials in India may be cornering as much Rs. 92,122 crore or 1.26 per cent of GDP, through corruption . The book estimates that corruption has virtually enveloped India

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growing annually by over 100 per cent and most bribery is accrued from the transport industry, real estate and “other public services”.

Pegging the figure of bribery from “other public services” at Rs. 14,594 crore (\$2.92 billion), the authors say this is mainly accounted for by leakages from official welfare programmes. Side by side, real estate and related business services involving registration of property and stamp duties account for Rs. 12,534 crore (\$2.5 billion) in corruption, says two economic experts.

Bribery at multiple checkpoints and by revenue officials, police and customs in the transport sector generate Rs. 11,267 crore in corruption, the authors say. The book estimates bribery amount from illegal mining, theft from public mines and licensing at Rs. 9,578 crore (\$1.91 billion). This is followed by corruption in government procurement. Bribe-taking by inspectors, police and local bodies in unregistered manufacturing amounts to Rs. 6,600 crore.

On the other hand, a study conducted by ‘Transparency International’ (TI) in 2005 found that more than 62 per cent of Indians had first-hand experience of paying bribes or ‘influence padding’ to get jobs done in public offices successfully. In its study conducted in year 2008, TI reports about 40 per cent Indians had first-hand experience of paying bribes or using a contact to get a job done in public office. It is noted that most of the largest sources of corruption in India are entitlement programmes and social spending schemes enacted by the Indian government.

A few examples in this regard include ‘Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act’ (MGNREGA) and ‘National Rural Health Mission’ (NRHM). In this connection, it can undoubtedly be said that despite its best intentions, the MGNREGA is beset with controversy about corrupt officials pocketing money on behalf of fake rural employees. Other daily sources of corruption include India’s trucking industry which is forced to pay billions in bribes annually to numerous regulatory and police agencies on inter-state highway routes. Indian media has widely published allegations of corrupt Indian citizens stashing trillions of dollars in Swiss Banks.

### **Recent Situation**

It is true that the list of scams and scandals in our country is endless. In recent years India has earned a place among the three most corrupt countries in the world. Side by side, in 2013, India ranked 94th out of 177 countries in Transparency International’s ‘Corruption Perception Index (CPI), tied with Colombia, Greece, Moldova, Mongolia and Senegal. The growing number of scams poses a serious development challenge. In this connection, the recent situation in India may be classified in the following categories:

I. As on 9 January 2011, according to the information of S.Y. Qureshi, the former Chief Election Commissioner of India, in the 15th Lok Sabha 2009, 162 of 543 parliament members were accused of crimes, under India’s ‘First Information Report’ procedure wherein anyone can allege another of committing a crime.

Many of the biggest scandals and scams in India since 2010-11 have involved very high level government officials, including Cabinet Ministers and Chief Ministers, such as in the 2G Spectrum scam, Coalgate scam, S-Band Distribution scam, Adarsh Housing Society scam, Military Instruments import scam, mining scandal in Karnataka, cash for vote scam and Rs. 2 Lakh crore foodgrain scam in Uttar Pradesh etc.

II. As per 2009 study by ‘Transparency International,’ the leading economies of Asia, revealed ‘Indian Bureaucracy’ to be not just least efficient out of Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam, China and Indonesia. Further it was also found that working with India’s civil servants was a ‘slow and painful’ process.

Corruption among Indian civil servants found not only in one or two departments but also in many departments like Health, Income Tax, Sale Tax, PWD, Electricity and now even in Education etc. Likewise, taxes and bribes are common between state borders; TI estimates that truckers pay annually Rs. 25,000 crore (US \$ 5 billion) in bribes. Government regulators and police share in bribe money, each to the tune of 43 per cent and 45 per cent respectively.

III. In a recent telecast of 'Aaj Tak' news channel, it was observed that hundreds of tonnes of wheat, to be distributed among the poor through PDS shops, go to flour mills in Delhi.

IV. Officials are alleged to steal state property. In Bihar more than 80% subsidized food aid to poor is stolen. In cities and villages throughout India, mafia raj consisting of municipal and other government officials, elected politicians, Judicial officers, real estate developers and law enforcement official, acquire, develop and sell land in illegal ways.

V. In government hospitals corruption is associated with non-availability of medicines or duplicate medicines, getting admission, consultations with doctors and availing diagnostic services. There have been cases of diversion of medical supplies from government hospitals and clinics as well as supply and distribution of medicines of inferior quality.

On the other hand, 'National Rural Health Mission' (NRHM) is another healthcare-related government programme that has been subject to large scale corruption allegation. This social spending and entitlement programme has been managed since 2005 by the 'Ministry of Health', hoped to improve healthcare delivery across rural India.

VI. Government officials having discretionary powers in awarding contracts engage in preferential treatment for selected bidders, display negligence in quality control processes. Many state-funded construction activities in India, such as road building, are dominated by construction mafias, which are groupings of corrupt public works officials, materials suppliers, politicians and construction contractors. Shoddy construction and material substitution (e.g. mixing sand in cement while submitting expenses for cement) result in roads and highways being dangerous, and sometimes simply washed away when heavy monsoon season arrives.

VII. Corruption is rampant in the judicial system of India as well. According to 'Transparency International' judicial corruption in India is attributable to factors such as "delays in the

disposal of cases, shortage of Judges and complex procedures, all of which are exacerbated by a preponderance of new laws."

VIII. The 'Indian Armed Forces' have witnessed corruption involving senior armed force officers from the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force. Many officers have been caught for allegedly selling defense stores in the black market in the border districts of Indian states and territories. In this regard, a number of scandals during 2000-2010 damaged military's reputation, and such scandals included skimming of armed forces money, re-selling of government property, and faking combat missions.

### **Indian Black Money in Switzerland**

Black money is referred to the money which is unaccounted for and untaxed cash. It affects the economic, social and political progress of the entire nation. Continuing generation and accumulation of black money poses a grave threat to our economy and is likely to threaten the very security and survival of the country. However, black money refers to money that is not legitimately the property of the 'owner'.

A white paper on black money in India suggests two possible sources of black money. The first includes activities not permitted by the law, such as crime, drugs trade, terrorism and corruption, all of which are illegal in India. The second, more likely source is that the wealth may have been generated through a lawful activity but accumulated by failing to declare income and pay taxes. Some of this black money ends up in illicit financial flows across international borders, such as deposits of tax-haven countries.

But what about the amount of black money deposited by the dishonest businessmen, politicians and corporate bosses in foreign banks by defrauding the people and the public exchequer? No official figures are available. A November 2010 report from the Washington-based 'Global Financial Integrity' (GFI) estimates that over a sixty year period, India lost US \$ 225 billion in 'illicit financial flows' beginning in 1948, adjusted for inflation, this is estimated to be \$ 500 billion in 2012, or about \$ 8.5 billion per year. The report also estimated the size of India's underground economy at approximately US \$ 640

billion at the end of 2008 or roughly 50 per cent of the nation's GDP.

It is noted that if corruption levels in India were reduced to the levels in the developed economies such as the United States, India's GDP growth rate could increase by an additional 4-5 per cent, to 12-13 per cent each year. In this connection, C.K. Prahalad, the management guru, estimates that the lost opportunity cost caused by corruption, in terms of investment, growth and jobs for India, is over US \$ 50 billion a year.

According to a 2010 article in *The Hindu*, unofficial estimates indicated that Indians had over US \$ 1456 billion in black money stored in 'Swiss Banks'. While some news reports claimed that data provided by the 'Swiss Banking Association (SBA) Report' (2006) showed India had more black money than the rest of the world combined. However, a more recent report quoted the SBA's Head of International Communications as saying that no such official Swiss Banking Association statistics exist.

Another report said that Indians owning Swiss Bank account assets are worth 13- 15 times to country's national debt. Once this huge black money comes back to India, the entire foreign debt can be repaid in 24 hours. In this context, James Nason of Swiss Bankers Association in an interview alleged that "The black money figures were rapidly picked up in the Indian media and in Indian opposition circles, and circulated as gospel truth. However, this story was a complete fabrication".

Another report said that Swiss officials had told the Indian government that in 2006, Indians held about Rs.23,000 crore in banks there. In 2010, as India pushed Geneva to share information about Indians who held allegedly illicit bank accounts in Swiss banks, nearly Rs. 14,000 crore were moved out of those bank accounts and the amount fell to Rs. 9,000 crore.

Some reports also indicate that the average balance in these accounts is about Rs. 40-50 crore and then at best, the government can hope to recover about Rs. 3,000 crore, including penalties. But in June, 2014 the ASSOCHAM came out with an estimate which put the amount of black money abroad at \$1.9 trillion or Rs. 120 lakh crore. A mind-boggling figure indeed!

At present, India stands at top in ranking for black money in the world and most of its part is dumped in Swiss Banks. In this connection, it is interesting to know that the list containing names of the 'patriotic' Indians who had stashed black money abroad was stolen from HBSC in 2008 and it reached India via France. According to media reports, the so-called holders of black money might have closed their accounts as of now. Significantly, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has ordered urgent scrutiny of 627 Indians who had accounts at HBSC in Geneva.

However, the intervention of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and the International treaties of Indian Government with various foreign countries and also the recent initiative of Narendra Modi Government have created new hopes for bringing back this black money in the country.

### **Impact on the Economy**

India has witnessed paradigm shifts that paved way for tremendous economic growth and development ever since it adopted the policy of economic liberalization. According to figures backed by the 'International Monetary Fund' (IMF) published in a 2012 report, the Indian economy is the 10th largest economy in the world by Nominal GDP and is the 3rd largest economy by 'Purchasing Power Parity' (a theoretical concept used to value currencies).

Corruption has also emerged across these two paradigms. License raj acted as an incubation period for the sort of graft we see today. Of course, it has escalated to such a level that it has infiltrated every social sphere, directly and indirectly hampering our growth and development as a country.

There are two types of corruption that exist at different levels: Retail corruption that has pervaded every stratum of the society and wholesale corruption, the kind of graft our politicians and bureaucrats are getting infamous for. Yet, retail corruption is much harder to track as this form of graft is systemic that requires change in the system and polity.

Black money stems from bribery by those holding public office such as granting of business, leakages from government social spending programmes, 'speed money' to circumvent or fast-track procedures, black marketing of price-controlled

services and altering land use to regularize unauthorized construction.

Corruption adversely affects the socio-economic system in the following manner: Corruption indirectly affects every other citizen. The widening divide between the rich and poor can also partially be blamed on corruption. The economic programmes, which are meant to alleviate poverty among citizens, usually get mired in corruption as politicians end up pilfering large sums of money allotted by the government.

For example 'National Rural Employment Guarantee Act' (NREGA) scam in which the money allocated to create job opportunities for the under-privileged across the country was embezzled by corrupt officials in the state of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, and M.P., as was revealed by an evaluative study conducted by V.V. Giri National Institute.

Substandard and inadequate infrastructural facilities in our country are another factor dampening the mood of a foreign investor who intends to invest in our country; and this again can be blamed on corruption. Funds allocated to build roads; government building and logistics are siphoned off indiscriminately. The 'Taj' corridor scam displayed precisely this in which U.P. Government was caught pilfering Rs. 175 crore meant to build a shopping corridor next to the 'Taj Mahal'.

Corruption has a snowball effect on the entire system. It acts as a fodder for the various economic imbalances such as inflation. The country then experiences disturbance even in the political circle with one party slinging mud at the other for their respective involvement in some corruption scam or the other, resulting in adversarial politics. Such rampant corruption can repel investors from investing in our economy owing to instability plaguing the whole system, leading to stunted economic growth.

Corruption manifests itself in the form of tax evasion. High tax rates lead corporates fending off taxes causing a great loss to the state exchequer. Companies liable to pay taxes skirt the payment by projecting incorrect profit and saving statements. An estimate shows that government loses about Rs. 2 lakh crore annually due to tax evasion.

Side by side, the government introduced 'Minimum Alternative Tax' (MAT) to levy taxes on company's book profits. On the other hand, people have got into the habit of evading taxes and do not want to pay any taxes. Instead, they bribe the politicians, bureaucrats and other concerned officers and this results in proliferation of black money. If this practice does not come to an end, the accumulation of black money cannot be stopped.

However, there are various factors that have contributed to the country's dismal state of economic affairs, flawed economic policies, the inability to check and control spiralling rates of corruption, cut-throat competition in the corporate sector fueling the growing corruption rates. Arriving at a definite cause and effect relation may not be viable. However, keeping corruption rates low in all its forms will certainly give the Indian economy a chance to redeem its growth rates as witnessed in 2006- 07.

## **Conclusion**

From the foregoing analysis it is clearly evident that the greatest challenge mankind is facing today is that of economic development. In this era of globalization we are shifting towards market economy and in it, development depends on investment. But the rise in corruption obstructs the initiatives that create opportunities. Corruption discourages investment from both internal and external sources.

In place of raising the level of capital inflow, corruption helps in capital flight. In this way corruption lowers total investment in infrastructure and social services. Obstruction by corruption to the market mechanism and investment perpetuate low productivity, low income, low viable employment and ultimately low level of development.

Should we not treat financial corruption and scams as an act equal to treason? Is it not exigency of the present times? Do we not deprive the common people of their rights by allowing corruption? We all know that a sizeable amount of money is stashed away in Swiss Banks, the recovery of which can help solve most of the problems facing the poor

masses languishing in shanties and on the roads in India.

A significant fact is that many of the ambitious plans are not executed for the simple reason of paucity of funds. We are not able to provide even basic facilities to our poor countrymen due to lack of funds. A very large chunk of our population is living below the poverty line even after 67 years of Independence. Is it not a national shame?

It is high time that these scams were declared to be in category of treason and the people involved, especially the kingpins were meted out the same treatment which is prescribed for such acts. As per a survey report, in the Gulf countries, the rate of crime is very little in comparison with that in other countries of the world. The reason cited is the severity of punishment for such crimes. Can our country not frame such laws that can make difference between the petty crimes and scams of such a big dimension?

Therefore, today it is needed that if corrupt persons fiddling with public money are punished strictly according to the degrees of their crimes, nobody can dare indulge in corrupt practices. In order to think of doing so we will have to first include scams into the category of treason. In the public interest, such scamsters and corrupt politicians or bureaucrats should be brought under the purview of strict laws like TADA and POTA.

They need to be punished in order to convince the masses that the law of the land does not make any difference on the basis of social or political status. In this regard, we are hopeful that the introduction of Lokpal mechanism will be helpful in combating corruption effectively.

Side by side, it can be said that corruption can be ceased and economic growth can take place when some of the requirements for fast economic growth like strong institutions, political stability, fast and reasonable decision-making mechanisms are put in place. On the other hand, the problem of corruption can be resolved by listening to our inner voice and acting according to the conscience. All of us should remember the Atharveda sloka:

“The wealth through pious means flourishes; Those who earn through dishonest means are destroyed.”

Let us take a pledge to make our governance transparent, participative and welfare oriented.

Finally, the main conclusion to be drawn is that undertaking reforms both economic and political by reducing institutional weaknesses offers the best hope to overcome corruption. The reforms will bring it under control and minimize its adverse consequences so that the country can proceed with its efforts to become a modern and developed nation with a good chance of attaining that goal.

Last, but not least, we can conclude with the saying that huge Indian money is outstanding in safe tax-heavens abroad which needs to be brought back in to our country. It is not only important to bring back the ill-earned money smuggled out to the foreign tax-havens, but it is equally important to stop the constant generation of black money within the system.

With the total amount lying idle in the tax- heavens India can build huge world class infrastructure for its people. We can establish new IITs, IIMs, AIIMS and other premier institutes for imparting world class education. Today, everyone is talking about good governance, but instead of paying mere lip service and/or indulging in symbolic gestures, the time is most opportune for powers that be (and / or aspirants to the positions of power) to demonstrate their commitment to the cause by proposing to take concrete action.

It is now time for active citizenship to create awareness and raise its voice against the relentless menace of black money and evil manifestation stashed away in Swiss Banks. This means citizens must demand action from Parliament, judiciary, executive and civil society organizations – all of whom must advocate quick action from administration that will resolve this problem forever.

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# Transforming Rural Societies via SHGs

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*[There has been considerable debate over the success of micro finance institutions and SHGs in initiating transformations in rural areas. Varied responses have echoed this debate over the decades. One group of scholars argues that this is a magic bullet and has the power to alleviate poverty and empower women in rural societies. Others who defy the group approach are mainly apprehensive of its abilities as a panacea to cure all problems of rural development and women's empowerment.]*

This article seeks to discuss in detail the meaning and importance of social capital approach and its ability to bring out social change in rural societies *vis-à-vis* women. The arguments are mostly based on analysis of some empirical success stories, which makes the importance of 'networks', 'group life' evident in creating a lively space for human societies.

## Social Capital Approach

Social capital has become a popular concept within social sciences (Dasgupta, 2000, Sibel, 2002). But why is it so important and popular among social sciences? The answer perhaps lies with the works of a famous social science scholar Cox. According to Cox "Social capital is generally considered to be intrinsic to social functioning, in that it enables the members of a society to act collectively in solving the problems and working for this common good". (Cox: 2002:337).

For Colman (1990:302) Social capital is a property of social structures and social relations that help to facilitate social action and to get things done. Even Durkheim who is better known as the father of sociology, in his account of solidarity and Tonnies in his account on *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* as twin axis of group life have discussed about it long ago.

The concept of social capital is mainly used in two senses in social sciences, one is positive and the

other is negative social capital. Portes has convincingly argued, 'we find negative and positive types of social capital in every society and even as two qualities within the same network' (Portes,1998:20).

The present work concerns with highlighting the positive aspects of social capital approach to explain social change in rural societies in relation to women appliqué workers. According to Portes (1998:10), positive social capital is a real, potential resource available for concrete individuals implying positive socioeconomic outcomes from rule enforcement and bounded solidarity. The case of informal economies holds key to the understanding of micro finance and social capital approach *vis-à-vis* women.

Despite the measures taken by the state after independence, still the rural society is undergoing through problems like gender disparity, discrimination, poverty, illiteracy, low purchasing power, poor health status and low level of empowerment in the family as well as society for women and so on. That is why a fair number of criticisms have emerged regarding development policies for women contrary to the statements made by the state officials, neither their views nor the interests of grassroots women have been taken into consideration at the time of policy formulation (Rajagopal & Mather, 2000: 2910).

Thus, it is argued that 'people have to look at it as the fundamental resource and not as problems for

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which planning is devised (Bandhyopadhyay et al, 2002:2558). The operationalisation of this approach through SHGs can enable the rural women in India to make sense of their agency and capabilities. Many success stories are testimony of this transformation in some parts of rural India and many parts of Bangladesh. The need is thus to take up such approach to every village in India and to bring a transformation in the overall lives of women and in society.

Right from one's birth, each person becomes a part of a network. The immediate network of nearly born human being is the family and kin groups, and then the network grows simultaneously with age to encompass organizations, associations. These networks are more over are enabling structures rather than a constraining structure which if used by the individual agency can bring about positive social consequences. SHGs are based on these principles and thus have the capacity to bring out positive social consequences.

### **SHGs Initiatives: some success stories**

The success stories which have been the source of inspiration for the present paper are drawn from secondary and my primary observations at field sites while carrying out my field survey on appliqué craft making communities of Pipili, Odisha, for my PhD thesis. Appliqué is a technique by which the decorative effect is obtained by superposing patches of coloured fabrics on a basic fabric, the edges of the patches being sewn in some form of stitchery (Mohanty 1980).

This technique of craft making is mostly visible in other parts of India like Gujarat, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu and so on. Odisha<sup>1</sup> appliqué crafts however stand out unique on account of its long association with religious festivals and processions. More importantly these art works are connected with the traditions of Lord Jagannath<sup>2</sup>, the presiding deity of Odisha.

Historians believe that appliqué crafts of Odisha date back to the 12th century, when the temple of Lord

Jagannath was built at Puri (Patnaik 1993, Mohanty 1980). This craft is traditionally practiced by a caste of professional tailors, known as *Darjis*, who are largely concentrated at Pipili which is 40 kilometers away from the Puri temple.

Craft making is a hereditary occupation of these *Darji* communities and their occupation has a religious affinity with the Jagannath temple at Puri. A series of rituals and festivals are carried out for the three deities at Puri temple all over the year. For specific rituals of the deities particular servicemen (*sevayats*) get appointed on hereditary basis. As with other services of the Lord, *Darji seva*<sup>3</sup> or the supply of appliqué items are rendered by these communities, in return for which they receive certain portion of the daily offering or '*Bhog*' from the temple (Mohanty 1980). All this is regulated by the record-of-rights of the Jagannath Temple.

The industry has undergone tremendous changes in recent years with the integration of Indian economy with global economies. Rising demands for craft in the tourist and urban consumer market has enabled many non-traditional craft makers to enter into this industry as profitable business ventures. Similarly the government also looks at these industries as instruments of development, poverty eradication, and employment generation in the countryside.

The micro finance institutions have thus been promoted and women's participation in these institutions is also taken well care of by the state in recent years. Though my objectives were different during my field investigation but I could not escape from the changes that are taking place by the organisations of SHGs. Few of my experiences along with secondary literature surveys are cited here to explain the role of micro finance institutions and importance of women's networking in empowering these rural women.

Most of the SHGs members in the region engaged in appliqué craft making are from the lower socio economic background. It becomes handy for them to take loan and stitch the appliqué pieces at home

during their leisure time. They also occasionally take bulk orders on complete pieces of appliqué crafts to supply to a big merchant artisan at Pipili. Otherwise they are mostly engaged in stitching of these crafts on piece rate basis.

There are many SHGs in the peripheral regions of Pipili who act as business entrepreneurs like the traditional craft makers of Pipili. They own their own workshop, visit marketing places, exhibitions, craft melas sponsored by government agencies. All most all those who work as entrepreneurs or as piece rated workers, whom I visited agreed, on the fact that this business means a lot to them. They narrate stories of their bad days when they used to depend on their husband for their own and their children's expenses. Many proudly say that they now contribute towards family expenses along with their husband.

Apart from financial resources, it has also impacted their life in many ways. The ways in which these groups address and respond to social problems like alcohol, atrocities social evils, drudgery, health etc. in their area makes the case of micro finance institution and group approach a valid case for rural development.

Reddy's findings are absolutely true to the appliqué craft workers of Pipili. Reddy wrote: "In some villages, women groups have collectively fought for their rights; and in a few cases, they have systematically exposed the corrupt practices of the local officials and bank officers, (Reddy, 2002: 529).

My field observations at Pipili revealed that informal way of saving through which appliqué SHGs raise funds has given rural women the autonomy to handle and utilise the funds on their own. Even though many SHG groups also complained about the alleged harassment of male NGO officials during the initial period of their group formation, but later on I found that they have been able to award punishments to those members in the form of informal sanctions to their family members.

Gossiping and criticising the person in public meeting constitutes a strategy of these SHGs members to punish the culprit. Schuler et al.'s (1998) study can be brought to discussion here. Her study shows that economic independence through the micro credit programmes can reduce women's vulnerability to men's violence by strengthening their economic roles and by making their lives more public. They also say that when women challenge gender norms this sometimes provoke violence in their homes specifically in the attitudes of husbands.

By putting resources into their hands, credit programmes may indirectly exacerbate such violence; but they may also provide a context for intervention since they are economically independent. During the field visit I was reported by many of SHGs that how they protest the acts of violence and brutal beating of their drunkard husbands. They even proudly narrated their successful endeavours of shutting down the liquor shops, handing over the drunkard husbands to the police.

Sidney et al (1997) in their study of Bangladesh society found how the women's access to credit provided by the Grameen Bank and the Bangladesh rural advancement committee (BRAC) facilitates the use of contraceptives, family planning etc. Some other case studies suggested positive links with SHGs and children's health, particularly if the programme participants are women (Pitt et al, 1999).

According to Sheel and Krishna, economic ties among women can also provide social bonding. In meetings, the focus was on problem solving, exchange of business tips, loan repayment strategies as well as on family matters. As part of the group organisation, women learn to develop sustainable linkages with formal and informal institutions such as banks, courts, and district offices beyond the immediate village environment. Group solidarity provides adequate confidence for task.

Conventional approaches, which regard women as targets and not as agents of change, have been thus

proved wrong. They also found out that by participating in group activity women learn to understand the structure of the group, and about assuming leadership skill etc, whereas the later could find the changing aspects of the perceptions of the involved member of the SHGs.

They have shown that the perceptions regarding the education of the girl child and about the health etc are changing. They all have shown higher level of awareness on the issues on social development as well.

Economic empowerment has not only the ability to challenge the violent behaviour of men but it also provides the rural women to be more decisive. It gives them the ability to take decisions not only in their own lives but also in the lives of their children in matters related with their health, education etc which are traditionally only decided by the male members of the household.

SHGs provide a stage where rural women can talk about their personal problems; they can put forth their views, their opinions in a public sphere. They organise various meetings, share each other's experiences and help each other in their time of need. This makes it possible to revert their only stereotypical role i.e. 'Domestic role', which confined them in the four walls of a house in the past.

The ways in which they articulate and raise their voice and demand their share after working as members of SHGs makes a possible conclusion that the microfinance institutions are really magic bullets.

In the following narration I quote of a woman after being a part of SHG: "Initially I feared every one. Today I do not fear my husband or the police. I am a group leader. I have the collective strength of my group, other groups as well as of the community. With regular savings, we women are also able to withstand most problems. All has been possible due to organized solidarity..." Ranjana Sheel and Sangeeta Krishna (2002:23)

## Conclusion

Social capital approach to understand women's empowerment process is both a real and potential factor of social change in rural India. The working of these groups has not only changed some traditional beliefs, values and behaviour of the rural women but also other members of the society. The overwhelming success of this 'group approach' and 'networking' in rural women's development once again reminds us the famous saying "united we stand and divided we fall".

The success of this group approach also tells us the validity of Gandhian philosophy today. The concept of cooperativisation, the basic building block of Gandhian philosophy, has been reinforced in recent years by the group approach in rural development schemes essentialised in contemporary concept of social capital, civic engagement and networking in India (Lahiri et al, 2006:286).

Formation and functioning of Self-help groups are based upon such principles. In other words, SHGs are the operational expression of such approach. The acceptance of this dominant paradigm through SHG formation has not only resulted in poverty reduction but also all-round social change in rural society.

The working of these groups as seen in the case of appliqué workers has aroused awareness among these women regarding their rights, responsibilities of others in society. These changes have largely helped them to come out of the four walls of the house and to raise voice against injustice. Moreover, they have realised their agency by the help of mutual cooperation and group solidarity, which definitely came from the institution of microfinance.

However, caution needs to be taken in generalising the success rates among all women in rural societies which is still highly stratified on the basis of caste and class. Most of my observations show that the group approach has been beneficial for women

coming from the lower socio-economic background. I could not see any group where the constituent women members are drawn from high caste and classes.

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## (Footnotes)

1. The name of Orissa was officially changed to Odisha and its language from Oriya to Odia in 2010 following presidential assent on a bill proposed in this regard in 2008 by the ministers of state assembly.
2. Jagannath temple at Puri is one of the historical and religious monuments of Odisha. It is located near the Bay of Bengal Sea. It is famous as a Vaishnava temple with marvelous architecture. This temple is dedicated to the trinity of gods viz., Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra. But popularly it is known as Jagannath Temple. The Temple was constructed probably by Ananta Varman Chodaganga Deva, the illustrious king of the Ganga Dynasty in 12th century A.D. Presently; this temple is a centrally protected monument under Archeological Survey of India, Bhubaneswar Circle, since 1975 which is responsible for its upkeep, maintenance and preservation etc.
3. Services rendered to Jagannath temple are recorded in a service record and the servicemen as a matter of right get remuneration from the temple treasury.



# Indian Parliament and Declining Celebrities!

Dr. Gopal Sharma\*

Politics is the 'art of possible' which needs no professionalism. Different political parties – whether national or regional – have chosen some declining celebrities as their candidates to contest the elections in the recently held 16th Lok Sabha elections. For examples, this time, actress Nagma from Meerut and Cricketer Md. Kaif from Phulpur were the candidates of Indian National Congress. Actress Hema Malini from Mathura, musician Bappi Lahiri from Serampore, and singer Bulbul Suprio from Asansol were the candidates of Bharatiya Janata Party.

Moonmoon Sen from Bankura, Sandhya Roy from Midnapore, Dev from Ghatal, Biswajit Chatterjee from Delhi, singer Indranil Sen from Behrampore, footballer Bhaichung Bhutia from Darjeeling were the candidate of Trinamul Congress to contest the general election.

It seems that politics in India has become a 'fashion' or 'pastime' or 'second career or option' for those declining celebrities who were once star in their respective fields.

With the passage of time, Indian democracy is maturing. This time it was very hard to predict which political party would form the government. It was observed that the concept of one-party dominance was going to become history in India, which had been experiencing coalition form of politics for the past two decades. In a coalition form of government, the stability debate and discussion in the parliament is always necessary.

The coalition partners cannot reach the final destination until and unless a healthy consensus is arrived at. Only healthy debate and discussion can produce good and fruitful legislation and governance. It is a fact that celebrities are always

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busy with their assigned and primary activities and often remain absent when their presence which is felt necessary in the parliament.

For them, politics is optional. But, politics is the highest form of social activity. It should not be treated as optional. The ends of the political parties should not always be victory in the election. One should respect the people's aspirations, demands and needs and work for redressing their grievances.

In choosing the celebrities as party candidates for the election purposes, sometime the Supremo of the party may be guided by his/her vested interests. Because of the lack of knowledge and experiences of the celebrities in the field of politics they will not oppose any decision of the party. So, whatever the Supremo desires or thinks becomes the last word.

It is true that parties hiring celebrities as candidate may gather more and more people at the time of election campaigns, but it should be kept in mind that people go to the election rallies to see the celebrities and not to listen to the main agendas. More than this, there are some provisions in the Constitution of India whereby some candidates may be nominated as parliamentarian by the President of India from the different field of social activities.

Is choosing celebrities not the sign of disrespect of the political parties towards their followers? Is there any general concept that only celebrities can produce a positive result in the election? Why celebrities and why not social activists?

Now-a-days the concept of professionalism is increasingly pervading every sphere of life. The time has come to think that even in the field of politics we can introduce professionalism. If the politics is the highest form of social activity then it should be treated as such. As a parliamentarian a representative has many responsibilities and challenges and regular updates of his knowledge and skills is necessary.

Time has come to think of amending the People's Representation Act. To win the election it is not necessary for any political party to choose celebrities as candidates. The Delhi Legislative Assembly elections concluded in December 2013 is the prime

example. The different candidates contesting election under the banner of Aim Admit Party were not celebrities. The Aim Adami Party thoroughly utilised their field experiences.



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## Failure of Regional Party in Assam-An Overview

Dr.Dibakar Ch.Das\*

*[This brief article presents the electoral history of the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) of Assam from the period of its formation to the present time, accounting for its coming to power for two terms and its unceremonious ouster. In his appraisal of the AGP, the author raises pertinent question about the need for a regional party and what contributes to its rise and decline. Ed.]*

Assam has been able to have a regional party as a result of age-long agitation on foreigners' issue demanding the Governments to detect and deport the foreigners who came either from Bangladesh or from any other countries. The Assam agitation which had brought a tremendous change in the political sphere of Assam lasted more than half a decade and it could be able to give birth to the regional political party viz. Assam Gana Parishad (AGP) in 1985.

Most of the members of this party were no other than the leaders of the then All Assam Students Union (AASU). In the late 70's, the members of the AASU were leading the Assam agitation in which all the people of Assam irrespective of caste, creed, religion etc. used to cooperate as they came to know very well that the influx of illegal immigrants in a continuous flow would definitely engulf the entire Assam in social, economic, political, cultural aspects.

Not only that, the native Assamese feared that would be in minority and they might lose their identity. Anyway, the people felt exceedingly happy and proud to have a regional party which was expected to fulfill the basic needs of the people of Assam.

### Why Regional Political Party?

In general, for the existence as well as the emergence of regional political parties, there are some important causes and factors. One of them is for the solution of local problems to which the Centre pays no heed to take any action. Experiences ironically reveal the fact the Centre and the national political parties are found to be indifferent to the local problems of a region and Assam is also not an exception.

In short, the parties at national level put no emphasis on the solution of any of the local problems. Secondly, as economic imbalance among different classes prevails especially in the remote villages of India and it stands as an obstacle on the way to development but the national parties are found non-attentive to utter any words for these problems which they most likely consider minor ones only.

If so, which party comes forwards to find out any means for solving these problems and it is certainly the regional party. Thirdly, it is needless to mention that one of the characteristics which have made India a Unitary is the supremacy of the Centre even over the administration of provinces also. Here In India, there is more centralization than decentralization system and under this system of centralization, the

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Centre is allowed to exercise much more power to interfere with the legislation of the provinces.

As a result, many of the local problems remain unsolved owing to dependence on the central authority. Most agree with the fact that only regional political parties compulsorily desire to undertake plans and policies in order to solve these problems. Fourthly, the regions have been deprived of many of constitutional opportunities which were promised to reach every nook and corner and neither national parties themselves have time to discuss nor they are desirous of placing the prevalent step-motherly attitude towards the local problems before the Parliament.

So far as the regional political party of Assam is concerned, in addition to these common reasons, there are a number of genuine local grounds which require regional political party to discuss the problems like floods, influx of illegal immigrants, unemployment etc. to which the Government led by the parties at national level is found unresponsive.

So, definitely the people of Assam had come to feel the necessity of a regional political party i.e. Assam Gana Parishad which had brought a change in the political field of Assam. Again, it should be mentioned that the Assam Gana Parishad, the only regional party, is the offspring of the Assam Accord which was signed on 14 August 1985 between the former Prime Minister, Late Rajiv Gandhi and the leaders of AASU.

In the long run, the AGP came into existence with the consent and support of the people, through the Assembly Election in 1985, and the party was able to form the government. The people were very happy to have their own government expecting to get all desires fulfilled which the Central government used to ignore.

It was Prafulla Kr. Mahanta, the then President of AASU, who along with other members of his ministry completed the five-year term but

unfortunately, paid no attention to the interests of the people of Assam.

People never forgot to think that in order to place them in the powerful chair i.e. Ministry, thousands of people from the remote villages had come out of their houses and huts to cast their votes with a dream which the previous government led by the Congress had failed to turn into reality.

Thus in the wake of AGP's victory, the people of Assam were very happy for the first time and they enjoyed the taste of their own government under the AGP and with a firm belief they looked to the very government to solve certain problems viz. foreigner's issue, unemployment problem, flood problem etc. However, in practical terms the new government failed to come to the expectations of the people who had reposed their trust in the young leadership.

Anyway, in this way, the AGP-led Government completed the first term (1985-1990) during which not a single promise was fulfilled. Still the people having simple and liberal attitude, were prepared to reelect them for another term through the Assembly Election held in 1996 and thus the Gana Parishad could be able to form the Ministry headed by Mr. Prafulla K. Mahanta as the Chief Minister for the second term (1996-2001).

But this time also, the AGP-led Government treacherously cheated the people of Assam who were patiently waiting for their own leaders to look into the major issues. But unfortunately, during this term also, the regional party-led government failed to translate the will of the Assamese. Majority of the people then started losing their faith and good impression towards the government and thus got it ousted from power.

In this way, the Assam Gana Parishad has been reduced to such a minimal position that it even lacks the status of opposition and since then its decline has started. Most agree with what one says that the regional party i.e. Assam Gana Parishad has lost its

popularity and failed to oust the dominating party which has been claimed to give little importance to the people of Assam.

Since 1985, or so to say, in the twenty-five years old political history of Assam, six terms of Assembly elections have been held so far but gradually the Assam Gana Parishad has been losing its status as well as popularity for its own faults.

Let us discuss its fall down in descending order on percentage wise vote cast for the Assam Gana Parishad(AGP) and the Congress which gives a clear account for comparative analysis: Election(1985), AGP 34.54% while Congress secured 23.48% ; election(1991) the AGP reduced to 18.07% but the Congress raised to 28.98% ; election(1996), fortunately AGP could be able to raise its percentage by 29.70% but the Congress also raised to 30.56% since the election held in 1996, inauspicious days for AGP began.

Its popularity has been decreasing from the 2001 Assembly election to the recent one held in 2011. In the election, the AGP had secured 20.13% while the Congress 39.60% ; likewise, in the election held in 2006, AGP secured only 25.69% but Congress got 32.62% . But this time, the percentage of vote secured by the AGP was unfortunately very low to utmost 13.07% by 10 seats out of 126 while on the contrary Congress had been able to secure 43.48%, the highest number of seats i.e. 78 seats defeating not only AGP but all the other political parties viz. BJP,BPF,AUDF along with others.

Congress had got absolute majority and thus needed no help from others to form the Government which constitutionally requires only 64 seats, the so-called the magic number of Assam. AGP has even lost the status of opposition party. The fewest elected members belonging to AGP have to sit in the Assembly just simply as ordinary members.

As mentioned earlier, people want a regional party really to represent the entire region showing

eagerness to solve various problems important for the development of the region. But when it fails to do so, the people will stop giving support. And the same has been case with the Assam Gana Parishad.

The collapse of AGP is attributable to many factors. One of the most important requirements for a regional political party is its internal strength, unity, cohesion and close affinity with the native people at the grassroots level. However, these parameters were not maintained by the AGP. It lacks hierarchy and party discipline which has resulted in weakening of the foundations of the Party.

Another deficiency is the failure to unite all the people of Assam irrespective of caste, creed, religion etc. Thirdly, the party has failed to be responsive to the burning issues i.e. foreigners' issue and it cannot but be admitted that the influx of illegal immigrants is going to engulf the entire Assam in all aspects.

Fourthly, the leaders of the AGP were found self-interest oriented. In other words, individual interests were preferred to the public interests and as a result, the people began to lose their faith as well as good impression about the regional party. In addition, one of other factors is habit of the party leaders about speaking ill of those activities done by the existing government in the name of development through various schemes and policies but not what they failed to do for welfare of the people.

So the practical experiences explicitly reveal the amount of development which party has been able to go ahead. If so, why is it necessary for the people to form the regional political party? To speak the truth, the principle' No work for the people, but for own' stands behind the fall of the party. For its defeat, Assam Gana Parishad itself is the only cause and it need not blame others or the ruling party i.e. Congress which could be able to secure absolute majority by virtue of its performance in spite of corruption charges leveled against it.



# Recent Trends in Indian Dairy Industry

Dr. P. Murugesan\*

Even as agriculture holds the central stage in the rural economy and the allied sectors namely, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries activities play an important role in national economy and in socio-economic development of the country. These activities have contributed to the food basket, nutrition security. Dairying has become an important secondary source of income for millions of rural families and has assumed the most important role in providing employment and income generating opportunities particularly for landless, marginal and women farmers.

India is the world's largest milk producer, accounting for more than 13 per cent of world's total milk production. It is the world's largest consumer of dairy products that consumes almost 100 per cent of its own milk production. This represents sustained growth in the availability of milk and milk products for our growing population. The per capita availability of the milk has reached a level of 290 grams per day during the year 2011-12, which is more than the world average of 284 grams per day.

Several measures have been initiated by the Government to increase the productivity of milch animals, which has resulted in increasing the milk production significantly from the level of 102.6 million tonnes at the end of the Tenth Plan (2006-07) to 127.9 million tonnes at the end of the Eleventh Plan (2011-12). The Annual growth rate for production of milk is about 5% in 2011-12 compared to 2010-11.

## Performance of Production (1950-51 to 2012-13)

The Indian Dairy sector has acquired substantial growth momentum from 9th Plan onwards and

achieving an annual output of about 127.9 million tonnes of milk during 2011-12 compared to 121.8 million tonnes in 2010-11. About 14.78 million farmers have been brought under the ambit of 1,48,965 village level dairy cooperative societies up to March 2012.

Table 1

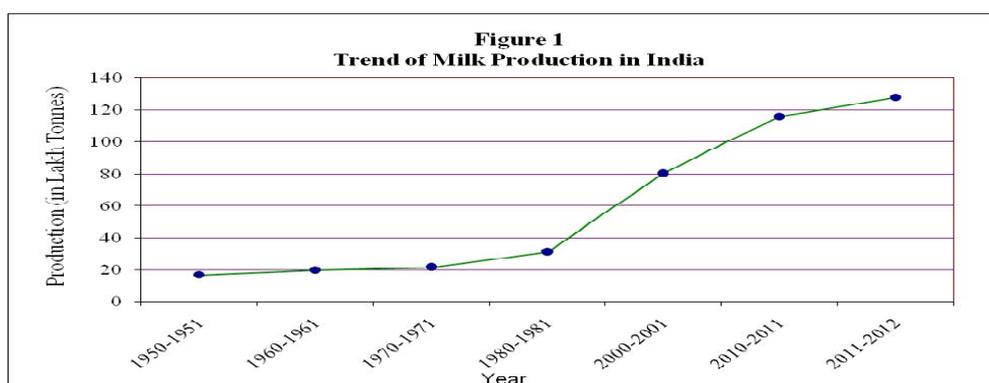
### Volume of Milk Production in India

Period	Milk Production (In million tonnes)
1950-1951	17.0
1960-1961	20.0
1970-1971	22.0
1980-1981	31.6
2000-2001	80.6
2010-2011	116.2
2011-2012	127.9

Source: Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India

It could be understood that the milk production in India has been continuously increasing over time (1950-51 to 2011-12). The volume of milk production in India increased from 17 million tonnes in 1950-1951 to 31.6 million tonnes in 1980-1981, and it went up to 127.9 million tonnes in 2011-12. Despite the increase in population and demand for more milk in India, the co-operatives, corporate bodies and local vendors are able to achieve tremendous output, with no fluctuations in milk production.

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### State-wise Relative Share of Milk Production

To study regional imbalance, major fifteen states of India have been selected since state level aggregation is considered as a meaningful level of regional aggregation. The states Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have been

selected for the study. These states together have contributed 89 per cent of total milk production of India during 2009-10.

Further comparative growth performance has been investigated across states and across time. The study period has been divided into three sub-periods namely, 1991-92 to 2000-01 and 2001-02 to 2009-10.

**Table 2**

**State-wise Relative Share of Milk Production in India**

Name of the State	Period (Per cent)		
	1991-1992	2001-2002	2009-2010
Andhra Pradesh	5.64	6.84	9.26
Bihar	5.84	3.08	5.44
Gujarat	6.61	6.58	7.85
Haryana	6.41	6.01	5.36
Karnataka	4.48	5.70	4.28
Madhya Pradesh	8.82	5.90	6.37
Maharashtra	7.00	7.25	6.82
Punjab	9.83	9.64	8.34
Rajasthan	8.14	9.24	8.48
Tamil Nadu	6.33	6.18	5.13
Uttar Pradesh	18.18	17.19	17.95
West Bengal	5.46	4.30	3.82

Source: Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India

It could be understood that an increasing trend has been observed in the state of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh during 2009-10

compared to the year 2001-02. The decreasing trend has been found in the states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal over the period. However, changes in relative contribution in total output for the states have been marginal over the period. Uttar Pradesh still stood ahead of other states in terms of relative percentage share of output for all the periods. However, decreasing trend has been found over the period.

### Conclusion

Dairying has become an important secondary source of income for millions of rural families and has assumed the most important role in providing employment and income generating opportunities particularly for landless, marginal and women farmers. The results of the present study exhibits the total milk production in India has been increased to nearly seven times in the last 6 decades. Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest contribution of the India' total milk production and one fifth of total output of milk in India was accounted during 1991-92 and also subsequent periods.

In addition to that, the better performance in terms of growth of milk production had been attained by the states Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal during the period 2001-2010.

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## Sweet Home Mississippi

Eddie J. Girdner

Clouds moved across the Mississippi Delta sky slowly filling up the patches of blue between them. The cotton had been picked and baled and taken to market or stacked in ricks. The rains came down in buckets-full with warnings of tornados. It turned colder. When the clouds moved away, the mornings were cool and crisp.

Ted did his work, taught his classes at the university. But he found himself hard up for emotional support and any female companionship. In that respect it was good that the constitutional law class and writing kept him so busy, filling up most of his weekends. Otherwise he would have gone nuts.

It was October 1988. The Presidential election campaign was on. Tacky cardboard signs littered the lawns around town. Almost all of them Republican. Mississippi was electing a new senator to replace an aging one. There was to be a campaign rally in the town following the fish fry. The catfish industry had recently emerged as a spark of economic hope for the area.

Brent Trott, the Republican candidate, was scheduled to be there and give a speech at the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) building. Ted thought it was an opportunity to do some local soaking and poking in Mississippi politics. Instructive for a political scientist.

He cautiously approached the crowd of locals at the venue on the north edge, the white section, of the town. There were businessmen in ties and coats, prosperous looking landowners and some working class. Cops with heavy guts and guns on their hips. He spotted just a couple of blacks. That was all.

He got some catfish, and felt silly, eating Brent Trott's catfish, almost guilty, but he was operating undercover. Just curious. He had to slip around, being one of those Volvo-driving pinkos with a

beard. And a professor too. He was not going to be fooled by anything. There was endless smoking which irritated Ted, especially when some red neck blew the smoke right into his face. His eyes began to burn. Lumpen elements, he thought.

There was no doubt that Trott was going to be elected, but he would not get a majority in the Delta, with its majority black population. The blacks would vote for Dwayne Dandy, the Democrat. Ted didn't like either one of them, but Dandy was a little more socially progressive. The state went way beyond being conservative, to absolutely reactionary in Ted's view.

He joined the crowd in the VFW Hall, sitting well back, to observe the happenings. The affair opened with the pledge of allegiance. He played along. What the hell.

Then a group of young kids, all male, all white, "sons of Mississippi," from a local high school, were brought out to sing the national anthem.

"Oh beautiful, for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain..." Instead of beauty here, Ted only saw polluted skies and fields of cotton.

This was followed by a prayer, in which celebrating Christopher Columbus was combined with the directive that the audience pray for Brent Trott. It would be more appropriate to pray for his victims, Ted thought.

Then there was a singer from the Lawrence Welk Show who assured the audience that Brent Trott would "ensure your future. Brent Trott, from Tupelo, for Mississippi."

"He is a good man. Get everybody to go out and vote for him. We should be running him up to Washington." "Now everybody clap your hands to this song."

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\* Fethiye, Turkey.

“I’m from Tupelo and I love Mississippi. He’s the one, Mississippi, He’s the one. He’s the one. He’s the one Mississippi I see. He’s the one. Brent Trott for Senator, He’s the one. We’re worried about tomorrow. The world’s out of hand. There’s nothing we can do. Oh yes there is. Get out and vote often then for Trott. Mississippi deserves a Trott. Brent Trott for Mississippi. Just like the Mississippi carries water to the Gulf of Mexico.”

The drivelng shit of the song ended, dying a deserved death. Not only could he not clap to that inane crap, Ted felt a sinking feeling. Ahh, Jesus, this shit is a lot worse than I imagined, he thought. A lot worse than the worst heart-burn he had ever felt. He felt quite ill. But he had to go on with it now.

Well, it was instructive for a political scientist. This was, after all, politics, American style. Pollyticks. Polly means many and ticks are blood sucking animals, as Utah Phillips used to say. Politicians are so crooked, they have to screw their socks on in the mornin’.

“When Mississippi elects a Senator, they elect one for twenty-five years,” the speaker intoned. And he wasn’t shitting. The imbecile droned on.

“We need one who is conservative, like Brent Trott is. He was voted one of the six in the House most outstanding in the South. He wrote the budget that the US is operating under right now and a highly respected, great leader.” Enough reason to make one ill, Ted thought. Oh God. This is a lot worse than I thought.

The man himself trotted to the microphone. Ted was amazed at his size. Like a little shrimp. Short. Jesus. That son of a bitch looks twice as big on TV, he thought. Amazing how the camera can transform the world. That little sawed off greaser. Slick. He could have made a good used car salesman or a lobbyist. Maybe that would be his future, once his lying was honed a little more sharply.

“Just thanks to everybody. There’s nothing sweeter than young boys’ voices till they start dropping off a cliff. I know where the Delta is. In 1959, I came to the University of Mississippi in Oxford. What America is all about is friendship, the family, praying together, strong moral values. I want to preserve those things in Mississippi that are so valuable to

you. That’s what it’s all about. To have the opportunity I had. Be able to go college.

We ought to think about blessings. America is at peace. No men and women at war. Sustained peace for twelve years, because we have built military strength. I was worrying about the strength of the military. We have rebuilt our strength. We need to remember how prosperous Americans are. The economy is growing.”

The string of lies rolled off his slick tongue and out the sides of his lips as his southern drawl filled the room.

“I want to stay close to the people. Call Brent or write a letter. I am going to have an office in Northwest Mississippi, not just for political purposes. Get a message to Congress. Mississippi needs to move forward on the economy, need jobs, good paying jobs, and federal assistance. We are making progress on highways, industrial start-ups, airports, and will have a full time economic development assistant in Washington. We have to go for it to get industry.

I will be an active spokesman for the state. All people need is more opportunity. We need drug legislation. Must say no to gun control legislation. I am a strong supporter of the Social Security Trust Fund. I’m asking for your vote. It’ll affect our lives for years to come. My father worked in the shipyards in Pascagoula.”

Mercifully, the lies droned to an end. All boiler plate. Right-wing clap trap and empty promises that meant the opposite of the way they sounded. Ted had to get the hell out of that place. What the fuck was he doing in this place anyway? Well, there’s American politics for you, he thought. He went home for the evening.

A local law firm and some businessmen, the town establishment, had erected a large sign on the highway near the junction of the two main highways. It was mounted on an old wagon with George Bush signs all around it. At the top was a banner: “Save America, Vote for Bush”

Ted had seen the sign several times and it started to get under his skin. It was sending a not so subtle message to the locals, that any advance of the

underclasses of society was a threat to the ruling class. He had heard people referring to Dukakis, the Democratic candidate, as that "little Greek." It was racism and near-fascism, Ted thought. He wanted to expose it for what it was.

The instructor who taught criminal justice next door, Bernie Shaw, in his office was calling Dukakis "Zorba the Greek," "Jimmy the Greek," and "Jimmy the Beak." That's racist, Ted thought. Those people need to be exposed. It is so "unamerican" in spirit. Save America? What they really mean is "save racism, save fascism". In a way, it is true. They are saving it for the rich. The underclasses will never get their share of what they have produced. That is their real hidden agenda and what they intend to ensure.

The Jewish sociologist, Eric Goodman, was amused at Bernie's fulminations. "Tell me, Bernie," he said, "why are you going to vote for Bush?"

"I am going to vote for him just because he is a nice guy," Bernie said, in his southern drawl, sounding as dead serious as stupid. Straw for brains, Ted thought. What would one expect? Ted liked him ok, as far as that goes. A good old boy. A retired policeman. But who could trust him? No longer young, relatively harmless. Poor guy. Out to pasture.

Bernie had tortured blacks in the civil rights movement as a policeman in Jackson in the sixties. An older black student told Ted how he had arrested a group of blacks on a hot summer day and thrown them in the back of the police van with the heater going full blast. The student had been one of them.

Ted decided to go for it and wrote a letter to the local town paper. It would be a daring act to actually send it to the paper. But somehow, he couldn't just let the sons of bitches get by with that without getting whacked from some quarter. Oh God. The temptation was so juicy.

Sometimes he went a little too far. Way too far. It was not an open society. There was really no freedom and democracy there. He hated to go on the attack, but clearly somebody needed to do it. He was sure that the blacks felt hostile about that

sign. He was going to get himself lynched yet in this fascist neck of the woods.

### **To the Burdick Times**

Can anything be done here that does not reek of racism? I am referring to the banner that has been hoisted above the Bush-Trott sign in Weaselville: "Save America, Vote for Bush." This must mean many things to many people, depending on one's particular prejudices, such as, "save America from that subversive little Greek immigrant." Or "keep America in the hands of the whites. Don't allow a progressive like Dukakis to be elected that would expand opportunities for the underclasses. Vote for someone who will change nothing. Our heads will remain firmly planted in the sand forever. Amen."

Just what, I would like to know, is so American about that? I have always thought that one ideal in America was equality and opportunity for all, not for one race, class, sex, or ethnic group. We are a nation of immigrants, blacks, whites and everyone else except native American Indians. Only a racist argument could support the inherent rights of one group over those of another. But Bush is seen as a super patriotic "American." Dukakis is seen as a "Greek," in Mississippi. Does that not smack of a racist mentality? Obviously both candidates were born and raised in the United States and one is no more "American" than the other.

Our democratic institutions have roots in the political thought of the ancient Greeks and the system of direct democracy that was established in Athens. I hardly think that we need to fear that a "Greek" is somehow a threat to the American system by virtue of the fact that she or he is of Greek ancestry.

Dukakis, it is implied, will somehow lose America. How will Bush save it? Or it might be better to ask who will he save it for? I suggest for "the rich," that is unless the Japanese buy up the rest of it first!

The best evidence of this is seen in the Reagan-Bush Administration. Clearly the rich have gotten richer and the poor poorer. The national debt has skyrocketed to over three trillion dollars in 1988, so that America is now the largest debtor nation. Our trade deficits have grown to 170 billion dollars a year. Educational standards have fallen and the quality of the work force has declined, relative to

Western Europe and Japan. Real hourly earnings have dropped more than four percent. There are eighteen nations with lower infant mortality rates than the US.

On the social front, the thrust of the Reagan-Bush Administration has been to steadily erode civil rights and economic opportunities for blacks, which were hard won during the 1960s. This has solidly won Bush the white vote in the South. The Republican Party hears the drum beat of those who march beneath a racist banner.

But racism will not “save America” any more than it saved the South. Its stench portends the doom of nations and peoples wallowing in this cesspool of hate, whether in Weaselville, Mississippi or Pretoria, South Africa. Apartheid, though clad in (red, white, and blue) sheep’s clothing, will be relegated to the scrapheap of history.

**Sincerely, Ted Grover**

**Professor**

He got a call from the editor asking him if he had written the letter. He confessed to the crime. He waited for it to appear. Waited for the shit to hit the fan. It would hit it somewhere. No shit.

A few days later the letter appeared, just as he had written it. He learned from a student in one of his classes that a group of lawyers were responsible for the sign and that one of them was the student’s father. He said that he gave it to his father to read. Oh shit!

But there were also progressives within the pores of Mississippi society. A couple of people complimented him on the letter. A middle aged woman who worked in the library had his letter taped to her wall and said that she agreed with every word of it. She told Ted that every time she saw the sign, she just wanted to get out and tear it down.

Those God damned Republicans think that the American flag stands for racism and apartheid,” Ted thought. “No one has replied at all to my letter. That shows how bankrupt they are. They are cowards and know that I’m right. They can only defend themselves with violence. That is the only way.”

Huge raindrops were plummeting out of the sky, banging against the metal drain pipe, soaking the wooden railing around his little balcony and drenching the leaves of the little tree which were now turning yellow, orange and red in the autumn air. It was a lonely existence. He was in a world of shit. Sweet Home, Mississippi.



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## Perspectives on Agricultural Credit in India

Aneesh K. A\*

*Agriculture continues to be the backbone of Indian economy. The agriculture and allied activities constitute the main source of livelihood of the vast majority of rural population in India (about 58.2 percent of the working population). Even though the contribution of agriculture to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India is showing a declining trend (it is only 13.7 percent in 2012-13 compared to 51.9 percent in 1950-51); nonetheless, its capacity to encompass an extensive workforce reflects its importance in Indian economy.*

Indian agriculture is mostly a gamble of monsoon, which sometimes shatters all wishes and hopes of the majority of farm folk comprising small and marginal farmers. So the farmers in India are always in a vicious circle of problems and troubles.

These situations compel the Indian farmers to depend on credit for upholding their farming operations. So credit, in its adequate quantity and timely availability, constitutes a central input in Indian agriculture which plays a very decisive role in Indian economy. The food production and prices can disturb the economy by casting its reflections on other macro-economic variables. So, agricultural

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credit remains a very sensitive and perceptive subject discussed ever by the government, politicians, policy makers and economists.

The development and strengthening of Indian agriculture was the major emphasis of the government after independence. The very first Five Year Plan (FYP 1951-56) implemented in India also emphasized on the same objective by setting a 2.1 percent target rate of growth in this field. The plan was very successful, which realized a high rate of 3.6 percent. The successive initiatives like green revolution (late 1960s), nationalization of banks (1969 and 1980), establishment of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs in 1975) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural development (NABARD in 1982), etc provided a boost to agricultural credit flow to small and marginal farmers in India.

The year 1991 marks the opening of a liberalized era and introduction of reforms in the financial sector in India. A sudden and explicit reversal of the policy of social and developmental banking coupled with the reforms has created wide ramifications in rural India, especially in the agricultural sector. The agricultural credit flow has shown a substantial decline resulting in the debilitation of institutional framework for agriculture after reforms.

The wide ranging impacts of the above include increased sidelining of small and marginal farmers in the supply of agricultural credit, strengthening of the hold of money lenders on rural debt portfolios, the recurring instances of farmers' suicides, declining public capital formation and staggering growth rates in agriculture (Satish, 2007 ; Ramakumar and Chavan, 2008).

By realizing the very dismal picture of the Indian economy after the financial sector reforms the government of India and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have introduced a host of policy measures to boost the flow of credit to agricultural sector in India. Those policies were guided mainly by the considerations of ensuring adequate and timely availability of credit at reasonable rates through the expansion of institutional structure, its outreach and scale as also by way of direct lending (Golait, 2007).

An initial step in this regard relates to the direct and indirect finances. Since October 1993, both direct and indirect finances have been considered together for meeting the priority sector target, with some ceiling on the latter. The definition of 'indirect finance' has also been changed by the government gradually by incorporating a large number of beneficiaries.

Under Special Agricultural Credit Plan (SACP) introduced in 1994-95 for public sector banks, the banks are required to fix self-set targets for achievement during the year. The targets are generally fixed by banks about 20-25 percent higher over the disbursement made in the previous year. This mechanism was gradually extended to the private sector banks after 2005-06.

In 1989, NABARD introduced the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme, as a unique credit delivery innovation for providing adequate and timely credit to farmers under a single window with flexible and simplified procedure. The key features of no collateral requirements; less stringent monitoring of actual use of loan and renewal facility after three years to good standing borrowers, make the scheme more popular and user-friendly among rural farmers (NABARD, 2013).

The Comprehensive Credit Policy introduced as an integral part of "New Deal for Rural India" promised by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in 2004 aims to double the flow of credit to agriculture over a period of three years. The policy includes the commitment to raise agricultural credit flow by 30 percent every year; financing of 100 farmers per branch (thus, 50 lakh farmers in a year); two to three new investments in agricultural projects per branch every year and a host of debt relief measures, such as debt restructuring, one-time settlement and financial assistance to redeem loans from money lenders (Ministry of Agriculture, 2007).

Government of India announced an interest subvention scheme in 2006-07 to enable banks to provide short term credit to agriculture (crop loan) up to Rs. 5 lakh at 7 percent interest to farmers. Further, to incentivize prompt repayment, in the Union Budget for 2009-10, government of India

announced an additional interest subvention of one percent to those farmers who repay their short term crop loans promptly and on before due date. This was subsequently raised to 2 percent in 2010-11 and 3 percent in 2011-12 and 2012-13 also.

Thus, the farmers, who promptly repay their crop loans, are now extended loans at an effective interest rate of 4 percent per annum. As proposed in the Union Budget 2013-14, interest subvention scheme for short term crop loans is to be continued and extended for crop loans borrowed from private sector/ scheduled commercial banks.

In the context of massive farmer suicides, to mitigate the distress of farmers in general and marginal farmers in particular, the Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme (ADWDRS), 2008 was announced in the Union Budget 2008-09. The scheme covered direct agricultural loans disbursed (i) between 31 March, 1997 and 31 March, 2007; (ii) overdue as on 31 December 2007 and (iii) remaining unpaid until 29 February, 2008. The debt waiver exercise was completed by 30, June 2008, where as the debt relief exercise was closed in June 2010 after granting a few extensions.

In the recent past also the government of India, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and NABARD has implemented and executed several financial assistance policies and packages which include developing of Joint Liability Groups (JLG), Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), extending credit facilities to marketing federations, direct lending to cooperative banks, concessional refinance scheme 2011-12, etc. most of them aiming to the small and marginal farmers. The impacts of these policies and measures were wide ranging.

With the introduction of SACP, the flow of credit to agriculture has increased tremendously. Initially the scheme was only for public sector banks, later with the recommendations of the Vyas Committee<sup>1</sup>, the SACP mechanism was made applicable to private sector banks from the year 2005-06.

In almost all years the actual disbursement exceeds the targets (see Table 1.1). The agricultural credit disbursement of Rs. 8255 crore in the year 1994-

95 had increased to Rs. 125309 within a decade, which was Rs. 20309 crore higher than the target of the year. During the financial year 2011-12 the difference between the actual and targeted disbursement of agricultural credit was Rs. 36029 crore.

**Table 1.1: Actual and Targeted Disbursement of Agricultural Credit**

Year	Target	Achievement
2004-05	105000	125309
2005-06	141000	180486
2006-07	175000	229400
2007-08	225000	254657
2008-09	280000	301908
2009-10	325000	384514
2010-11	375000	468291
2011-12	475000	511029
2012-13 (Provisional)	575000	607375
2013-14	700000	-

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, GoI

Since independence the share of non-institutional credit flow in agriculture has been showing a declining trend in the wake of nationalization of banks, strengthening of cooperatives, establishment of RRBs, etc. But immediately after the introduction of financial sector reforms the trend of institutional and non-institutional credit flows have taken a reverse swing.

Between 1991 and 2002 the share of non-institutional credit increased around 8.3 percent (see Table 1.2), this was mainly because of the retreat of commercial banks. Large scale close down of rural branch networks and the general red-tapism in procedures and systems of institutional sources of credit press the rural people to depend more on non-institutional credit sources.

(.....Continued the Next Issue)