GANDHI MARG

Quarterly Journal of the Gandhi Peace Foundation

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Gandhi Marg is the quarterly interdisciplinary journal of the Gandhi Peace Foundation published from New Delhi in the months of March, June, September and December every year. Original contributions on themes of national and international importance falling under the broad area of Gandhian Studies are invited from scholars and practitioners. Articles submitted to Gandhi Marg are refereed, normally by members of the Editorial and Advisory Boards. It is presumed that an article submitted to Gandhi Marg is original, and has not been under the consideration of any another journal. In general, the articles should not exceed 8000 words including notes and references.

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Examples

Books: Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 23.

Articles: Ramashray Roy, "Parameters of Participation", *Gandhi Marg*, 12, 3 (October-December 1990), p. 276.

Chapters within Books: Pearl S. Buck, "A Way of Living", in S. Radhakrishnan, ed., *Mahatma Gandhi: Essays and Reflections* (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1956), p. 51.

Internet Citations: Apart from author and article, include also the URL and date of download. For example: <www.un.org> accessed on 10 May 2006.

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Gandhi on Religion and Social Harmony

Malabika Pande

ABSTRACT

Democracy and democratic norms such as civil rights, adult suffrage, political pluralism and secular politics, were the dominant themes in international politics till the middle of the twentieth century. Religion was not considered a political force potent enough to disturb democratic societies. But recent history has proved all that wrong. In India, the colonial period saw an aggregation of communal tension culminating in partition. The importance of religion and religious mobilization are now widely recognized as significant factors in national and international politics. Gandhi had anticipated this. After his return from South Africa in 1915 he committed himself to the pursuit of a kind of swaraj for India that went beyond mere political freedom and civil rights, and was marked by the inculcation of ideals of peace, brotherhood and social concord. This paper seeks to present Gandhi's perspective on inter-faith dialogue and understanding as key constituents of a harmonious social order, and also focuses on his active interventions in situations of communal conflict and his constructive efforts to structure a society that was marked by non-violence, equality and religious tolerance.

THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD continues to be troubled by large-scale violence and terrorism, often in the name of religion. The underlying discords in some way reflect our attitude to religion which often colours our approach to culture, though the two are not synonymous terms at all.[1] This struggle is sometimes described as 'civilisational conflict'.[2] Is it indeed so, and if it is then what is the way out? This paper makes an attempt to present M. K. Gandhi's perspective on religion and peace through inter-faith dialogue and cooperation, and his praxis of the idea in some of the most harrowing tests of inter-communal harmony in the years leading to the violent

events of the Partition of India.

Gandhi was a believer in the Vedanta philosophy of Hinduism which advocates the essential spiritual unity of all mankind. His Hinduism, in his own words, was "all-inclusive. It is not anti-Musalman, anti-Christian or anti-any other religion. But it is pro-Muslim, pro-Christian and pro-every other living faith in the world."[3] More revealing is Gandhi's conviction about the relative truth of all religions, as expounded in his address to the first Annual Meeting of the Council of the Federation of International Fellowships at the Sabarmati Ashram (January 13–15, 1928):

> After long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that (1) all religions are true; (2) all religions have some error in them; (3) all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism, in as much as all human beings should be as dear to one as one's own close relatives. My own veneration for other faiths is the same as that for my own faith; therefore no thought of conversion is possible. The aim of the Fellowship should be to help a Hindu to become a better Hindu, a Mussalman to become a better Mussalman, and a Christian a better Christian.[4]

Underpinning Gandhi's eclectic view of religion was his faith in *anekantavada* (the Jain doctrine of relative pluralism) according to which any reality can be evaluated from many different points of view, each estimate true in itself but not expressing the whole truth. This principle, he says, taught him to judge a Muslim from his own standpoint and a Christian from his.[5] Perhaps these beliefs made him generally disfavour religious conversion and assert that if one found fault in one's religion, it should be corrected, not abandoned.[6] In fact, when his devout follower Madeline Slade (*Mirabehn*) expressed a desire to convert to Hinduism, he persuaded her to remain in her own faith, Christianity.[7]

The theory of religious pluralism, which upholds the *de jure* legitimacy of all institutional religions, was the keystone of Gandhi's philosophy[8]. He used a number of metaphors to express his thoughts in this regard. In *Hind Swaraj*, his first published book (1909), Gandhi averred that all major religions were roads that led to the same destination.[9] At other places he observed that religions were like branches of the same parent trunk,[10] or rivers that flowed into the same ocean.[11] Religious pluralism implied not merely toleration but respect and sympathy for religions different from one's own:

> [T]he principal faiths of the world constitute a revelation of Truth, but as they have all been outlined by imperfect man they have been affected by imperfections and alloyed with untruth. One must therefore entertain

the same respect for the religious faiths of others as one accords to one's own. Where such tolerance becomes a law of life, conflict between different faiths becomes impossible, and so does all effort to convert other people to one's own faith. One can only pray that the defects in the various faiths may be overcome, and that they may advance, side by side, towards perfection.[12]

In his Constructive Programme Gandhi made equal respect for all religions the first step towards national reconstruction, exhorting every member of the Congress party to cultivate "personal friendship with persons representing faiths other than his own."[13]

The holding of dialogue between different religious groups was a significant dimension of the practice of religious pluralism. The future of peace between religions could only be ensured in this manner. "Dialogue", to quote Anthony Parel, "was a process, not of superimposing one's own religious views on the other, but of understanding the other as a different religious being."[14] Gandhi's *anekantavada* took care of this. The fact that people of different faiths lived harmoniously as regular inmates of his ashrams in South Africa and India affirms the value of Gandhi's experience in conducting inter-faith dialogue. Another crucial element of his philosophy was the renunciation of violence in any form as a legitimate means of religious expression. This conviction enabled him to persuade the Muslim leaders of the Khilafat Movement to undertake a non-violent struggle for the success of their cause. They in turn asked him to lead it.[15]

Secularism of the inclusive kind has to be the *sine qua non* of a multi-religious country like India and Gandhi was indeed a good protagonist of this doctrine, though he very rarely used this term. Secularism for Gandhi was a kind of religion which signified 'fundamental morality' or an ethical approach. To quote him, "we needlessly divide life into watertight compartments, religious and the other, whereas if a man has true religion in him, it must show in every detail of life."[17] But, of course, religion in its institutionalized form was a different thing, and he clearly stated: "Religion was a personal matter and if we succeeded in confining it to the personal plane, all would be well in our political life."[18] That appearance and practice were as important as conviction was demonstrated by Gandhi's public conduct. He began the practice of inter-faith prayers, in which "texts of different religions were read and sung" at his ashrams and later at all his prayer meetings[18]. All Ashram residents had to affirm vows set out in the Ashram Rules, but Gandhi stated that these were not identified with any particular religion:

Each vow has been finally supported by a quotation from the Hindu Shastras. These have been deliberately omitted from the Book of Rules because the Ashram believes that the principles implicit in the vows are not a monopoly of Hinduism but are common to all faiths.[19]

Moreover, the Ashram inmates were not allowed to don saffron clothing, for Gandhi insisted on their wearing white khadi to distinguish them, as servants of the people, from Hindu *sanyasins* (ascetics).[20]

Gandhi's secular approach is further illuminated by his concept of 'nationality'. Though he often referred to himself as a *sanatani* (steadfast) Hindu, he more than any other leader stressed his Indian nationality above every other kind of identity. In most of his prayer meetings throughout his life he said "We are Indians first, and Hindus, Musalmans, Parsis and Christians after."[21] This attitude becomes more obvious when he talks of the relationship between the state and religious education:

I believe that religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations. Teaching of fundamental ethics is undoubtedly a function of the State … [but] we have suffered enough from State-aided religion and State Church. A society or group, which depends partly or wholly on state aid for the existence of its religion, does not deserve or better still does not have any religion worth the name.[22]

Nationhood for Gandhi was defined in non-religious terms. In *Hind Swaraj*, which was published in 1909 in the form of a dialogue between a *Reader* and the *Editor* (i. e. Gandhi), to the *Reader's* query as to how India could be regarded as one nation when there were Muslims, Parsis and Christians living in it, the *Editor* responds that India could not cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions lived in it. Moreover, "... in no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms; nor has it been so in India". Hindus and Muslims had lived together for centuries making mutual adjustments and except for occasional friction their relations were reasonably peaceful. While holding that British imperial policy was a major factor in embittering their relations, he called attention to the role of religious radicals in this regard, pointing out that extremists of both groups, whom he described as "selfish and false religious teachers", caused dissension by focusing on peripheral issues. His very sensible suggestion was that "if everyone will try to understand the core of his own religion and adhere to it, and will not allow false teachers to dictate to him, there will be no room left for quarrelling."[23] This prescription is inherent in the *Vow*

of Hindu-Muslim Unity proposed by Gandhi in April 1919 for the participants in the Satyagraha campaign against the Rowlatt Bills:

> With God as witness we Hindus and Mahomedans declare that we shall behave towards one another as children of the same parents, that we shall have no differences, that the sorrows of each shall be the sorrows of the other and that each shall help the other in removing them. We shall respect each other's religion and religious feelings and shall not stand in the way of our respective religious practices. We shall always refrain from violence to each other in the name of religion.[24]

In 1920, the Indian National Congress, by this time India's foremost political organisation, was reconstituted under the guidance of Gandhi and became an influential agent for popular mobilisation and social cohesion. Among the important changes introduced in the Congress Constitution by Gandhi, in consultation with other members of the Constitution Committee, was the very first article, which posited "the attainment of *swarajya* by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means", implying that only honourable and non-violent methods would be employed in the pursuit of freedom. Another landmark, enshrined in the fifth article, was the organisation of provincial units of the Congress on linguistic basis for more efficacious popular mobilisation; this would enable the Congress to reach the poorest of the poor. The twenty-ninth article, titled *Contentious Subjects and Interests of Minorities*, was designed to assure the Muslims that the Congress would never take up for discussion any subject that was by and large unacceptable to Muslim delegates:

> No subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subjects Committee or allowed to be discussed at any Congress by the President thereof, to the introduction of what the Hindu or Mohammedan Delegates, as a body, object by a majority of three-fourths of their number, and if, after the discussion of any subject which has been admitted for discussion, it shall appear that the Hindu or Mohammedan Delegates, as a body, are, by a majority of three-fourths of their number, opposed to the resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon such resolution shall be dropped.[25]

Gandhi sought to foster abiding social bonds through a mass campaign of "non-violent progressive non-co-operation with the Government for the purpose of securing the rectification of the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs and attaining swaraj", which took the form of the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–22). However, the fraternal spirit among different social groups that was abundantly in evidence in the course of the Movement was put to the most severe

test almost immediately after it was called off in the wake of the Chauri-Chaura violence, as communal riots broke out in different parts of India.[26] An early portent of this was the 'Moplah Revolt' of late 1921 in the Malabar district of the Madras Presidency, which began as a wide-ranging protest of the Muslim Moplah (*Mappila*) peasantry against strong police repression during the Khilafat Movement, and evolved into a violent campaign against *jenmis* (upper-caste Hindu landlords) and other Hindu groups in the region. The resulting civil disorder was marked by the killing or forcible conversion of hundreds of Hindus (who were a minority in the area).[27] These events were the only discordant episodes in the Movement, which had been marked by an exemplary degree of communal harmony. While Gandhi condemned, in no uncertain terms, the Moplah outrages on several occasions and was particularly harsh on those Muslim leaders who sought to justify them, he also called for understanding towards the Moplahs and supported measures for relief to the Moplah families facing severe distress in the wake of strong Government action:

> The Moplahs sinned against God and have suffered grievously for it. Let the Hindus also remember that they have not allowed the opportunity of revenge to pass by. Many have done all they could to take reprisals when they got the opportunity.
> My point is simple. In face of the awful fact of starvation and homelessness, all argument and all opposition must be hushed. Generations hence, when all our evil acts will have been forgotten, posterity will cherish the treasured memory of every simple act of love shown by the one to the other. I therefore ask every Hindu reader who will extend the hand of love and fellowship to his starving Moplah brother and sister and their children, to send his or her mite, and I shall endeavour to see that it is properly distributed among the most deserving among the Moplahs.[28]

However, in an apparent reaction to the Moplah 'atrocities', several prominent nationalist Hindus were drawn towards communitarian solidarity. Swami Shraddhanand (who had earlier actively campaigned for Hindu-Muslim unity and had even addressed the congregation from the pulpit of the Jama Masjid in April 1919) and his Arya Samaj colleagues began actively promoting *shuddhi* (ritual purification) and *sangathan* (consolidation) campaigns, while in August 1923 the Banaras Session of the Hindu Mahasabha (which had been founded at Hardwar in 1915) called for the setting up of Hindu self-defence squads. Muslim leaders countered this situation with their own *tabligh* (missionary propaganda) and *tanzim* (organisation)

initiatives.[29] The result of this competitive religious extremism was the occurrence of one hundred and eleven serious riots between 1923 and 1927, from Kohat in the North-Western Frontier Province to Dacca in Bengal, of which ninety-one were in the United Provinces alone![30]

In a series of letters addressed to Gandhi at this time by both Hindus and Muslims, individually and occasionally on behalf of local organisations specific to one or the other community, the bleak state of relations between the two was attributed to his own approach, statements or actions. Gandhi responded as best as he could through the pages of his journal, *Young India*, and in his orations and other communications.[31] He analysed the factors that called for serious introspection and collective action by both the religious groups, including the abuse of the freedom of speech and press by sections of both communities. He appealed to his readers to consider it their duty to "never accept without examination and scrutiny, what may be written against Hindus or Muslims" and to consider it their duty to promote trust and harmony between the communities.[32] Criticising the *shuddhi* campaign, and by implication the *tabligh* drive, he wrote:

> My Hindu instinct tells me that all religions are more or less true. All proceed from the same God, but all are imperfect because they have come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality. The real *shuddhi* movement should consist in each one trying to arrive at perfection in his or her own faith. In such a plan character would be the only test. What is the use of crossing from one compartment to another, if it does not mean a moral rise? What is the meaning of my trying to convert to the service of God, for that must be the implication of *shuddhi* or *tabligh*, when those who are in my fold are every day denying God by their actions?[33]

Two persistent causes of friction, Gandhi observed, were cow-slaughter by Muslims and the playing of music by Hindus outside or near mosques (each considered blasphemous by the respective community).[34] Though Gandhi upheld the Hindu veneration of cows, he did not resent their slaughter by Muslims for food. The riots that had taken place in the name of the cow had not saved a single cow, he said, but rather stiffened the backs of Muslims. To him, further irony was provided by the fact that the Hindus who owned the cows were responsible for treating them most cruelly. The only time, he observed, when many cows were saved from slaughter was during the non-cooperation movement, as a result of voluntary and generous effort of the Muslims themselves. Cow-protection societies ought to turn their attention to proper care of cattle in their respective areas rather than stir up communal discord, he wrote.[35] Gandhi had a similar

response on the issue of playing music or conducting *arati* in the proximity of mosques. Just as Hindus could not compel Muslims to refrain from killing cows, so could Muslims not compel Hindus to stop music or *arati* at the point of the sword. They could only trust to the good sense of the Hindus. For this, dialogue and mutual understanding were a must between the communities. "To yield to the threat or actual use of violence is a surrender of one's self-respect and religious conviction", he stated, "but a person who never will yield to threat, would always minimise, and if possible, even avoid occasions for causing irritation".[36] In fact, "the regulation of cow-slaughter and playing of music must be left to the goodwill of the respective communities",[37] and all disputes had to be resolved through non-violent institutionalised means, such as reference to "private arbitration, or to the law-courts, if they wish"[38].

Gandhi was firm in censuring individuals irrespective of their religious identity for lapses from logic and good sense in their arguments or actions on community issues, and gave higher place to objective candour than considerations of 'political correctness' in his admonitions. However, given the tendency of sectarian strife on even trivial matters, "he always tried to appear even-handed, often championing the cause of the Muslims and criticising the Hindus".[39] Yet, he minced no words in holding the Muslims of his time to be generally more intolerant and fanatic than other religious groups, on account of a reaction that had taken place against the liberalism of the Islamic teachers in the period of the Caliphs Harun al-Rashid and Al-Mamun, and affirmed: "… I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam has sufficient [strength] in itself to become purged of illiberalism and intolerance."[40]

Nevertheless, recurrent episodes of communal conflict brought profound anguish to Gandhi, as "Hindus and Mussalmans, who were only two years ago apparently working together as friends, are … fighting like cats and dogs in some places …", and on September 18, 1924, without taking any of his associates and family members into confidence, he went on a fast in Delhi at the house of Maulana Mohammad Ali, with the following announcement: "Nothing evidently that I say or write can bring the two communities together. I am therefore imposing on myself a fast of 21 days commencing from today and ending on Wednesday, October 8."[41] The fast occasioned the first Unity Conference at Delhi, chaired by Motilal Nehru and attended by prominent persons in public life, which passed several resolutions addressing issues that fuelled communal tensions and proposing pragmatic modes of resolving communal controversies and conflicts at local level. Gandhi approved the decisions of the

Conference, but did not accede to its request to break his fast ahead of the announced date. The fast did have a calming effect on inflamed communal passions, and the Unity Conference pointed some paths forward, but Gandhi himself believed that entrenched communal attitudes required constant ministration towards cultivating mutual respect and trust: "The Conference for unity was only the starting point of unity. Its resolutions were inadequate; those attending it were imperfect; hence the beginning too has been deficient. Nevertheless, the Conference was of great importance. It will strike deep roots; it is our duty to protect and water the tender plant it has set up."[42]

Even at the time of severe communal crises Gandhi's faith in non-violent means, especially the process of dialogue, was not shaken. In December 1926, at the height of Hindu-Muslim tension in the country, Swami Shraddhanand was assassinated by a Muslim fanatic, Abdul Rashid. Gandhi had been severely critical of the Swami's religio-political views though he had personal regard for him for his earlier role in forging Hindu-Muslim unity. Gandhi was apprehensive about a Hindu backlash following the death of Swami Shraddhanand. Upon learning of it from Lala Lajpat Rai while proceeding to Gauhati for the Forty-first Congress, he requested him and M. R Jayakar (who were at Calcutta *en route* Gauhati) to rush to Delhi to "prevent excitement or resentment" and sought to calm passions through his statements, speeches at public meetings, addresses at the Congress Session and writings in *Young India*. "Let us not ascribe the crime of an individual to a whole community ..., let us not think of the wrong as done by a Mussalman against a Hindu, but of an erring brother against a hero,"[43] he wrote. He asked Muslims to condemn the murder in unequivocal terms if they desired to prove their bona fides on a peaceful solution to the communal problem. The sword, he said, had to be sheathed if Islam was to live up to its name. Otherwise it would be a calamity for its followers and the world, as the communal problem was a world problem. Reliance upon the sword was wholly inconsistent with reliance upon God.[44]

In the event, the efforts of Gandhi and his associates did have a positive impact in containing reactive communal violence on the murder of Swami Shraddhanand, yet inter-religious tensions were steadily rising, manifestly in view of sectarian mobilisation *vis-à-vis* the ongoing exercise on the future constitutional set-up of India. The recommendations of the All-Parties Conference of 1928 (the Motilal Nehru Report), which proposed (with specific exceptions) joint electorates instead of the separately demarcated legislative constituencies for minorities implemented from 1909, were not

acceptable to the Muslim League and also occasioned sharp critiques from other organised religious groups for being inconsiderate of genuine concerns over their social and cultural identity. The Report, which had been approved by the Congress at its Calcutta Session (December 1928), also propounded Dominion Status as the immediate political goal for India as against the call for 'Independence' at the preceding Madras Session under the influence of young radicals such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose.[45]

Faced with widespread objections to Dominion Status as a travesty of swaraj and the anxieties of minority groups over joint electorates as prescribed by the Nehru Report with an implied message of their dissociation from the "national cause", Gandhi succeeded in persuading the Congress leadership at the Lahore Session (December 1929) to rescind the earlier approval of the Report at the Calcutta Session. A crucial Resolution of the Lahore Congress (drafted principally by Gandhi) declared that "swaraj in Congress creed shall mean complete independence", announced the lapse of "the Nehru Scheme of Dominion Status" and hoped that "now that the communal question drops out of the purview of the Congress, all parties in the Congress will devote their exclusive attention to the attainment of complete independence" and also "that those whom the tentative solution of the communal problem suggested in the Nehru Report has prevented from joining the Congress or actuated them to abstain from it, will now join or rejoin the Congress and zealously prosecute the common goal".[46] Steering the resolution in furtherance of these affirmations, Gandhi stated that "in an independent India every problem is to be solved on a national basis and not on a communal basis", and through this he met the problem of religious nationalism head on, while assuring Muslims, Sikhs and other minorities that no solution of any communal question in any future constitution would be acceptable to the Congress that did not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned.[47] After the settlement of the 'Communal Question' at the Lahore Congress, Gandhi made a classic observation on moral secularism:

> There never can be any conflict between the real interest of one's country and that of one's religion. Where there appears to be any, there is something wrong with one's religion, i.e., one's morals. True religion means good thought and good conduct. True patriotism also means good thought and good conduct. To set up a comparison between two synonymous things is wrong.[48]

Despite the efforts of Gandhi and his colleagues to engineer a

social and political resolution of communal conflict, the following years saw a steady sequence of Hindu-Muslim riots in different parts of India, some of which (such as the Kanpur Riots of March 1931) were marked by heavy losses of life and property across the communities.[49] We find Gandhi leading a determined campaign for communal peace through invocations to the common citizens and strongly worded rebukes to the offending groups, occasional fasts, visits (wherever possible) to the affected localities and meetings with their residents to offer solace and reinforce confidence, personal exchanges with local community leaders and rallying notable individuals and public figures for the larger objective of redressing animosities and restoring the torn fabric of social harmony. His influence was instrumental in limiting the intensity of communal conflict in the period after the Civil Disobedience Movement, even as the growing politicization of the communal divide by the late 1930s was making the task difficult.[50] The years of the Second World War were overlaid by momentous developments presaging the terminal stage of imperial rule in India, and drawing sustenance from the complex manoeuvrings and interactions of the Government and some of the organised political formations, communal conflict became a depressingly regular feature of the social landscape, but Gandhi's persevered in his endeavours to stem the growing tide of inter-communal distrust and discord. [51] He was animated by the conviction "that conflicts needed to be straightened out by those involved in them, rather than by the intervention of 'outsiders'" and reflecting the approach that "situations must not be allowed to deteriorate; grievances should be tackled in time; and, at the ground level, every effort to deal with problems jointly would serve to foster a sense of commonality instead of difference; the socio-economic elements of conflicts must be recognized and solutions found, lest the conflicts be dubbed 'religious'."[52]

Gandhi's faith in communal harmony and inter-faith dialogue was again on trial in the years 1946 to 1947 just before and after the partition of the sub-continent into India and Pakistan. August 16, 1946, the *Direct Action Day* called by the Muslim League under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, to orchestrate "direct action for the achievement of Pakistan", was marked by widespread rioting and slaughter in Calcutta, which unleashed a period of communal violence in India on an unprecedented scale. In two Eastern districts of Bengal – Noakhali (now in Bangladesh) and Tipperah (now Tripura, India) – several hundred Hindus, who were a minority, were looted, raped and killed by Muslim mobs in October 1946.[53] Gandhi went to Noakhali in November 1946 and over the next four months walked

barefoot from village to village (like a pilgrim, he said) with a few companions notably Nirmal Kumar Bose, Manu Gandhi, Pyarelal, Amtussalaam, Dr. Sushila Nayar, Sushila Pai, Kanu and Abha Gandhi and Amritlal Thakkar (*Thakkar Bapa*). In a statement to the press, Gandhi explained his plan of action – the group would divide into teams of two and cover as many villages as possible, stay as far as possible in the house of a Muslim League member (who might be hostile) and carry on a dialogue with the local community.[54]

As was his wont, Gandhi conducted a prayer meeting at every village he visited and spoke to both Muslims and Hindus, asking them to give up fear and hatred of each other, to live like brothers and sisters and rehabilitate those who had fled their homes. His presence impelled the Muslim League Government of Bengal (headed by H.S. Suhrawardy since its induction in July 1946) to set up Peace Committees and institute relief measures, such as provision of rations, house-building material, raw materials for craftsmen, etc.[55] The Government also issued appeals to the Hindus to return and actively participate in the peace process.[56] Gandhi's mission of peace received wide publicity and his group had several visitors and visiting companions on tour, including Sikh members of the *Azad Hind Fauj*, Asaf Ali (India's Ambassador to the U.S.A.) and Raymond Cartier, editor of three French newspapers.[57] Gandhi's prayer meetings were not just about peace but focused equally on the rural economy, on utilising local resources to the optimum level, on self-help for proper sanitation and on arranging for pure drinking water, etc. He thought about converting the fertile land there into a 'land of gold'.[58] Addressing local Muslim women, who hesitated to come out because of purdah restrictions, he spoke about the harm done by such practices and went so far as to say that, in his opinion, purdah was "contrary to what the Prophet preached". Though his remarks aroused some criticism from extremist Muslims, Gandhi was not daunted and patiently argued with his critics.[59]

From the third week of December 1946, there was noticeable improvement in the 'refugee situation' in Noakhali. Hindus felt reassured enough to begin returning to their homes and the trend continued through January and February 1947. Gandhi expressed his happiness at this outcome and did not forget to admonish the Hindu refugees against practising untouchability of any kind whether among themselves or towards their Muslim neighbours. An event that contributed to the changed attitude among even Muslim hardliners in East Bengal was the twenty-one day fast for Hindu-Muslim unity by Ms Amtussalaam, a devout Muslim follower of Gandhi, at Sirandi village. Distressed by the fast, several Muslims

asked Gandhi for advice, and at his suggestion took a formal pledge promising full respect for the right of Hindus to freely practise their religion and assuring cooperation in all efforts to establish peace.[60] About Gandhi's impact, Hardiman writes: "In East Bengal, in particular, he managed to calm the atmosphere to a remarkable degree."[61]

Meanwhile, Bihar was beckoning Gandhi.[62] After the observance of 'Noakhali Day' on 25 October, 1946, Hindu peasants in several parts of Bihar had carried out a massacre of Muslims "far more terrible really than Noakhali, with at least 7000 deaths."[63] Gandhi was shaken to the core by the brutality of the Hindu reaction to the Noakhali wrongs, and his emotional distress is manifest in his letters (including one to Jawaharlal Nehru), addresses to prayer meetings and writings from November 03, 1946, when he learnt of the gravity of the Bihar violence. He had gone on a 'restricted diet' on October 30, and hinted that he would stop eating altogether if the Hindus of Bihar did not observe complete restraint.[64] His anguish is manifest in the appeal he issued to the people of Bihar on November 06, 1946:

> Bihar of my dreams seems to have falsified them. … It is easy enough to retort that things under the Muslim League Government in Bengal were no better, if not worse, and that Bihar is merely a result of the latter. A bad act of one party is no justification for a similar act by the opposing party. … Is counter-communalism any answer to the communalism of which Congressmen have accused the Muslim League? Is it nationalism to seek barbarously to crush the fourteen per cent of the Muslims in Bihar?
> I do not need to be told that I must not condemn the whole of Bihar for the sake of the sins of a few thousand Biharis. … I am afraid, if the misconduct in Bihar continues, all the Hindus of India will be condemned by the world. That is its way, and it is not a bad way either. … Let not Bihar, which has done so much to raise the prestige of the Congress, be the first to dig its grave.[65]

In the weeks that followed, Gandhi was assured that the atmosphere in Bihar was returning to normal, though very slowly. However, on learning from Syed Mahmud, an old associate and a Minister in the Congress Government of Bihar, about the continuing fear and insecurity of the Muslims and smouldering communal emotions on both sides of the divide, he decided to leave Noakhali for Bihar on March 2, 1947. He began a walking tour from village to village, holding prayer meetings and dialogues with the local population. "I have come here to do or die," he said, and if "communal peace is not established, I shall pray to God to hasten my end, because

in that event, I shall not be in a position to serve anyone." The only way, he said, Hindus could atone for their sins was through persuading the Muslim refugees to return to their homes and help them rebuild their houses, clean their wells and sink new wells to replace the old ones filled with the corpses of massacred Muslims.[66] The organisation of this volunteer service was taken up by Gandhi and his companions who included Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (*Frontier Gandhi*), Shah Nawaz Khan of the Indian National Army and Mridula Sarabhai, well known social worker of Ahmedabad. As in Noakhali, Gandhi talked to the local women, both Hindu and Muslim, asking them to give up mutual suspicion, fear, anger and feelings of revenge as that constituted true bravery.[67] In some villages Muslims demanded separate police stations headed by Muslims and the appointment of Muslim policemen as measures of security; Gandhi reminded them that these demands were the result of a communal mindset created by the separate electorate system and would lead to many Pakistans not only in Bihar but elsewhere as well. Rather, majorities, he said, everywhere should win the confidence of the minorities through proper rehabilitation work and the government must do justice by giving proper compensation and appropriate relief as and where necessary.[68]

In August 1947, when Punjab was in the grip of a communal holocaust, there was a simultaneous outbreak of communal violence in Calcutta, and Gandhi who had been planning to return to Noakhali, stopped in Calcutta and went to stay in a deserted Muslim house in Beliaghata, one of the worst affected areas of the city. H. S. Suhrawardy, the Provincial Premier (Chief Minister), agreed to stay with him there. On August 31 a crowd of aggressive Hindus attacked the house he was staying in, and Gandhi narrowly escaped being wounded. Next day, the violence resumed with vengeance in Calcutta.[69]

Gandhi adopted the only method available to him in such a situation. He decided to fast from September 2, 1947, to bring pressure to bear on the gangs who were responsible for the attacks. The moral pressure exerted by this event soon saw several of these "goondas" coming to Gandhi to beg forgiveness and promise to stop the violence if he called off the fast.[70] On the evening of 4 September a deputation of leaders from the Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, the Sikh community and other bodies came to plead with him to end the fast. Only after they promised to lay down their lives to prevent further communal violence did Gandhi call off the fast. There was no more communal violence in Calcutta during that period,[71] and Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy, hailed Gandhi as a 'One Man Boundary

Force' for stopping the rioting in Bengal, while several regiments failed to do so in the Punjab.[72]

Gandhi's next test was in Delhi. Here, from the beginning of September 1947, in reaction to the carnage in Punjab, Muslim houses and shops were targeted by the Hindus and Sikhs and large numbers of Muslims killed.[73] Much of the Muslim population of Delhi fled to relatively safe places like the Purana Quila (Old Fort), Humayun's Tomb and elsewhere where they camped in very difficult conditions . The authorities initially treated these places as mere transit camps on the route to Pakistan.[74] Hindu and Sikh refugees who had fled from Pakistan (Punjab mainly) were living in much larger numbers and equally difficult conditions in places like Jamia Millia, Diwan Hall, Wavell Canteen and Kingsway.[75] It was in these depressing circumstances that Gandhi arrived in Delhi on September 9, 1947 and began visiting the camps of both sets of refugees almost immediately. Later, at his prayer meetings, he said, "what is going on is not Sikhism nor Islam nor Hinduism"[76] and that all had become savages.[77] He upbraided the Hindus for making Muslims refugees in their own land; in the same breath he condemned Pakistan for driving away the minorities. Lahore, he said, was the city built up by Hindus and "today is almost empty".[78]

At the refugee camps he appealed to the inmates not to look to the government for everything but to try to help themselves especially in the matter of sanitation. The government of course had to take responsibility for providing food and drinking water. Hindu refugees thought that he was being harsh with Hindus as Pakistan was much more culpable for the whole situation, but he explained that he was only doing his duty in trying to be even-handed, and that no one ought to harbour feelings of revenge or hatred, otherwise the newly won freedom would be lost.[79] Gandhi was aware that Hindu extremists could target him and said as much to a Muslim delegation, "I shall not be surprised if one day I fall a prey to this fury," a prophecy that was to prove true very soon! [80]

Muslim refugees in Delhi looked to Gandhi for succour especially after his success in Noakhali, Bihar and Calcutta. Gandhi was unequivocal in telling them that they should openly declare their loyalty to the Indian Union to win the hearts of the Hindus and condemn the atrocities on the Hindus in Pakistan. He gave similar advice to Muslim League members of the United Provinces.[81] He instructed both Hindu and Muslim refugees to surrender their arms and live like brothers, as had happened in Calcutta.[82] Gandhi had a mixed experience when he visited the Muslim refugee camp at Purana Quila on 13 September. While some Muslims resented his presence,

most welcomed him with 'great love and affection', and said: "This old man has come to save us, to wipe our tears. We are hungry and he has come to see if he can find bread for us somewhere...."[83] Gandhi's healing touch can be gauged from one example. Two Muslim craftsmen came to him with blankets and money and said that they should be distributed among the Sikhs and Hindus who had suffered in Punjab. Gandhi applauded their sentiment and later at his prayer meeting said "any such act must be written down in letters of gold."[84] Gandhi's appeal for blankets for the refugees, through the press, led to huge donations from many social organisations, from the Ambassador of Iran and his wife and from students and teachers of Arya Kanya Vidyalaya, Delhi.[85] Moreover, writes David Hardiman, the "… Delhi authorities were shamed into treating it (the Muslim refugee problem) as their problem (not Pakistan's), and set about organising rations, sanitary facilities and better security..... Daily meetings were held to review the situation and neighbourhood meetings were organised and peace committees established."[86] By late October, the communal tension had lessened and there was relative peace.

Though Gandhi did not publicly oppose the acquiescence of Congress leaders with the League's demand for Pakistan, he openly contested the idea of Pakistan till the very end. Thus, in late September, 1946, he said:

> … I am firmly convinced that the Pakistan demand as put forward by the Muslim League is un-Islamic and I have not hesitated to call it sinful. Islam stands for unity and brotherhood of mankind, not for disrupting the oneness of the human family.[87]

In a letter to H. S. Suhrawardy, now the Chief Minister of East Bengal (Pakistan), dated October 27, 1947, he wrote: "Hindus and Muslims are not two nations …. Hence you and I have to die in the attempt to make them live together as friends and brothers, which they are."[88] Gandhi's long and passionate speech at the All-India Congress Committee meeting on November 15, 1947, was to remind his party men about India's inclusive cultural traditions which appeared to be shaken by the holocaust of Partition. Among other things, he said:

> It is the basic creed of the Congress that India is the home of Muslims no less than Hindus.... You should declare that those Muslims who have been obliged to leave their homes and wish to return are welcome in your midst.... If you do what is right Pakistan will sooner or later be obliged to follow suit.... Hinduism cannot be saved by orgies of murder.

You are now a free people. You have to preserve this freedom. [89]

Gyanendra Pandey notes that it was "with Gandhi's active intervention and not without some expression of dissent, the All-India Congress Committee reiterated its commitment to building a non-sectarian, democratic India in which there would be place for people of all faiths".[90]

As sporadic violence against Muslims continued in Delhi, Gandhi launched an indefinite fast (his last, incidentally) on January 13, 1948, declaring that it would "end when and if I am satisfied that there is a reunion of hearts of all communities brought about without any outside pressure, but from an awakened sense of duty".[91] The only condition on which he would remain alive, he said, was if he was assured that every Muslim would feel safe walking freely in the streets of Delhi.[92] He reiterated his message to Muslims to openly declare their loyalty to the Indian Union and not Pakistan as many of them till recently supported the Muslim League and Pakistan. Only on such a basis could trust between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims be built.[93] The impact of Gandhi's fast was almost immediate. "In Delhi", writes Abul Kalam Azad, "the effect was electric. Groups which had till recently openly opposed Gandhiji came forward and said that they would be prepared to do anything in order to save Gandhiji's precious life."[94]

Gandhi's fast had another major fall-out. One of the main bones of contention between India and Pakistan (and consequently a factor in communal tension in India) was the division of cash assets after partition. The Indian government wished to delay payment of the total amount pending an honourable settlement on many other contentious issues with Pakistan.[95] But on January 16, 1948, when Gandhi's health was deteriorating rapidly, the pressure of his fast led to the momentous decision of the Government of India to transfer the entire amount of 55 *crore* rupees to Pakistan, thus altering a 'deliberate settled policy'.[96] Ghulam Mohammad, Finance Minister of Pakistan, in a statement, gratefully acknowledged Gandhi's role in settling the matter.[97] But Gandhi did not give up his fast, stating that the letter of his vow would be satisfied only "if the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Delhi bring about a union, which not even a conflagration around them in all other parts of India and Pakistan will be strong enough to break."[98]

Gandhi was now joined in his fast, along with thousands of Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan, by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Arthur Moore, Editor of *The Statesman*, both former critics of fasting as a form of coercion.[99] On January 17, the fifth day of the

fast, a hundred thousand government employees signed a pledge to work for peace. The police signed their own pledge.[100] Gandhi desired similar written and signed pledges from all representative groups, not mere verbal assurances; he told Abul Kalam Azad about seven conditions that had to be fulfilled before he would give up his fast. Accordingly, on January 18, 1948, a seven-point declaration (written, at Gandhi's instance, in the Persian and Devanagari scripts) signed by representatives of all major Hindu and Muslim organisations, including Ganesh Dutt for the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, and Maulana Hifzur Rehman, Ahmad Saeed and Habib-ur-Rahman for Muslims of Delhi, and the Chief Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of the Delhi Administration, and endorsed by Sardar Harbans Singh for the Sikhs, was submitted to Gandhi. The declaration called for the total rehabilitation of Muslims in Delhi, restoration of their mosques and the establishment of cordial relations between Hindus and Sikhs on the one hand and Muslims on the other, and concluded with these words:

> We assure that all these things will be done by our personal effort and not with the help of the police or military. We request Mahatmaji to believe us and to give up his fast and continue to lead us as he has done hitherto.[101]

Zaheed Hussain, High Commissioner of Pakistan, who was also present on the occasion, conveyed his people's concern for Gandhi's health and their hope that circumstances would be created to enable him to end his fast, stating that "if there was anything that he could fittingly do towards that end, he was ready and so were the people of Pakistan."[102] Rajendra Prasad, President of the Congress, appealed to Gandhi: "I have signed on behalf of the people, please break your fast". Gandhi agreed to end his fast, saying: "Let God's will prevail. You all be witness today".[103]

There were some 'touching scenes of fraternization' between Hindus and Muslims in the most sensitive area of the city i.e. Subzimandi.[104] The same day, i.e. January 18, about a hundred *burqa*-clad Muslim women came out and called on Gandhi. Gandhi was upset by their purdah and asked them to remove their veils as he was like a father and brother to them. "Purdah should be of the heart", he said, and the women then removed their veils.[105] The Muslim community's faith in Gandhi was again demonstrated when he was invited to the annual Urs (commemorative festival) at the shrine of Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Chisti in Mehrauli (which nearly did not take place as a result of the disturbances) on January

27, 1948. As a special concession the usual practice of not allowing women to enter the shrine was waived and the girls accompanying Gandhi were allowed to enter.[106]

During the last three days of his life Gandhi conducted his daily prayer meetings, advocating brotherhood and non-violence even when there was news of violence from the Frontier Province of Pakistan and the resurgence of bloodshed in Noakhali (East Pakistan). In an interview to Kinglsey Martin, the eminent British journalist and editor of the *New Statesman*, on January 27, Gandhi recalled Tolstoy's story of Ivan the Fool who remained non-violent even when he became king. For such a man or such a government, he said, a non-violent army would be a perfect possibility. Given a chance Gandhi said, he would use such an army in Kashmir although Sheikh Abdullah thought otherwise.[107] To further his vision of social and political cohesion of India he planned to reorganise the Indian National Congress not as a political party but into a *Lok Sevak Sangh*, with a missionary zeal to effect radical changes in society ensuring justice, tolerance and economic equality.[108] On January 30, while on his way to his daily prayer meeting, Gandhi was shot dead from point blank range by a Hindu fanatic (his own prophecy) — Nathuram Godse.[109]

The assassination of Gandhi was like a shock-treatment to the embattled psyche of the nation, for, in the words of Humayun Kabir, it "had a cathartic effect and throughout India men realized with a shock the depth to which hatred and discord had dragged them. The Indian nation turned back from the brink of the abyss and millions blessed the memory of a man who had made redemption possible."[110] Sumit Sarkar is of the opinion that "the Gandhian way in 1946-47 was no more than an isolated personal effort with a local and often short-lived impact."[111] On the other hand David Hardiman writes, "Gandhi's death in itself went a long way in achieving what he had been striving for in those final months of his life".[112] The immediate impact of his death was that, at last, the Muslims of Delhi felt secure and able to return to their earlier way of life. Qazi Jalil Abbasi of Delhi later stated with tears in his eyes, "Gandhiji made it possible for Muslims to continue to live in India."[113]

The essence of Gandhi's teaching was the need to inculcate "an attitude which would go beyond toleration …, and he did this in various ways: encouraging greater knowledge about one's own tradition and that of others; developing a self-critique which would not foster skepticism so much as bring about what he called 'purification'; praying that others would receive the light that they needed; and realizing that the special loyalty that was aroused by one's own religion did not warrant feeling superior to others."[114] His

legacy was carried forward in post-Independence India by dedicated followers like Jaya Prakash Narayan, Vinoba Bhave, Narayan Desai (son of Mahadev Desai) and Baba Amte[115], and lives today in myriad ways in the social and cultural fabric of India. On the international plane, Gandhi has received equal, if not greater, recognition, in the pursuit of human equality, dignity and freedom. Thus, the civil rights movement in the U.S.A., the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, the pro-democracy movement in East Europe and the pro-peace movement in Palestine all have acknowledged their inspiration from Gandhi.[116] Though the Hindu-Muslim relationship in present-day India is not as idyllic as it might be were regressive memories of perceived triumphs and humiliations not made to persist by those whom Gandhi called "selfish and false religious teachers", the fact that the Muslims are by and large a numerous and thriving community in constitutionally secular India is testimony to the success of Gandhi's ideas and endeavours.

We may conclude with Ramachandra Guha's tribute to Gandhi, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly on September 30, 2011, to mark the *International Day of Non-Violence*, observed every year on October 2 (Gandhi's birthday). Recalling that Gandhi "encouraged inter-religious dialogue, so that individuals could see their faith in the critical reflections of another", Guha observed:

> Gandhi was at odds both with secularists who confidently looked forward to God's funeral, and with monotheists who insisted that theirs was the one and true God. Gandhi believed that no religion had a monopoly on the truth. He argued that one should accept the faith into which one was born (hence his opposition to conversion), but seek always to practice it in the most broad-minded and non-violent way. And he actively encouraged friendships across religions. His own best friend was a Christian priest, C. F. Andrews. At the time, his position appeared eccentric; in retrospect, it seems to be precocious. In a world riven by religious misunderstanding, it can help cultivate mutual respect and recognition, and thereby diminish conflict and violence.[117]

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Notes and References

1. For analytical insights on religion and culture, see Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a cultural system", in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London, Fontana Press, 1993), pp.87–125.
2. The concept of 'civilisational conflict', propounded in Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1997), has been widely contested; see Amartya Kumar Sen, "Democracy as a Universal Value", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 10, Number 3, July 1999, pp. 3–17.
3. M. K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* [CWMG] (New Delhi: The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, and Ahmedabad: Navajivan Trust, 1958–1994, 100 Volumes), Vol. III, p. 72.
4. N. K. Bose, *Selections from Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1948), pp. 226–27. Bose drew on Gandhi's speech as given on pages 17–19 of the published Report of the Meeting (January 13–15, 1928). An abridged version (original draft?) of the address was published as 'Discussion on Fellowship' in *Young India*, January 19, 1928, *vide* CWMG, Vol. XXXV, pp. 461–64. The Federation developed from a group called International Fellowship founded at Madras in 1922 by "A. A. Paul, an Indian Christian who wanted to put into practice Gandhi's conviction that differences of opinion about politics or religion need not and should not prevent people from enjoying each other's company as fellow human beings": Martha Dart, *Marjorie Sykes, Quaker-Gandhian* (York: Sessions Book Trust, in association with Woodbrooke College, Birmingham, 1993), p. 31.
5. CWMG, Vol. XXXVI, pp. 122, 216.
6. CWMG, Vol. XIII, pp. 219.
7. Bhiku Parekh, *Gandhi's Political Philosophy: A Critical Examination* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 83–84.
8. Anthony J. Parel, *Gandhi's Philosophy and the Quest for Harmony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 107.
9. CWMG, Vol. X, p. 29.
10. CWMG, Vol. XLIV, p. 166.
11. CWMG, Vol. VII, p. 338.
12. Observance XI ('Tolerance') of the *Satyagraha Ashram Rules* (June 1928) revised in consultation with other members by Gandhi (who had drafted the original Rules in May 1915), CWMG, Vol. XXXVI, p. 401.
13 CWMG, Vol. LXXV, p. 109.
14. Parel, p. 109.
15. CWMG, Vol. XVI, p. 312.
16. CWMG, Vol. XXXIV, p.449.
17. CWMG, Vol. LXXXIX, p. 29.

18. Ramachandra Guha, "Gandhi's Faith, and Ours", *Hindustan Times*, January 30, 2008, *at* http://ramachandraguha.in/archives/gandhis-faith-and-ours-hindustan-times.html, accessed on March 05, 2011].

19. CWMG, Vol. XXXVI, p. 418. For the Ashram Rules (as revised in 1928), see "Satyagraha Ashram", ibid, pp. 398–410. The original Rules, under the title "Draft Constitution for the Ashram", are in CWMG, Vol. XIII; pp. 91–98.

20. Kaka Kalelkar, *Stray Glimpses of Bapu* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1960), pp. 32–33. Cf. "When the writer Swami Satyadev Parivrajak sought to join his ashram, Gandhi told him that while he could continue to be a sanyasi, he would have to discard his ochre robes": Alon Confino and Ajay Skaria, "The Local Life of Nationhood", *National Identities*, Volume 4, Issue 1, March 2002, p. 13.

21. CWMG, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 232; Vol. XLVIII, p. 374.

22. CWMG, Vol. LXXXXIV, p. 19.

23. *Hind Swaraj*, CWMG, Vol. X, pp. 29–31.

24. CWMG, Vol. XV, p. 203.

25. Malabika Pande, *Gandhi's Vision of Social Transformation* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2011), pp. 191–95. Gandhi's insistence on the linguistic criterion in constructing the provincial units of the Congress, as against their earlier coincidence with the presidencies and provinces of British India, was a striking precursor to the linguistic reorganisation of States in post-Independence India. For the text of the new Constitution, see CWMG, Vol. XIX, pp. 190–98.

26. The quote is from Gandhi's *Draft Resolution on Non-Co-Operation* placed before the Congress Session at Nagpur (December 1920), CWMG, Vol. XIX, pp. 182–83. The final form of the Resolution is in the same Volume at APPENDIX I, pp. 576–78. The background, progress and withdrawal of the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement need no elaboration as they are well-documented in the literature.

27. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India, 1885-1947* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1983), pp. 216–17.

28. E. g. Gandhi's editorials in *Young India* titled *Hindus and Moplahs* (January 1922), CWMG, Vol. XXII, pp. 266–70, and *The starving Moplah* (May 1924), CWMG, Vol. XXIII, pp. 512–14.

29. Tapan Basu, Pradip Datta, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar, Sambuddha Sen, *Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags: A critique of the Hindu Right* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, Reprint, 1993), p. 10. Ayesha Jalal writes, "... the Arya Samaj activists and their Muslim counterparts who had orchestrated the khilafat and non-cooperation agitation in the Punjab had by 1923 turned to *shuddhi-sangathan* and *tabligh-tanzim* respectively": *Self and Sovereignty- Individual and Community in South*

Asian Islam Since 1850 (London, Routledge, 2000), p. 257.

30 R. Coupland, *The Constitutional Problem in India, Part I: The Indian Problem, 1833–1935*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 109; Basu *et al*, p. 10.

31. The letters were not always recriminatory, and in fact several expressed sincere doubts or misapprehensions about Gandhi's views and pronouncements. For these letters, or references to them, and Gandhi's replies, see the issues of *Young India* for the period after April 1924, when he resumed its editorship following release from prison. The most instructive of his responses in this context is a lengthy article "Hindu-Muslim Tension: Its Cause and Cure", *Young India*, May 29, 1924 (which was subsequently issued as a booklet), CWMG, Vol. XXIV, pp. 136–54.

32. CWMG, Vol. XXIII, pp. 411–12.

33. CWMG, Vol. XXIV, p. 149.

34. Cf. Sarkar, p. 233: "The recurrent ostensible issues were the Muslim demand for stopping music before mosques, and Hindu pressures for a ban on cow-slaughter. Communal bodies proliferated, and political demands were made increasingly on a communal basis":

35. CWMG, Vol. XXIV, p. 151.

36. Ibid, p. 141.

37. CWMG, Vol. XXV, p. 178.

38. CWMG, Vol. XXIV, p. 141.

39. Ranchor Prime, *Hinduism and Ecology: Seeds of Truth* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1994), p. 60.

40. CWMG, Vol. XXV, p. 179.

41. Ibid, pp. 210, 171.\

42. CWMG, Vol. XXV, p. 262. For the background and work of the Unity Conference, see ibid, pp. 171, 199–202, 209–10, 214–15, 226–27. Cf. Nehru's observations on this and subsequent Unity Conferences: "There were many earnest and well-meaning people at these conferences, and they tried hard to come to an agreement. Some pious and good resolutions were passed, but the basic problem remained unsolved. It could not be solved by those conferences, for a solution could not be reached by a majority of votes but by virtual unanimity, and there was always extremists of various groups present whose idea of a solution was a complete submission of all others to their views." Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (London: Bodley Head, 1945), p. 140.

43. CWMG, Vol. XXXII, pp. 453, 455, 461.

44. Ibid, pp. 474–75.

45. For an overview of these developments, see Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. IV (New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1972), pp 91–124, and V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India* (Madras: Orient Longman, 1957), pp.

33–39; see also Balram Singh Pavadya, "The Attitude of the Indian National Congress to Dominion Status, 1930-1947", *International Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3, July 1965, pp 285–89.

46. CWMG, Vol. XLII, p. 320.

47. Ibid, p. 359. 153–175.

48. Ibid, p. 379.

49. The Report of the Committee appointed by the Congress to enquire into the Kanpur Riots of 1931, which has been reprinted, with an Introduction by N. Gerald Barrier (ed.), under the title *The Roots of Communal Politics* (New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann Publishers, 1976), documented (p. 228 ff.) almost 40 major communal riots occurring during 1922–31. Although a detailed narrative of the riots from the early 1920s to the mid-1940s is not readily available, an informative survey for the period 1920–40 is to be found in B. R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or the Partition of India* (Bombay, Thacker & Co., 1946), Chapter VII, Section IV, pp. 153–75. For further information and insights, see Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1984), especially pp. 58–140, and Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 210–13, 235–50. Pandey has highlighted the fact that the Congress Enquiry Report on the Kanpur Riots of 1931 became the classical 'nationalist' explication of communalism in colonial India.

50. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2004), pp.334–42, offers a pointed analysis of the political dimensions of communal disharmony. For a Gandhi-centred perspective in this regard, see Stanley Wolpert, *Gandhi's Passion: The Life and Legacy of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 184–88, 193–99.

51. See Judith Brown, "The Mahatma in Old Age: Gandhi's Role in Indian Political Life, 1935–1942", in Richard Sisson and Stanley Wolpert (eds.), *Congress and Indian Nationalism– The Pre-Independence Phase* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp.271–304, esp. pp. 272–82.

52. Margaret Chatterjee, *Gandhi and the Challenge of Religious Diversity: Religious Pluralism Revisited* (New Delhi: Promilla and Bibliophile Asia, 2005), p. 356.

53. Sarkar, pp. 432–33.

54. "My ideal is to live in a local Muslim League family, but I see that I must not wait for that happy day." CWMG, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 138–39.

55. Ibid, pp. 140–51.

56. Ibid, pp. 238, 243, 246–48

57. N.K. Bose, *My Days with Gandhi* (Calcutta: Orient Longman, 1974), pp.109–113.

58. CWMG, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 319.
59. Ibid, pp. 356–59.
60. Ibid, pp. 254, 312, 313, 373, 410.
61. David Hardiman, *Gandhi in his time and ours* (Delhi: Permanent Black, Paperback edition, 2005), p. 185.
62. For a detailed narrative, see Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi– The Last Phase*, Volume 1 (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1956), pp. 356–62.
63. Sarkar, p. 433; CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 29, 133.
64. CWMG, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 70, 72, 75, 80, 92–93; the letter to Nehru (November 05, 1946) is on pp. 78–79. For a detailed narrative, see
65. CWMG, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 81–82.
66. Speech at Prayer Meeting, March 21, 1947, CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, p. 137.
67. Ibid, pp. 126, 132, 135, 140, 145.
68. Ibid, pp. 168–69, 173. See also, Dennis Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 161.
69. Hardiman, p. 186.
70. CWMG, Vol. LXXXIX, pp. 150–54.
71. Ibid. Cf. a first-person account of the time: "The riots would not have stopped easily in Calcutta but for Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He undertook a fast unto death in one of the worse-affected localities of the city. No one thought the fast would work. Some of our elders in school were openly sarcastic. But it did work. In fact, it electrified the city. The detractors, of course, continued to say that had he not fasted, the Muslims would have been taught a tougher lesson. But even they were silenced by the turn of events." Ashis Nandy, **"**The Death of an Empire", in *Sarai Reader* (Delhi: CSDS and The Society for Old and New Media), No. 02 (2002), p. 17.
72. Acknowledging the work of Gandhi in Bengal, Lord Mountbatten wrote to him on August 26, 1947: "In the Punjab we have 55 thousand soldiers and large scale rioting on our hands. In Bengal our forces consist of one man, and there is no rioting. As a serving officer, as well as an administrator, may I be allowed to pay my tribute to the One Man Boundary Force, not forgetting his Second in Command, Mr. Suhrawardy." CWMG, Vol. LXXXIX, f. n., p. 116.
73. Hardiman, p. 187.
74. Ibid.
75. CWMG, Vol. LXXXIX, p. 169.
76. Ibid, p. 246.
77. Ibid, p. 261.
78. Ibid, pp. 184–85.
79. Ibid, pp. 169–70.
80. Ibid, p. 384. It is instructive to recall Gandhi's observations in *Young*

India (December 30, 1926) in his tribute to Swami Shraddhanand, who had died at an assassin's hand: "Death is at any time blessed, but it is twice blessed for a warrior who dies for his cause, i.e., truth. Death is no fiend, he is the truest of friends. He delivers us from agony. He helps us against ourselves. He ever gives us new chances, new hopes. He is like sleep, a sweet restorer. Yet it is customary to mourn when a friend dies. The custom has no operation when the death is that of a martyr. I cannot, therefore, mourn over this death. He and his are to be envied." CWMG, Vol. XXXII, pp. 473–74.

81. Ibid, pp. 512, 176, 186.
82. Ibid, pp. 176, 186.
83. Ibid, p. 181.
84. Ibid, p. 339.
85. Ibid, pp. 327, 332, 333, 334.
86. Hardiman, p. 188.
87. CWMG, Vol. LXXXV, p. 367.
88. CWMG, Vol. LXXXIX, p. 418.
89. CWMG, Vol. LXXXX, pp. 40–43.
90. Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition*: *Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 142. For the text of the AICC Resolutions, see, CWMG, Vol. LXXXX, *Appendix I*, pp. 537–40.
91. CWMG, Vol. LXXXX, p. 409.
92. Ibid, p. 417.
93. Ibid, p. 415.
94. Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom: An Autobiographical Narrative* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1975), p. 194.
95. CWMG, Vol. LXXXX, Appendix V(A), pp.550–55.
96. Ibid, pp. 436–37; Appendix V(B), pp.555–56.
97. Ibid, p. 437.
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102. Ibid, p. 447.
103. Ibid, p. 448.
104. Ibid, p. 445.
105. Ibid, p. 449.
106. Ibid, p. 501.
107. Ibid, p. 503.
108. Ibid, p. 506, 527.
109. Ibid, p. 536.
110. Quoted in Dalton, p. 167. Dalton himself observes here that there was "no higher tribute to his life than the impact of his death, his final statement for swaraj".

111. Sarkar, p. 438.
112. Hardiman, p. 190.
113. Interview with Qazi Jalil Abbasi, Delhi, 31 January 1995, in Pandey, p. 145.
114. Chatterjee, p. 352.
115. Hardiman, pp. 191–95.
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117. Ramachandra Guha, *Why Gandhi Matters* (London: The London School of Economics and Political Science, 2011), pp. 5, 9.

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Call for Papers

Ubuntu: Journal of Conflict Transformation

Ubuntu: Journal of Conflict Transformation is a refereed bi-annual journal of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, published by Adonis Abbey, London, in the months of June and December every year. It is brought out as one of the core activities of the Conflict Transformation Programme of the College through the Department of Politics. Papers are invited for the next issue of the Journal to be published in June 2013. Last date for receiving papers for the June issue is 15 April 2013, and for the December issue, 30 September 2013.

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Example of in-text references: Ake (2001: 126) has shown that ... This point has been elaborated by others (eg. Mamdani, 2001: 235; Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2005: 18).

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Dialectic of Peace

Muhammad Tajuddin

ABSTRACT

Interaction often takes place between or amongst partners. Every systematized interaction is called a relationship. Relationship produces harmony and peace or conflict and violence. Instead of remaining static, relationship evolves dialectically. Continuity of a relationship depends on its rational governance. Structures of governance conventionally have been constructed and maintained by hegemonic partners as a class. Consent of the marginal partners has been manufactured through hegemonic control on the 'ideological state apparatuses'. Pax or peace has prevailed due to acceptance of subordination as normal and just by the marginal partners. The awareness and consciousness among the marginal groups about the hegemonic character of the structure of relationship and its institution of governance is a disturbing type of pax or peace reflected in all conventional relationships from family to international organisation. To bring 'perpetual peace' all anachronous relationships have to democratise their structures and egalitarianise their institutions of governance.

Rationale of Relationship

THE PRIMAL ACTS of human beings are their interactions which are the means to achieve good life, prosperity, culture and civilisation. Interaction when defined, structured and organised is called relationship. Two or more individuals located in a common space and time may be either indifferent or may have some interaction which may develop into a relationship. Relationship may be cooperative or productive, conflictual or destructive and uneasy or dysfunctional. History is basically a chronological record of human relationship in the form of interactions in several fields. Interactions may be inter-person, intra-society, intra-state and inter- state. Family, civil society, intra-state institutions or inter-state organisations are the different avenues of interactions.[1] Mutual rights and duties of those involved

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in interactions have to be defined and recognised for the smooth conduct of every relationship.

Inter- person and intra-society interaction is in pursuit of some interest by two, more or large number of persons for some minutes, hours, days or years. Intra-state and inter- state or organisational interactions are instruments to directly serve the interests of the interacting institutions and indirectly serve personal interests of the individuals authoritatively interacting to pursue institutional interest. Institutions interact with one another because they are working on different aspects of one bigger goal. Neighbouring states or members of international organisations interact bilaterally and multilaterally in pursuit of some objective.

Interaction may begin with or without choice but productive relationship cannot be maintained without consent of the inter-actors. Interest can be material, psychological or epistemological. Relationship can be based on free choice or pragmatic compulsion of the inter-actors. Productive relationships are of two types: positive and negative. In positive relationship the partners cooperate with each other on their free will. They are satisfied with their respective rights and duties, and want to continue the relationship. In negative relationship cooperation of at least one partner is based on compulsion. The partner cooperating under compulsion feels dissatisfied from the distribution of rights and duties, wants to revise it but is continuing the relationship in the absence of a choice. Both types of relationships are ongoing and productive.

Cooperative relationship is established after development of an understanding through conciliation, adjustment and accommodation. Maintaining understanding is crucial for positive relationship because its degeneration into misunderstanding convert the relationship into negative. The conventional way of establishing positive relationship is to pattern the relationship on the 'good' model available in that specific area in a milieu. The 'good' model of relationship in a newly emerged area of relationship evolves in course of time when rights and duties of the partners are identified and routinised. 'Intellectuals' in the milieu of the relationship gradually identify and recognise the rights and duties of the future inter-actors in the 'model' relationship. The structure of relationship of the 'model' becomes ideal in that field of the milieu and it is gradually universalised. Conformism of the prospective partners to the prevalent structure of relationship in that field in the society is inculcated among the upcoming generations through various available means of socialisation.[2]

Cooperative relationship of intra-state and inter-state organisations begins when potential partners, formally decide to start

interaction in an identified field or decide to expand their existing relationship in a new area. After formal decision at authoritative level necessary infrastructure is created. Depending on the nature and scope of the relationship, the extent, pattern and periodicity of the interaction is defined, required mechanism created, strategy devised and finance arranged. Appropriate persons working in the organisation are identified or suitable persons are recruited. Rights and duties of the inter-actors on behalf of the organisation are formally defined and they are oriented and trained if necessary. On the basis of expansion or contraction of the interaction the structure of relationship also increases or decreases. All other aspects related with the interaction are periodically reviewed and change if required is brought by the interacting organisations.

The state of smooth conduct of cooperative relationship between/ among the inter-actors is called peace. Peace is different from pax despite their apparent similarity. Peace means both internal and external harmony but pax means only external harmony. Peace symbolises inter-dependence, democracy, fraternity and justice in the relationship. It is idealist, inclusive, radical and status quo ante.[3] Peace is a state of maintenance of fairness and equality in rights and duties of the partners. It is an outcome of positive productive relationship and is based on contentment of every partner. Pax is a product of negative, yet minimalist relationship. It means absence of manifested violence but presence of structural violence. Relationship in pax is based on strata, hierarchy, fear, dominance and exploitation. It is realistic, exclusivist and status quoist.[4] It is unhealthy and inhuman because it lacks egalitarian and democratic mechanism to remove discontent. Despite their intrinsic difference- prosperity, culture and civilisation are products of either peace or pax or both.

The classification of a relationship as positive or negative and its state of affair as peace or pax is dependent on the perceptions and consciousness of the interacting parties. Even hierarchical, stratified, exploitative, undemocratic and unjust structure of relationship may generate a form of peace because the dominated and exploited partner does not perceive it as such. In relationships formed under the ideological regime of patriarchy, feudalism, racialism, majoritarian nationalism and power politics the weak person, group, organisation and state usually perceive the unjust relationship as equitable and fair.[5] This is done through maintenance of undisputed universality of the 'good' model in relevant areas of interactions. Inequality was the universal norm of relationship in ancient and medieval eras and it is still prevailing in those spheres where the values of interaction are pre-modern.

In modern period with universalization of the values of liberty, equality and democracy the norms of relationship have changed but the mindset of the dominant partner i.e. individual, group, organisation or state has not changed everywhere. Wherever possible they want to continue the anachronistic structure of relationship which results in degeneration of positive relationship with peace into negative relationship with pax. Conflict or contradiction is inherent in a negative relationship which may deteriorate the relationship into uneasiness. If grievance is not recognised and resolved then the uneasiness may worsen into disharmony and the relationship may become unproductive. The aggrieved partner may end the relationship after getting a substitute or may snap it even without an option.

Dynamics of Relationship

The interacting parties must have a mutually beneficial avenue of interaction and should reach an agreement on the terms and conditions of interaction. The agreement may be based on consent or coercion. Neither indifference nor cooperative relationship remains static because change is a universal fact of existence. Change may be micro or macro in terms of intensity. It may be local or universal in terms of its range. It is value neutral but it may be categorized as good or bad in relation to its impact. Every change- micro or macro, local or universal, good or bad influences the inter-actors directly or indirectly. Any change in the capability of one or all inter-actors influences their relationship directly. Change in the milieu of the inter-actors influences the relationship indirectly. The change if not responded in a manner satisfactory to all parties may degenerate a relationship. It may convert indifference into relationship because it may create an avenue of interaction, may make the non-acceptable proposal acceptable or may enable one prospective partner to impose a structure of relationship on the other. To maintain a positive relationship every change with a potential to influence the relationship directly or indirectly has to be responded in a manner satisfactory to all the partners.

Increase in capability of one partner may influence the perception of the partner about the structure of relationship. The empowered partner may perceive the existing structure of relationship as unrealistic. If capability of one partner decreases the partner with unchanged capability may perceive the existing structure as burdensome. Change in the milieu of relationship may affect the partners differently. One partner may want to amend the structure, but the other may not. In case of inter-personal relationship the

enhancement of capability of a partner comes because of prosperity, education, experience and maturity. Decrease of capability results from poverty, illness or old age.

In collective relationship the increase or decrease of capability of a group/ organisation results from the growth or fall of the quantifiable variables in which the capability are expressed. The variables to measure the capability/ power of a group, organisation, state or international organisation are tangible and intangible. The important tangible variables are economic strength, spatial reach, human capital and milieu. The milieu includes all those external variables on which a particular type of relationship is dependent upon but which are independent of the inter-actors. Generally milieu includes all those factors which make the context of the interaction. Every type of collective interaction has a separate set of factors. Depending on the range of influence an environmental factor can be identified as local, regional or international. The most common intangible variables to measure power of any collectivity are quality of leadership, morale and commitment of the human resource towards the goal of the organisation. The more specific names of the intangible variables or their derivatives may be different for distinct category of collectivities.

Irrespective of reason, change in relationship from positive to negative is expressed in the form of conflict. Each conflict is an obstacle which appears in the way of a relationship. As change is natural and universal so is conflict. Every conflict is an irritant indicated by a friction in the structure of relationship. It is perceived as a problem or crisis according to the intensity of its effect on the relationship. It demands updating of the structure through small adjustment, big amendment or renewal. If responded affirmatively, it results into continuation of the relationship. If reacted negatively, it may metamorphose the positive relationship into negative or leads to withdrawal of the dissatisfied partner and end of relationship. If the dominant partner opposes withdrawal the accumulated grievances make the structure dysfunctional. Further worsening of relationship may results in hostility, manifest violence or war.

Prerequisites of Relationship

The first prerequisite for establishing a productive relationship is the compatibility of objectives of the prospective partners. The compatible objectives are usually identified as personal interest in inter-personal relation, group/organisational interest in inter- group/inter-organisation relation and national interest in inter-state relation. Achievement of interest is measured by each partner by comparing the actual and expected benefit from the relationship. Every partner

wants to maintain relationship if the actual benefit is equal or nearly equal to the expected benefit; otherwise either partner will seek to dissolve it provided the partner has the requisite freedom to do so.[6]

The second requirement of every relationship is similarity and dissimilarity of attributes of the potential partners. Mutual complementarity of attributes along with compatibility of interests is necessary for initiating an interaction. Without it no relationship can be sustained in a fruitful manner. The similarity and dissimilarity is not only a prerequisite of relationship but also the basis of distribution of reward and liability. The similarity as humans is interpreted as fundamental equality of the partners. Their dissimilarity in education, technical knowhow, training, experience and efficiency if they are individuals, and their difference in capability measuring tangible variables in case of collectivities are recognised as factors relevant for distribution of reward and liability. In traditional societies even difference of birth, wealth, colour, gender, religion and language of the individual partners are recognised as variables relevant for distribution. Similarity has become the basis of equal and fair distribution of reward and burden. Dissimilarity is considered as justification for difference in their rights, duties and privileges.[7]

The status of dominant and marginal partner in every relationship is either conventionally recognised or emerges in course of interaction on the basis of difference. The strong partner usually dominates every aspect of decision making process in all types of human interactions. The dominant partner usually gives priority to its interest over the marginal partner and has a tendency to manipulate the situation to protect its interest.

Liberty to continue or dissolve a relationship is also determined by difference. Though the right is equally available to every partner, in practice the weak is unable to enjoy it. The sole prerogative to continue or break a relationship is availed by the strong partner. The relationship, even if it becomes burdensome for the weak, has to be maintained sometimes in the absence of a suitable choice and sometimes due to constraints. The constraints may be physical, economic, social, cultural and in some situation even legal.[8] Moreover, fear of harm, loss or injury from the dominant partner in case of breaking the relationship against its will is the most difficult constraint.

The third important requirement is the consensus of the prospective partners on some ideals to motivate them for sincerity in the relationship. No common goal can be achieved without sincerity of the partners. Ideal is a set of rational arguments considered as

standard of judgment in a field of activity. It harmonizes the common interest of the relationship with the individual interests of the partners. It is enlightened interest of the partners. No relationship can be formed and maintained without commitment to an ideal which inspires the partners to fulfill their obligations.[9] Partners always have to adjust and if needed even sacrifice their individual interests for the ideal.

In any problematic situation ideals are the point of reference for every partner. In positive relationship the partners agree on the ideal and its meaning, but in negative relationship they differ either on ideal or its meaning. Real or imagined violation of the ideal generates grievance which degenerates the relationship. When degeneration reaches up to disharmony and partners become adversaries every hostile action to harm or destroy the adversary taken by the aggrieved partner is also rationalized in terms of some ideals. Even regeneration of a disharmonious relationship is possible only by renewing the contract and reorganizing the structure according to some ideals.

Governance of Relationship

Partners understand and interpret the ideals in the perspective of their respective interests. Change in interest causes change in understanding of the ideals. A radically changed interest may become divergent to the ideals. In case of dichotomy the common tendency is to give primacy to interest over the ideals. Divergence on ideals has been the perennial threat to every type of relationship. Smooth conduct of relationship is essential for order and progress in society, state and the world. Rationality, which has guided humans to create relevant ideals for forming and sustaining relationships, finds out ways and means to preserve them. Rational solution for security of relationship has been to take away the right to define and interpret the ideals from the partners and to give it to a third party. Historically the third party or 'governor' of a category of relationship has been a person or a group of persons assigned the task because of its authority. The `governor' authoritatively defines and interprets the ideals, frames, norms and rules and persuades the partners to observe them and adjudges their conflict. Society gives appropriate powers to the 'governor' for maintaining order in the category of relationship. The resource, power and authority of the 'governor' depend upon the realm of relationship.

The primary relationships have been in social and economic domains. In primitive societies the two domains have been usually interdependent. If social relationship is cause economic relationship is its effect or vice versa. The naturally expanded social relations

have been defined as family, clan, tribe and/ caste. The 'governors' of these relationships have been paterfamiliases, clan leaders, tribal or caste chiefs. The nature of economic relationship prevalent in a society is dependent on the economic activities of the epoch. Discovery of new resources, development of new technique and invention of new technology causes increase in the avenues of economic activities which results in the expansion of economic relationships. Progress leads to separation and autonomy of social and economic relationships.

The purpose of economic relationship in primitive epoch was subsistence. With the addition of surplus generation in the ancient epoch the co-terminality of the social and economic relationships ended. The era of co-terminality was the era of family communism in which all members of a family worked according to their capacity under the supervision of the paterfamilias for their subsistence. The first mode of autonomous economic relationship was that of master and slave which got converted into lord and serf in the epoch of feudalism and transformed itself into employer and employee in the era of capitalism.[10] The surplus production created a new realm of secondary economic activity of exchange first in the form of barter and then through the medium of money. In the beginning exchange was one simple activity but gradually multiplied into many activities each with its own structure of relationship. Segregation and expansion of social and economic relationships resulted in the growth of habitation in the form of villages, towns and cities.

In primitive societies the 'governors' performed the tasks of maintaining order along with their routine work. In post-primitive societies to maintain order by informal socio-religious authority through persuasive means in multiple social and economic relationships of a sizable number of individuals in an expanded territory became difficult. Organisation of an authority with exclusive, full-time and regular task of maintaining order became essential. The authority which evolved to perform the task with exclusive jurisdiction is the state.

The state sustains itself by imposing extraction on the people whose relationships are under its protection. It has been equipped with the apparatuses of violence with authority to use them against individuals or groups who are persistent in violating the due rights of their partners in their respective relationships and who are not amenable to conventional sanctions. The state becomes supreme authority and all other 'governors' in its jurisdiction are its subordinates. Gradual expansion of the task of maintaining order metamorphoses state from a means to an end. The three jobs of

defining the ideal, enforcing its observance and adjudging disputes grow into separate functions of legislation, execution and adjudication.[11]

In its legislative power the state possesses the sole authority to decide the legality or illegality of any activity or relationship. The state controls every activity and relationship of every individual with its executive power through the means of public goods and violence. The monopolist adjudicative power makes state the single deliverer of justice, arbitrator in conflict and interpreter of law. The institutions performing these functions have been collectively identified as government. To facilitate its functioning, the state imposes a political relationship of loyalty on every individual in its jurisdiction. Obligations of every individual towards the state has been to do only legal acts and avoid illegal ones and to pay due taxes. The state's obligation towards its subjects or citizens has been to provide secure atmosphere for conduct of their activities under different relationships. The state imposes submission by threat or use of violence against law breakers. Order based on exhibition or actual use of force is pax which is volatile and uneasy, produced usually by suppression of conflict rather that its resolution. When failed to achieve pax by suppression the state tries to contain or manage conflict at tolerable loss with the objective to subdue it for a prolonged span of time.[12]

Traditional state was generally monarchical without any distinction between state and government. The persons holding governmental powers were generally autocratic. Hereditary principle of primogeniture, co-parenthood or adoption was the rule of succession. Change of government was change of state mostly brought through violence. There were no universal ideals to regulate inter-state interactions. Violence, conspiracy and bribery were the usual means to decide the inter-state disputes. Security of the weak states depended on acceptance of tutelage of the neighbouring strong state.

Functioning of states internally and inter state relations externally generated violence. Internal and external sovereignty, territorial integrity, equality of all states and separation of state and government were the ideals evolved to improve this situation. These principles were recognised in Europe through treaties or in the process of governance.[13] Segregation of government and state and control of lawlessness in inter-state relations brought drastic improvement in governance. Use of violence in individual- state relationship also reduced immensely and order based on law increased proportionately.

To restrict the state to be a means only it became essential to regulate the state's authority to use violence and to limit its use as

the last resort. The liberal democratic nation state has become a reality after many revolutionary and evolutionary changes. Each stage of change has been realised after great sacrifices in popular rebellions against the state.[14]The most important reform to make state subordinate to the people was the concept of popular sovereignty. The government of a pre-modern state derived its authority from the ruler but in modern state its source is citizens' mandate. Every modern state is a nation state which continues, but the government may change periodically. The existence of a government depends upon periodically tested popular support. Modern government is constitutional, representative and responsible which governs with transparency, accountability and responsiveness.

The guiding ideals of governance in liberal democratic state are the principles of rule of law and due process of law clearly defined in constitution. A person earns office and holds it according to law. Tenure, remuneration and other related things do not depend on the whims of the authority, capability of the office bearer or strength of the opponent, but are decided by law. Structures and functions of every office are unequivocally defined and the holder decides and acts accordingly.

The advent of the age of globalisation in 16th century opened new vistas for states beyond their frontiers to pursue their interests. [15] The principles to be observed by states in their foreign policy were unobserved in the absence of a global organisation. Lack of authoritative imposition of the ideals often resulted in rivalry and war and culminated in the First World War. The devastation of the war made it rational for the states to establish the League of Nations to monitor and regulate their international relations. Different limitations and flaws led to the failure of the League and outbreak of the Second World War.

The experience of the League and the estimated destruction in any future World War compelled the world leaders to establish the United Nation Organisation with more powers for the sake of world order. The UN has made direct contributions in protecting international order by managing and resolving international conflicts and even national conflicts with international ramifications. It has indirectly played a role in promoting peace by stewarding decolonization, providing security to weak and small states, supporting the developmental efforts of its members, universalising human rights regime and managing different sectors of international economic relations.

Hegemonism and Peace in Relationship

In traditional institutions of governance, dominant individuals, classes, organisations and states have assured that the relevant governing institution gives precedence to their interests over their partners in every relationship. Hegemonism of the powerful in every relationship is the oldest universal ideology of governance.[16] Its form, instrument and strategy have changed according to time and space but its spirit has remained unchanged. In traditional societies it has not been a visible cause of conflict because privileges of the dominant and deprivation of the marginalised have been recognised as normal and just. In the contemporary world it is the most obvious cause of conflict and violence in every field because deprivation based on marginality is unacceptable in the era of democracy.

The powerful partners as a class in a category of relationship generally appropriate for themselves the role of defining and interpreting the principles of rule of law and the due process of law in that category of relationship. They have almost exclusive right in creating and operating the means of legal and extra legal violence against dissenters. Institutions governing relationship according to hegemonism may have one standard for all but in reality they have dual standards- one for the dominant and another for the dominated. These institutions remain responsive and accountable mainly to the hegemons. Any change in the structure of relationship or the institution of governance is possible only after the approval of the hegemonic class. Acts challenging status quo are declared illegal or at least treated illegitimate. Every dominant partner freely uses all Machiavellian means and methods against the adversary who challenges the structure of relationship or the institution of governance with the support of hegemons of that relationship as a class. The institutions working for conflict adjudication and grievance redressal are usually biased in favour of the hegemons in their structure, mechanism and process.

Modernisation of the state system and universal acceptance of liberty, equality and human rights of every person irrespective of their differences has made hegemonism illegal in every sector of activity. Recognition of justice, democracy, rule of law, due process of law and egalitarianism as the guiding principles of every interaction have made hegemonism illegitimate in every walk of life. Privilege of hegemony of the dominant individuals, classes and organisations over their partners has been abolished in liberal democratic states. All relationship governing institutions and their decision making processes have been democratized. Despite its abolition hegemonism

is present in varying degrees in practices even in these states. Some of its most exhibitive forms prevalent even in liberal democratic societies are: inequality in actual enjoyment of right, exception or lesser share of duty, prerogative of veto or weightage in the decision making process.[17] The availability of instruments and mechanism for peaceful resolution of conflict by enforcing appropriate remedial measure in favour of the aggrieved party notwithstanding their weaknesses has made the goal of achieving peace easier in liberal societies.

Awareness about modern socio-political values and its consciousness has changed or is changing the character of every hegemonic relationship in the contemporary era from positive to negative. Change in relationship degenerates prevalent peace into pax which is apparent and deceptive peace. It does not indicate absence of conflict but symbolizes silence due to fear from the dominant partner. It depicts the capability of the hegemon to prevent, ignore and manage conflict by force. It shows hegemon's capacity to control and suppress the marginal's version and tactful use of the means of communication to propagate its version as the truth.

Political modernisation has not been uniform in every state. Most of the Asian, African and Latin American post-colonial states have arbitrarily drawn borders. The colonial powers fixed these borders in the process of their competitive colonialism. The existing borders of even those developing states which did not suffer direct colonial rule too were indirectly decided by the neighbouring colonial powers in the process of delimitation, delineation and demarcation of the borders of their colonies. These borders in some cases have divided people of one ethnic, linguistic and religious community into two or more states making them resenting minorities in their homelands. In other cases these borders have placed two or more historically antagonistic communities into one state. [18]

Post colonial nationalism has made these borders sacrosanct and the process of nation state building very challenging in these states because the ruling classes and the alienated groups have contradictory objectives. The majority communities in these states strive to blend the peoples in their territories into nations according to their cultures and the disaffected minority groups endeavour to secure their differences by achieving autonomy or independence. Both the parties take recourse to violence to achieve their antagonistic objectives instead of resolving their dispute by peaceful means. Neighbourly relations of these states are also often hostile because of disputes rooted in their colonial legacies.[19]

Many of these regimes are usually receptive towards economic

modernisation, cautious towards social modernisation and resistant towards political modernisation. These states are apparently modern but internally pre-modern, illiberal and undemocratic in structures and processes or at least in the process of governance. Regimes in many of these states are either absolute monarchy[20] or military dictatorship[21] or single party authoritarianism[22] or civilian autocracy.[23] They treat their nationals as subjects not citizens. Inspired by modern norm of individual– state relationship these nationals want to become empowered citizens. These out of date political systems with doubtful legitimacy have become horrendous source of violence against their peoples.

Security of these illiberal, undemocratic and tyrannical regimes is generally guaranteed by one or other major powers based on strategic alliance. During the Cold War era the structure of their alliances with either of the two super powers was neo colonial. In the post-Cold War period they maintain their security as strategic allies of the USA or any other major power that is a permanent member of the Security Council. These regimes subserviently serve the national interests of their patrons, and they fear their own people. They allow exploitation of their natural resources on terms and conditions decided by the strategic ally or serve as a comprador agent in the region for the politico-strategic interests of their masters. In exceptional cases some of them have become major powers unconcerned about the human cost, ruthlessly suppressing every dissension or pursuing nuclear weapons programme.[24] Their status bestows on them a false sense of security because things are decided in world politics on the basis of argument of power not power of argument.

Despite its unparallel contributions for world order the UN has failed to fully control violence and war due to some inherent weaknesses. It is an organisation of the sovereign nation states but not a supra- nation state authority. In spite of equality of all members the structures and processes of its core institutions- Security Council, World Bank, IMF and WTO are based on hegemonism of the powerful members.[25] Hegemonism is still legitimate and legal in illiberal-undemocratic states and the institutions of international governance which is the actual or potential cause of dispute in all types of relationships.

Dialectic of Relationship

Peace and violence are merely symptoms to express the state of a relationship. Relationship passes through four stages - two visible and two invisible. The visible stages are harmony and disharmony

and the invisible stages are indifference and uneasiness. Harmony is a result of positive relationship and it becomes visible by prevalence of peace. Disharmony is an outcome of negative relationship and it becomes visible by manifest violence. Indifference is a pre-relationship stage when the terms and conditions of interaction between the potential partners are in the process of settlement. Uneasiness indicates disagreement on some issue between partners in a relationship. Prolonged uneasiness degenerates positive relationship into negative relationship.

Stage of indifference if not attended to the mutual satisfaction of the potential partners may lead to withdrawal or disharmony. Stage of uneasiness if unattended may deteriorate the relationship into disharmony. Disharmony is a failure of the potential or actual partners to properly respond to the universal dialectical course of relationship. It ends an option of a relationship or terminates an ongoing relationship. The stages of indifference, uneasiness and disharmony despite their divergence in nature and effect are described as conflict without any distinction. Indifference and uneasiness are benign, inconspicuous and unavoidable conflicts while disharmony is malignant, conspicuous and avoidable conflict. Benign conflicts are symptoms of beginning or progress but malignant conflict represents decay in a relationship.

None of four stages are static or permanent. Partners in every relationship have to pass through at least three stages of the dialectical trajectory. They may or may not face the stage of disharmony. The responses to a stage may be progressive or regressive. Stage of indifference may progress into stage of harmony if the responses of potential partners are constructive. It may regress into stage of disharmony if any potentially equal partner tries to impose unilaterally a relationship. Time span of the stage of harmony is dependent on the dialectical evolution of the structure of relationship on the basis of constructive responses of the partners to relevant changes. Harmony may become perpetual if responses of the partners are always progressive.26 Stage of harmony may degenerate into stage of uneasiness if any change is divergently perceived by the partners. Stage of uneasiness may deteriorate into stage of disharmony if the disagreeing partner maintains negligent attitude or responds negatively to the change. Disharmony whether coming after indifference or uneasiness too is not constant; it may end the relationship or regenerate it, mutatis mutandis in the structure of the relationship. Peace is a function of favourable response to stage of indifference or stage of uneasiness and violence is a function of atavistic response to stage of indifference or stage of uneasiness. Pax is a

function of non-response or insufficient response to stage of uneasiness.

Peace and Positive Relationship

Peace is a means to achieve best result from a relationship, but not an end. Treating peace as an end may convert it into pax which may make the relationship dysfunctional. Containment and management of conflict and deterrence are the strategies to maintain pax with the objective to maintain status quo in the stage of uneasiness, neither allowing termination nor renewing the structure of relationship to regenerate it. In pre-modern era when might was right even pax based on hegemonism was better than lawlessness. Acceptance of domination by the marginalised was zeitgeist[27] or the *ius cogens*.[28] In contemporary era the zeitgeist and *ius cogens* in every sphere of relationship has changed; so it is becoming increasingly difficult for the dominant to maintain outdated norm in any structure of relationship.

For peace in contemporary era it is necessary that the structure and process of every relationship and their institutions of governance fulfill four conditions. The first condition is shunning of hegemonism and unequivocal supremacy of precept over power in structure and process in every relationship.[29] The second requisite is to build the structure, process and the institution of governance based on democracy, justice and egalitarianism with inbuilt instruments and mechanisms to keep them dynamic, representative and responsive to all stake holders. The third criterion is free accessibility of every aggrieved partner to the concerned institution of governance and provision for genuine and quick redressal. Its functioning must be strictly according to rule of law and due process of law without any exception or duality. The fourth precondition is that whenever a dialectical juncture comes in the process of relationship each partner responds constructively.

Science and technology has tremendously increased human capabilities, opportunities and choices in every field of interaction. Modern ethics and law guided by hedonism has removed all traditional taboos and sanctions in defining and interpreting interest to be pursued in every sphere of relationship from intra-personal to international. Unlimited and unbridled pursuits of individual, group, organisational or national interests have not only increased the frequency and intensity of disharmony in interactions; they have also created threats to human interest by disturbing earth-human relationship, the mother of all relationships. Bad effects of hedonistic approach to interest are increasing in the form of its by-products: life style diseases, depletion of natural resources, climate change,

ecological degradation and increasing gap between rich and poor. It has been universally accepted that there are *Limits to Growth* by this approach.[30] The unsustainability of unlimited pursuit of hedonistic interest by each partner, everywhere in every relationship has led to global realisation that there is an urgent need to radically redefine the meaning of interests, the means and methods to pursue them in all spheres of activities.

The present wave of globalisation has not only opened immense opportunities to pursue interest at global level by facilitating flow of ideas, commodities, capital and human beings, but has also created challenges of a global dimension. To face them and to make international governance more effective, devoid of the present weaknesses, it is necessary to make the UN system a supra-state organisation. True spirit of free flow should prevail so that globalisation serves humanity interest and not remain limited to the interest of the hegemonic class in every state or dominant states of the world. To add new fields of relationship and to limit disharmony globalisation should not become an instrument of homogenisation. Difference and diversity of all types within occident and orient and between them should be respected in all interactions. Bandwagonism must not become the ideal of globalisation on the excuse of *Clash of Civilisation*; the spirit of diversity and multiculturalism must prevail.[31]

Notes and References

1. Despite visible difference in nature interaction, number of inter- actors, area of interaction, the essence and goal of every interaction is to achieve certain common objective by the inter actors.
2. Antonio Gramsci has explained this process of socialisation through the concepts of- 'civil   society', 'intellectuals', 'hegemony' and 'common sense'. For details, see David McLellan,. *Marxism After Marx: An Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 175-194. Louis Althusser has coined the term 'ideological state apparatuses' to examine the socialisation process. For details, see Martin Cornoy, *The State and Political Theory* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 89-97.
3. Johan Galtung calls peace as 'positive peace' in his works. For details see Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research", *Journal of Peace Research*, 6, 3 (May 1969), pp. 167-191; *Peace, War and Defence* PRIO Monograph vol. 5, (Copenhagen: C. Ejlers; 1976); *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilisation* (London: Sage,1996).
4. K. E. Boulding has called pax as 'negative peace' in his writings.

For details see K. E. Boulding, *Stable Peace* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978); *The World as a Total System* (New Delhi: Sage, 1985); *Human Betterment* (New Delhi: Sage, 1985).

5. The ideologies of patriarchy, feudalism, racialism, majoritarian nationalism assume that inequality and subordination of the 'other' is natural, unavoidable and just because the 'self' is superior and the 'other' is inferior. Power politics between individuals, groups, organisations or states aims at getting and maintaining inequality over the partner in the form of precedence, influence and control irrespective of means. Because of this inherent character Jayprakash Narayan wanted to replace power politics (*Rajniti*) by people's politics *((Lokniti)*. For details see Bimal Prasad, *Socialism, Sarvodya and, Democracy: Selected Works of Jai Prakash Narayan* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1964).

6. Compatibility of partners' interests and their serving by the relationship is the first condition for establishing and sustaining a relationship. No positive relationship can be maintained when any partner thinks that its interest is not served.

7. Non-complemetary or uniformity of the individuals, group, organisation or state makes them prospective competitors not prospective partners.

8. These constraints are applicable to inter-personal and inter-group relationships. In contemporary inter-organisational and inter-state relationships less capability means less choice.

9. Even dishonest prospective partner has to camouflage its intention in the garb of some ideals to convince the other party to get its consent.

10. Karl Marx has called the economic relationships as relations of production. For details, see Karl Marx, *Poverty of Philosophy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1955), http: // www.marxists.org/ archive/marx/works/1847/poverty-philosophy/ch02.htm, accessed on 5 June 2012 and Karl Marx, *Capital* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974) http:// www.marxists.org/archive/ marx/ works/1894-c3/ch48.htm, accessed on 6 June 2012.

11. State is the chief 'protector' of all types of relationships in every walk of life within its jurisdiction. It is the source of all legal sanctions. Moral or religious sanctions, if contradictory to law, cannot be sustained.

12. Liberal democracies normally use political means to settle disputes along with coercive means. Limit of these peaceful means are their reformatory character. Without seriously compromising the core interests of the ruling class they can not be radical.

13. The most important development in the evolution of modern state system is the Treaty of Westphalia signed in 1648 among the important continental European states. The 'Westphalia System', though weakened, still continues in the absence of any alternative.

14. The important epochs in the course of reform of the individual-

state relationship are the Glorious Revolution- 1688, American Revolution- 1776 and French Revolution- 1789.

15. There have been three waves of globalisation: 1500- 1900 A.D., 1900-1945 A.D. and 1945 onward. For details see R.T. Robertson, *The Three Waves of Globalisation: A History of Developing Global Consciousness* (London: Zed Books, 2003).

16. The alternative term supremacism does not express the meaning of hegemonism. Supremacism is the ideology rationalizing domination and control based on belief of superiority on the basis of birth, gender, caste, race, religion, language, species and culture to the 'other' irrespective of reality. Hegemonism is the ideology which justifies domination and control on the basis of power irrespective of other factors. Hegemonism is achieved with consent which might not be the case in supremacism.

17. Hegemonism might be claimed on the basis of age, gender, number, strength, wealth, knowledge and position. It is legal and legitimate in traditional state and pre-modern society respectively. In modern state it is illegal but its legitimacy depends on the political culture.

18. For details see W. Gordon East, & J. R. Prescott, *Our Fragmented World: An Introduction to Political Geography* (London: Macmillan,1978) pp.85-93; A.J. Day, & J. Bell eds., *Border and Territorial Disputes* (Essex: Longman,1987).

19. Hostile relationship of Israel with Palestine and other Arab neighbours and uneasy India Pakistan relations are colonial legacies. One of the unsettled problems between India and Bangladesh a colonial legacy is the unique dispute of enclaves in each other's territory.

20. The monarchies prevailing in the world are of two types. Brunei, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Swaziland are the monarchies where the monarchs have absolute powers. Bahrain, Bhutan, Jordan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Morocco, Tonga and UAE are the monarchies where the sovereign monarchs rule according to constitutions subordinated to the will of these kings. All of them except Liechtenstein and Monaco have experienced direct or indirect colonial rule.

21. Majority of the post colonial states have been ruled by their militaries once or more after independence. Military junta states in 2012 are Fiji and Myanmar.

22. China, Cuba, North Korea, Laos, Syria, Turkmenistan and Vietnam have single party authoritarian regimes. All of them suffered direct or indirect colonialism.

23. Power in these states is generally concentrated in the office of president elected for life time or periodically elected every time in single candidate presidential election without any limit of term or in controlled unfair multi candidate elections. Constitutions in these states are made, unmade, mended and amended according to the desires of the rulers. Many of them are ex-military coup leaders or

former soviet officials in the post soviet republics ruling with the support of military, bureaucracy and civilian elites. The structure of the ruling party headed by these presidents overlaps the structure of the state. The annual survey *Freedom in the World* conducted by Freedom House identifies these states as 'not free' and 'partly free'. For details see *Freedom in the World 2011* available at http://www.feeedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2011, accessed on 27 June 2012.

24. China, Russia and North Korea are such states.

25. The core of the Security Council is constituted on the principle of oligarchy by five permanent members with veto powers. The proposed reform in the Council is not for its democratization but its reconstitution according to the oligarchic realities of the post Cold War world. For details see Dimitris Bourantonis & Jarrod Wiener eds., *The United Nations in the New World order: The World Organisation at Fifty* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan,1996); The Executive Board of the IMF is constituted by twenty four members on the principle of plutocracy. The value of each member's vote (weight) is determined by its respective quota based on the size of its economy. The principle of aristocracy is the basis of the conventions to appoint the Managing Director of the IMF only from amongst European members and to appoint only a US citizen as President of the World Bank. For details see Peter B. Kenen ed. *Managing the World Economy: Fifty Years After Bretton Woods* (Washington D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1994). The formal structure and process of WTO is democratic but informally its functioning is dominated by the world trade majors –USA and EU. For details see *Economic and Political Weekly* 44, no. 50 (December 12, 2009): 6-7.

26. The concept of 'perpetual peace' was propounded by Immanuel Kant. For details see, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, 1795 available at http:// www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/kant/kant1.htm, accessed on 27 June 2012. Karl W. Deutsch argues through the concepts of 'security community' and 'peaceful change' for the dialectical evolution of the structure of relationship. For details see Karl W. Deutsch, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organisation in the Light of Historical Experience* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957).

27. Hegel used the concept of Zeitgeist to express the idea- 'the spirit of the times' or 'the spirit of the age'. For details see Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001), socserv.mcmaster.ca/eco/ugcm/3||3/hegel/history.pdf accessed on 28 June 2001.

28. *Ius cogens* is a doctrine of public policy or *ordre public*. It is recognised as a source of international law in Article 38(1) of the Statues of the International Court of Justice but even national law takes it into consideration. For details see Scott Davidson, *Human Rights* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990) p. 58.

29. One of the cardinal principles of Gandhi was his uncompromising stand to give importance to precept over power in his private as well as public life.

30. The seminal work published in 1972 based on a study of the Club of Rome which for the first time drew world attention to the unsustainable growth of the contemporary civilisation. For details see Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, Jorgen Randers, and William W. Behrens III, *The Limits to Growth* (New York: University Books, 1972).

31. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilisation?", *Foreign Affairs*, 72, no.3 (1993) : 22-44. This was in response to Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992). The two scholars share the goal of western universalism which according to Fukoyama has been established at the end of the Cold War with which Huntington disagrees and states that in the Post Cold War era culture has replaced ideology as the main threat to western global hegemonism.

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Gandhian Perspective on Tribal Resources and the Modern State

Birinder Pal Singh

ABSTRACT

The modern state, whatever be its nature and type, has come to stay. It has become an extremely powerful engine to steer the so-called traditional society on the path of development following the framework of western modernization. It is positively related to the development and multiplication of resources for the 'benefit of its people' but negatively related to the tribes. The present paper discusses the concept of tribes and the plundering of natural resources by the colonial and nationalist state to their detriment. It deliberates on the nature of modern science and technology showing how it is negatively related to tribal development. Finally it discusses the Gandhian alternative suggesting tribal friendly 'modernisation' against the Government of India's policy of their integration in the national mainstream. The paper argues that the modern state and its apparatus are theoretically and ideologically pitted against the tribes both in terms of their social decimation and physical dislocation.

"This is what was spoken by my great-grand father at the house he made for us…And these are the words that were given him by the Master of Life: 'At some time there shall come among you a stranger, speaking a language you do not understand. He will try to buy the land from you, but do not sell it; keep it for an inheritance to your children.'"

<div align="right">
Aseenewub – Red Lake Ojibwe
(First Nation People of Canada)
</div>

THE QUESTION OF tribal identity and their economy has once again got into the eye of the storm in India in the recent past. The tribal area in question is believed by the anthropologists to host the earliest people not only in this country but on this earth generally. This resource rich belt is in the news where the Indian army and

other paramilitary forces are clashing with tribal people and the members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). They are fighting to protect their land and resources fearing physical dislocation in the wake of economic development. The opening up of Indian economy to the global corporations eying the material resources there, have triggered this clash of interests between the local stake holders and the big businesses.

The tribes constitute 8.4 percent of the Indian population as per 2001 census and they are spread all over the country. Certain pockets make home to large proportion of these people.[1] For instance, the major part of North-East with seven sisters is wholly tribal while Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh have substantial population of ancient tribes. Some 'developed' states of Punjab and Haryana refuse to recognise their presence though they are very much there.[2]

The Government of India identifies tribes as characterised by indications of primitive traits, distinct culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with the community at large, and backwardness.[3] This ideal-typical characterisation of a tribe does not apply to majority of the tribes now though it may still do well with people inhabiting the core of tribal belt. The governmental bureaucracy and the anthropologists always look forward to clear and precise definitions of their subject matter that the social reality ever defies. It is relevant to quote Dube: "In the Indian context the term tribe has never been defined precisely and satisfactorily. It was used, at one time, to denote a bewildering variety of social categories that were neither analogous nor comparable. The Rajput and the Jat as well as the aboriginals, for example, were categorized as tribes... *At no stage, however, did we have a set of clear indicators of tribalness*"[4] (emphasis added). The problem of definition is not unique to the Indian situation; it is also a general problem in anthropology as well.[5]

The issue here is not to discuss the problem of definition but only to suggest the very vagueness of their characterisation that speaks of the attitude of the powers that be towards them. As I understand, a definition is not and should not be an end in itself, but only a means to understand and explain the social or physical reality. It often leads the whole issue astray and one gets bogged down focusing on theoretical nuances and its applications only. The state or academia may be defining these people as aborigines, indigenous, primitives, savages, first nation people and so on. But it is certain that often most of these people remain marginalised in all parts of the world with animal-like existence from which they should be rescued, educated and civilised. They may be physically evacuated

from their habitat, if necessary, for developmental purposes - so very essential for the economy of a modern nation-state.

The problem of tribal identity and their resources has become contentious again. Earlier tribal settlements in and around the forests were not usually interfered with by the feudal lords or urban/rural elite. It happened with the onset of industrial revolution and subsequent expansion of economy and society. Consequently, the urban, 'civilised' merchant capitalist started encroaching upon the territory of the tribal or indigenous people for trading the forest produce, their natural wealth. The expansion of industry, market and urbanisation is largely dependent upon the forest. Pointedly, in India, it started with British colonialism.

The connection between colonialism and modernisation is well established in liberal bourgeois theory. Even in the eyes of a Marxist it had awakened the sleeping societies from slumber, their changelessness hence a positive development in their history which is expected to usher them into the modern era. To the functional sociologists virtues of modernity and modernisation have made possible social change in the traditional and backward societies. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of the independent India too befriended a famous anthropologist Verrier Elwin, to formulate policies for their development. To certain scholars like Ramchandra Guha, the tribal identity of the North-East owes more to Elwin than anybody else.[6]

In the process of modernisation and development, paradoxically the tribes got marginalized further. As a matter of fact their state and fate is inversely related to modernization which has become more intense with globalization. Jairus Banaji cites data: "there are about 40,000 natives left in Australia as opposed to 2,50,000 at the beginning of the 19th century, most, if not all, of them hungry and disease ridden, threatened in their deserts by mining plants, nuclear testing sites and missile ranges. Between 1900 and 1950 over 90 tribes have been wiped out in Brazil".[7] This has resulted in the rapid disappearance of the "primitive totality", the "tribal microcosm" and "will, within a few decades, entirely cease to exist." [8]

The 'Red Indians' in the USA numbered 8,46,000 in 1492, but they were reduced to 3,37,366 in 1937. Now only 300 tribes survive out of a total of 2,000 who still have 250 languages and dialects.[9] More recently, T.K. Oommen notes:

> In 1787, Australia's population was entirely aboriginal, but after 200 years of colonization in 1988 it became a mere 1 per cent. The estimates of Native Americans at the time of European contact vary between 2 to

5 million, but after 500 years of European occupation it dwindled to a mere 2,50,000… Half of these populations live in 260 reservations meant for them, the remaining are 'integrated' into mixed localities.[10]

Tribes meet the same fate everywhere thus validating a Maori proverb: "A white man's rat has driven away the native rat so the European fly drives away our own, and the clover kills our fern, so will the Maoris disappear before the white man himself."[11] It was not the fear of the indigenous and the illiterate alone but the dictum of a modern scientist, Charles Darwin: "Where the European has trod, death seems to pursue the aboriginal."[12] Thus the fear of the alien in tribal mind is not out of place. It is no phobia emerging out of their narrow mindedness. Let us read Levi-Strauss' lamentation too in this context that the Europeans had been so obsessed with power that, in their desire to remake the world in their own image, they had willingly destroyed most of the technologically primitive societies on this planet and paved the way for a new age of 'monoculture'.[13] He stressed the urgent need to preserve these native cultures since these are disintegrating faster than the radioactive bodies.

The tribes are not to be seen as a static, homogenous, primitive people that neither want change nor mobility. We may see a continuum of their types specialising in certain occupations depending upon their location in space. Those on the fringes of urban centres did trading, some specialised in making weapons and smelting iron etc. while others farther away pursued their traditional life style whatever that was and whatever meagre they could produce for their subsistence. They were happy and contented with themselves. Baidyanath Saraswati's characterization of tribe as "masters of their microworld" with an "aesthetically perfect rhythm of life" and "that their lifestyle changes within an unalterable form beyond which they perish" is instructive.[14]

The tribes thus had the wealth of peace of mind and contentment rather the material riches, the *maya* that makes the dominant culture of the present day capitalist society. The Bollywood icons of the day like Shah Rukh Khan ask you: "Don't be *santusht* (satisfied). Wish for Dish." The younger vulnerable audience is sure to follow his prescription of desiring more and more but not Gandhi's advice of *aparigraha*. The tribals had mastered the art of managing their lives with local resources howsoever meagre and paltry. They collected the raw material, processed it and made it into consumable items both for self consumption and for selling and/or exchanging other essential commodities from outside. This method of production and restrained consumption helped them conserve and regenerate their

resources, which is why they could sustain themselves and the natural resources for millennia.

Resources

Resources for the tribals, as for any people but surely less than the consumerist modern ones, had ever been important and shall remain so howsoever scientific and technological developments might have taken place. We may talk of two types of resources. One is the natural type –food, clothing and shelter– that the tribal people had always been utilizing and consuming since millennia for their survival. All needs were met from direct or indirect consumption of natural resources. The other type is traditional wisdom/knowledge to cope up with nature for their (social) existence that has now been made obsolete and redundant; hence the need to master the art and craft of new techniques and methods.

It is my submission that presently the tribal people are at great disadvantage on both counts. Their natural resources are being usurped through devious ways and the modern education is deluding them for various reasons that cannot be discussed here for reasons of space.

The tribes depending upon their location had pursued major and minor occupations specific to their material conditions and specialised in various productive activities making items of domestic and other use, not only for themselves but also for other communities. They crafted them aesthetically and obtained from the non-tribals, earlier in kind and later in cash, those items they needed for their consumption and survival. They also collected herbs and edibles from the forest for similar purposes. Many tribes like the Bangala have specialised in making and selling *desi* medicines. Most of them even today, despite market economy, never go for aggressive sales of their products. They remain satisfied with whatever they could sell comfortably.

It was not the local market that encouraged plundering of the forest but the colonial government itself was a great buyer of these products which is why the Forest Department was established in 1864. The government became the owner of all forests. Guha notes: "...by 1860 Britain had emerged as the world leader in deforestation, devastating its own forests and the forests of Ireland, South Africa, north-eastern United States, and parts of colonial coastal India to draw timber for shipbuilding, iron smelting and farming. In India, a generally hostile attitude to forest preservation was reinforced by the belief, widespread among colonial administration, that forests were an impediment to the expansion of agriculture and consequently

to the generation of land revenue."[15] He quotes Thomas Weber that the "destructive energy of the British race all over the world was rapidly converting forests into desert."[16] It would be pertinent to note that Britain then had a worldwide empire.

Till the advent of consumer market the tribal villages had their specific tracts of forest from where all the households had equal right and share in its wealth be it fuel wood, fodder, timber, fruit, herbs and other edibles. During my fieldwork (1993) in a remote Pangi valley of Himachal Pradesh where people still live as in ancient times, I was informed that the forest there is very rich, with a variety of edibles. The village panchayat fixes a date for their collection. Most of these items are commercially expensive and fetch them a good price in the neigbouring plains. Earlier they used some to exchange items of domestic use. But since the project of road building employing outside (from Bihar and Nepal) labour started, the villagers harvested these items before they matured because the outsiders would leave nothing for them. The government officers from outside the valley caused havoc to the fine timber of Cedar and Walnut, the latter know as raw material for making high quality furniture. The opening up of the hitherto landlocked valley to the outsiders has resulted in huge losses to the forest and its people. The Chenab Timber Agency supported by the British axed 5,04,955 high quality Cedars (Deodar) in this valley between 1852-87 of which 4,47,133 were cut down in three years (1860-63).[17]

Furer-Haimendorf notes: "In Northeast India there are to this day tribes among whom specific forest tracts with clearly defined boundaries are claimed as clan or village property, where only members of the clan or village in question are allowed to hunt or cut firewood." [18] He explains the general situation in India: "Tribal communities dwelling in enclaves inside the forest were either evicted or denied access to the forest produce on which they had depended for many necessities. Thus arose a conflict between the traditional tribal ownership and the state's claim to the entire forest wealth. Numerous revolts, ...were the direct result of the denial of the local tribals' right in the forests which they had always considered their communal property."[19]

The problem of encroaching the tribal wealth and property was not a rule with colonial power alone. The present day democratically elected Government of India is also carrying out the legacy of its colonial masters. The globalised economy has invited large manufacturing and trading corporations to the mineral rich tribal belt of central India, home to the oldest living tribes in the country. The natives resisting the loss of their land and forest are persecuted

by labelling them as Maoists, posing threat to the law and order of the land. The government launched the Operation Green Hunt (2009) deploying the paramilitary and police forces combing the 'Maoist infested' forests to capture those responsible for this menace.

Arundhati Roy who travelled to Chhattisgarh writes: "Over the past five years or so, the governments of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal have signed hundreds of MoUs (Memorandum of Understanding) with corporate houses, worth several billion dollars, all of them secret, for steel plants, sponge-iron factories, power plants, aluminium refineries, dams and mines. In order for the MoUs to translate into real money, tribal people must be moved. Therefore, this war."[20] She continues:

> The antagonists in the forest are disparate and unequal in almost every way. On one side is a massive paramilitary force armed with the money, the firepower, the media, and the hubris of an emerging Superpower. On the other, ordinary villagers armed with traditional weapons, backed by a superbly organised, hugely motivated Maoist guerrilla fighting force with an extraordinary and violent history of armed rebellion. …Each time, they have re-emerged, more organised, more determined and more influential than ever. Today once again the insurrection has spread through the mineral rich forests of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal – homeland to millions of India's tribal people, dreamland to the corporate world.'[21]

Amit Bhaduri, a noted economist has this to say: "In Chhattisgarh, tribals are being forcibly evacuated in thousands from their villages in the name of fighting extremism under the Salwa Judum[22] and carted off to huddle in Vietnam-style concentration camps while the corporations greedily eye their mineral resource rich land."[23] He elaborates:

> And this process of internal colonization is being carried out in India today by the state for "public purpose", by handing over land for mining to large private corporations like the Tatas and Jindals and others. This is the name of the game everywhere: iron ore rich lands in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa are all covered by mysterious memorandums of understanding between giant corporations and the concerned state governments. They are seldom revealed, despite applications under the Right to Information Act...Very often, even supporting infrastructure is provided by the government at public cost...It shows up in the fast growth of corporate profit and wealth...According to one set of estimates, corporate profit since the mid-1990s has grown three times faster than the country's GDP.[24]

The recent tribal revolts are a legacy of the pan Indian phenomenon that started in the latter half of the eighteenth century with the advent of British colonialism that tried to harness the mineral wealth of their home, the forest. Each decade of the British rule – from 1778 to 1947– witnessed a series of resistances and rebellions in one or other part of the country. The first recorded tribal revolt was carried out in 1778 by the Pahariya Sirdars of Bihar in the east against the British government followed by the Koli disturbances in the western state of Maharashtra in 1784-85. The Koya uprising in the south (Andhra Pradesh) took place in 1803 while the Assam tribes in the far north-east revolted in 1828. In north India Meos and Minas too revolted against the Raj. Some of these revolts have become a part of the folklore not only of a particular tribe but of the whole region.

If one looks at the factors that sparked off these uprisings, the invasion of their territory and the communal property of forest especially curbing their rights since times immemorial and subsequently their evacuation from there were primary. The question of insider versus outsider, *diku* for instance, is also very important be it the British, the local lord or the traders and contractors. Exploring the relation of tribals with the great Indian mutiny of 1857, Singh argues: "…participation of such communities in the 1857 uprising was the culmination of almost sixty years of their resistance to the colonial rule. The tribal movements in this phase from the end of the 18th century to 1857 have been described as primary forms of resistance, elemental, spontaneous, violent, led by tribal chiefs or other chiefs, aimed at overthrowing the colonial authority that destroyed the old system."[25]

The whole issue of resistance and rebellion arose when these tribes were left with no alternative with respect to the plundering of their resources and threatened with evacuation. I believe they never bothered about other tacit or covert exploitation, given their naivety and innocence about the deceitful activities of the urbane non-tribals. When one looks into the intricacies of each revolt, different precipitating factors may be identified that on surface may appear dissimilar but the core issue remains the same. This is also true that each tribe is not going to behave similar. A variety of issues and concerns are relevant for an in depth understanding of their problems and issues case by case. Roy Burman argues sociologically: "The foregoing case studies show that while the presence of internal stratification does not by itself play a decisive role in mobilizing the tribals to take organised action against the loss of their resources, particularly land resources, it still has some relevance in determining

the course of events."[26] Later he himself attests to the exception of internal stratification in the case of Santals who made a powerful rebellion in 1855.

Troisi who studied the Santal rebellion and other movements, notes that "all of which were powerful expression of the collective protest of the Santals against conditions of economic exploitation and social oppression."[27] He concludes: "Our analysis of the three movements shows that the rebellion was restorative in nature in that it aimed at the expulsion of the British Raj and the Hindu landlords, money-lenders and traders, and sought to usher in the earlier autonomy and social order. It had a religious rationale which was effective in mobilizing the people for the achievement of the primary objective – the restoration of the Santal Raj."[28]

Ghanshyam Shah reviewing the literature on tribal movements shows an element of continuity between the pre- and post-independence movements in India:

> Various studies on tribal movements highlight the militancy of the *adivasis* in various struggles during the pre- and post-independence period. They also point out that the line between the changing nature of the issues that the tribals raised in the past and the present movement is thin and getting blurred as the tribals become peasants. Few scholars believe that *adivasis* because of their locale and dependence on natural resources are closer to nature. They respect nature. Hence their struggles ... particularly in the nineteenth century largely focused on their land and forest rights. [29]

Amit Prakash studying decolonisation and tribal policy in Jharkhand reinforces the above argument: "Effective utilisation of mineral resources required greater degree of direct rule. Consequently, a system of exclusion premised on direct paternalistic rule by the Governor of the province through the district officers developed in this region. It was this model of exclusion that went on to significantly influence the tribal policy of later years as well that of the independent Indian State."[30] I have discussed elsewhere:

> A perusal of the seven major cases of tribal rebellions in different parts of India…, suggests that the central issue everywhere had been a deep seated concern of the indigenous communities for preserving their natural resources they had been using for their subsistence since times immemorial. It never occurred to them that someone from outside could grab their resources and direct them either not to use these the way they used or pay a price for that. It was sheerly unthinkable… They are not given to calculating gains and losses in terms of the modern market rationality.[31]

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Further, Raghavaiah sums up, "the tribals also put up their fight to safeguard their honour, to protect their cherished freedom, and to get redress against the money lender, the Zamindar, and other parasitic land-holders, who tried to deprive them of all they had."[32]

Let me conclude this discussion by citing Furer-Haimendorf's observation on aboriginal rebellions in southern India:

> I do not refer here to the war-like frontier tribes… but to the rebellions of the primitive aboriginal tribes of Peninsular India, such as the Santal Rebellion in Bihar, the Bhil Rebellion in Khandesh and the Rampa Rebellion in the East Godavari District. All these *rebellions were defensive* movements; they were the *last resort of tribesmen driven to despair by the encroachments of outsiders on their land or economic resources*… but the tribes of Middle India and the Deccan are on the whole so gentle and inoffensive that extreme provocation is necessary before they take the law into their own hands.[33] (emphasis added)

STATE

The problem of tribal development lies with the political and administrative system. These elite are interested neither in the tribal peoples' development nor in raking issues that do not favour them. The World Bank Report on the status of education and health services in India notes: "While official rules provide for the possibility of punitive action in the case of repeated absence, disciplinary action for absences are rare. Teachers and health workers are almost never fired."[34]

Why doesn't the political system generate demands for stronger supervision of providers? The World Bank Report continues: "Most of the countries in our sample are either democratic or have substantial elements of democracy. Yet provider absence in health and education is not a major election issue. Apparently, politicians do not consider campaigning on a platform of cracking down on absent providers to be a winning electoral strategy."[35]

Thus cutting the long story short, the present theory and practice of development in the world's largest democracy is not conducive to inclusive growth which is why the poor and the poorer communities are getting marginalized further. Arjun Sengupta et al write:

> These four groups of people – extremely poor, poor, marginal and vulnerable – constituted about 77 per cent of the population in 2003-04 (or 75 per cent according to the detailed consumer expenditure schedule). Most of them are living with an average DPCE below the international level of poverty of $ 2 per day and according to us this is the group

which should be identified as the common people in India (the "aam adami") who have been *bypassed by the high growth* performance..[36] (emphasis added)

Elaborating on the fate of *aam adami*, they suggest: "The level of education is an important determinant of poverty status as 86 per cent of the illiterates and 83.3 per cent of those with educational level up to primary school were in the lower strata of the poor and vulnerable in 2004-05."[37] And for the same year "91 per cent of SC/ST illiterates,… were in the poor and vulnerable group."[38]

The tribal people on the fringes of society, with poor literacy and lacking other infrastructure thus find it extremely difficult to enter the development stream. Our study of tribes in Punjab shows that besides Bangalas, Bazigars and Nats whose senior generation is still earning something from their traditional occupations, "all others are given to daily-wage unskilled labour in villages and towns, rag-picking, scrap (*kabad*) collection or selling petty goods as *pheriwalas* (hawkers). In all the communities that we have studied, only an insignificantly small section is working in the services sector, more than 98 per cent are given to petty jobs and errands."[39]

The modern state has not only engulfed the tribes that were hitherto least influenced by such an organization in their previous history but also allowed intrusion in the tribal world of the market forces both national and international that know of no relation other than domination and exploitation. The powerful market has subordinated the state itself. The analogy of genie dictating the master aptly sums up the relation between the two. A single MNC's assets are more than the GDP (gross domestic product) of many countries put together. How could poor tribals dare stand against them? If at all, for how long? A major function of the modern state is to ensure the overall growth and security of its people. In a liberal democracy who shall bother about the mandate of 8.4 percent people scattered countrywide for coming to power.

Even when the liberal state like ours has drafted numerous policies for the tribal peoples' welfare and development, it has not yielded positive results compared to the inputs claimed by the Indian government and the political elite. The present political system is rather opposed to the implementation of policies favouring them. C. R. Bijoy sums up the plight of adivasis in Kerala with respect to their land rights:

The lessons from Kerala are: (1) The present arrangement for protection of the interests of adivasis in the state has clearly failed in carrying out

its responsibility meaningfully; (2) nor does the present arrangement in the state have the inherent capacity to carry out its constitutional obligations; (3) the judicial response is inadequate; and (4) paternalism and sympathy for the plight of the adivasis, including their land problems, pretended or genuine, are insufficient by themselves to provide necessary impetus or the will to implement the acts that protect adivasis.[40]

Virginius Xaxa writes: "Despite the attempts at absorption through administrative practices at both the central and state levels over the last fifty years, the attainment of constitutional objectives is still an elusive goal, and is going to become more elusive in the future."[41] He notes that the Scheduled Castes have benefitted from the government schemes more than the Scheduled Tribes. He explains the phenomenon sociologically:

My contention is that exposure per se is not as important as the social structure they represent and of which they are a part. Besides being considered outside of "civilisation", tribes in India represented a different type of society. Tribal societies on the whole are small in size and are marked by a great deal of homogeneity despite being differentiated along the lines mentioned above. They are characterized more by similarity and resemblance than by differentiation and heterogeneity, especially in terms of their structural features. Thus tribal societies are marked by an absence of interdependence, division of labour and occupation, and correspondingly by a heterogeneity of values, skills, knowledge, income, wealth, status, and privilege.[42]

It is a pity that the central and state governments did not pay attention to the tribal people and their inaccessible areas for development till the MNCs' evinced interest in setting up business enterprises to tap the resources in areas home to numerous tribes. Recently, the government has drawn a plan to construct 25,000 kms long road network in the tribal areas by 2016 to fight naxalism. The priorities of the state are clear – roads to neutralise tribals resisting plundering of their resources and home.

Modern Science and Technology

The modern state following the philosophy of Enlightenment and development owes significantly to science and technology. It is, therefore, meaningful to look into the language of pioneers like Francis Bacon (1561-1626) responsible for setting the tone and tenour of modern science. Carolyn Merchant notes that for Bacon, 'Inquisition of nature is in any part interdicted or forbidden'. That nature must be 'bound into service' and made a 'slave', put 'in constraint' and

'moulded' by the mechanical arts. The 'searchers and spies of nature' were to discover her plots and secrets. Nature's womb harboured secrets that through technology could be wrested from her grasp for use in the improvement of human condition. Adam and Eve have been made sovereign over all other creatures. 'By art and the hand of man', nature should be 'forced out of her natural state and squeezed and moulded.' In this way 'human knowledge and human power meet as one.' She also notes about another great philosopher Rene Descartes who writes in his *Discourse on Method* (1637) that through knowing the crafts of the artisans and the forces of bodies we could 'render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature.' [43]

Seyyed Hossein Nasr in his book *Man and Nature* subtitled *The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* not only critiques these scholars but the whole European and Christian philosophy of those times that ushered in the present era of development through modern science and technology. He blames the loss of metaphysics and subordination of philosophy to this science with emphasis on quantitative information and data at the expense of qualitative data and interpretation. He writes:

> In order to reach certainty in knowledge through his famous method, Descartes had to reduce the rich diversity of external reality to pure quantity and philosophy to mathematics. His was a mathematicism, to use the term of Gilson, and henceforth Cartesian mathematicism became a permanent element of the scientific world view. The physics Descartes constructed through his method was rejected by Newton... But his mathematicism, the attempt to *reduce reality to pure quantity* with which one could deal in a purely mathematical way, has become the background of mathematical physics and unconsciously of many other sciences which desperately seek to find quantitative relationships between things by overlooking their qualitative aspect.[44] (emphasis added)

The modern state given to the twin processes of modernization and globalization with the help of modern science and technology has become a measure of civilisation and development. The development of modern science and technology has become an end in itself. The modern scientific temper is opposed to all that is traditional and religious. These modern processes have only added to the speed with which the tribal communities are going to witness their death. There is absolutely no chance of their survival under the given socio-economic and political conditions prevailing not only in India but anywhere in the world. There could be some respite to the tribal people for conserving their society and culture and the natural

resources in the socialist system of politics and administration at least in theory but in practice, there too it is impossible because socialism is also given to the above mentioned principles for the development of a nation-state in competition with the capitalist block. It also debunks tradition, the hallmark of tribal or primitive communities.

There was, during our freedom struggle and still is only one alternative, the Gandhian model of social and economic development where all three components, namely resources, tribes and the state could have a cordial and harmonious relation with one another such that one would lead to the growth and well being of the other. One shall not make foe to the other. This model of development will save both the tribal people and their resources from exploitation by the corporations through the state.

The tribal mode of village existence was absolutely compatible to Gandhi's philosophy of village India. He always said that India lives in villages and if its villages perish, India will perish too. Thus we should develop them further rather than towns and large cities that in fact "were a snare and a useless encumbrance and that people would not be happy in them, that there would be gangs of thieves and robbers, prostitution and vice flourishing in them and that poor men would be robbed by rich men." [45] He advocated that true democracy and justice could only be dispensed at the village level with decentralised administration and judicial system. He advocates:

> My idea of village *Swaraj* is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity… The Government of the village will be conducted by the *panchayat* of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishment in the accepted sense, this *panchayat* will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office… Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and the government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world.[46]

Thus there is need to strengthen the *gram* panchayat that was truly effective in every tribal society in the form of tribal or *kabila* panchayat. It has always been very powerful and operated at various levels from the village to a region. The tribal administration and Gandhi's formula are much in consonance with Rousseau's prescription: 'Democracy presupposes "many conditions that are

difficult to unite": small state, a *simple lifestyle*, a large measure of equality in rank and wealth and "*little or no luxury*".' [47] (emphasis added) But Gandhi's views were neither appreciated by Nehru nor by Ambedkar. Nehru writes to Gandhi in 1942: "I do not understand why a village should necessarily embody truth and nonviolence. A village, normally speaking, is backward intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made from a backward environment. Narrow-minded people are much more likely to be untruthful and violent."[48] And, to Ambedkar a village is a "sink of localism and den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness, and communalism."[49] But Gandhi's concept village (that may consist of about 1000 souls) is not the existing type bereft of all amenities.[50] He qualifies:

> An ideal Indian village will be so constructed as to lend itself to perfect sanitation. It will have cottages with sufficient light and ventilation, built of a material obtainable within a radius of five miles of it. The cottages will have courtyards enabling the householders to plant vegetables for domestic use and to house their cattle. The village lanes and streets will be free of all avoidable dust. It will have wells according to its needs and accessible to all. It will have houses of worship for all, also a common meeting place, a village common for grazing its cattle, a cooperative dairy, primary and secondary schools in which industrial education will be the central factor, and it will have village *panchayats* for settling disputes. It will produce its own grains, vegetables and fruit, and its own Khadi.[51]

Gandhi used to say that nature has everything for human needs but not for her greed. Thus the principle of sarvodaya must be invoked because that is the only way to allow sustenance of all natural species including the homo sapiens and the natural resources above all. That is why he likens it to *yajna*. In his own words: "A *yajna* is an act directed to the welfare of others, done without desiring any return for it, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature. "Act" here must be taken and includes thought and word, as well as deed. "Others" embraces not only humanity, but *all life*..." [52] And sarvodaya cannot be realised without practising poverty voluntarily, that is, *aparigraha*. Gandhi himself has strongly recommended the 'principle of non-possession' for attaining sarvodaya. He writes to Narandas:

> Non-possession is allied to non-stealing. A thing not originally stolen must nevertheless be classified as stolen property if we possess it without needing it. Possession implies provision for the future. A seeker after truth, a follower of the law of love, cannot hold anything against tomorrow. God never stores for the morrow. He never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment… The rich have a superfluous

store of things which they do not need, and which are therefore
neglected and wasted; while millions starve to death for want of
sustenance. If each retained possession only of what he needed, no one
would be in want and all would live in contentment.[53]

Incorporation of such principles of social, economic and political
development in the Indian Constitution would have relieved us from
the scourge of scams and scams. No activity is more criminal and
anti-national than depositing the nation's wealth in the Swiss Bank.
But the mentor of the Indian constitution remarked: "I am glad that
the Draft Constitution has discarded the village and adopted the
individual as its unit."[54]

Gandhi had given us not only an alternative model of development
but also redefined the concept of civilisation in direct contrast to the
modern western notion which is given more to material development
and physical comfort. He writes in *Hind Swaraj*: "This is considered
the height of civilisation. It has been stated that, as men progress,
they shall be able to travel in airship and reach any part of the world
in a few hours. Men will not need the use of their hands and feet.
They will press a button, and they will have their clothing by their
side. They will press another button, and they will have their
newspaper. A third, and a motor car will be waiting for them."[55] He
continues: "Civilisation seeks to increase bodily comforts, and it fails
miserably even in doing so." [56] He dubs it as 'irreligion', a 'disease'
but is optimistic that it is not incurable. Gandhi thought that modern
civilization had a depressing air of 'futility' and 'madness' about it
and was likely to destroy itself before long.

By critiquing western civilisation he had made a paradigmatic
revolution, but there were no takers and followers of his newness
including those very near and dear to him. It is our misfortune and a
tragedy for the poor and tribal people. He had asserted: "Civilization
in the real sense of the term consists not in the multiplication but in
the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants…If anyone
appropriates more than he really needs, he reduces his neighbour to
destitution."[57] Max Weber, the father of modern sociology also notes:
"A man does not 'by nature' wish to earn more and more money, but
simply to live as he lives and as he is accustomed to live, and to earn
as much as he is required to do so."[58]

I believe that the philosophy of voluntary poverty or non-
possession of goods, *aparigraha* as weaved by Gandhi into his theory
of non-violence, has tribal origin. It must be a theorization of their
practical existence as observed by our ancient sages and philosophers
who had a holistic vision of reality in which nature –the store house

of resources necessary for any kind of life– was to be feared and respected and not dominated and exploited as is the wont of modern civilisation and its science and technology. It is instructive to look into the proposition made by Nasr in restoring the balance between man and nature that has been ruptured by the modern science because Christianity 'came as a spiritual way without a Sacred Law'. He suggests: "A re-vitalized intellectual tradition based on a real metaphysical knowledge could firstly free philosophy from total slavery to the senses, the fruit of experimentation and empiricism, and secondly could help in the creation of a philosophy of nature which would outline the anatomy of nature and the different sciences that could be associated with it."[59] He continues: "A re-discovery of metaphysical knowledge, and a re-vitalization of theology and philosophy of nature could set a limit upon the application of science and technology. In the old days man had to be saved from nature. Today *nature has to be saved from man* in both peace and war."[60] (emphasis added)

Thus, it may be concluded that the existing modern state is theoretically, ideologically and practically pitted against the tribes. Its policies rather promote their physical dislocation and social decimation, I repeat, their physical dislocation and social decimation. Whatever measures might be taken and howsoever honest they may be, the twin processes of physical dislocation and social decimation remain unavoidable since the state is given to modernization of economy and society. Its citizens in competition with others wish to maximise their own material progress and profit based on exploitation of resources both human/cultural and natural, to be at Number One in some book of records. The benevolent state on the contrary is given to conserving all natural resources for the benefit of its people and their posterity, thus sharing these amongst them on basis of 'to each according to one's needs' only. If the modern state assumes such nature and character, then the whole debate between the two models of tribal development based on 'isolation' from the mainstream society and 'integration' with it, as of Verrier Elwin and G. S. Ghurye respectively in the case of India, will become redundant. The peace shall prevail everywhere thus realizing swaraj in letter and spirit.

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Gandhian Views on Democracy

K.P. Mishra

ABSTRACT

The nation, recently, witnessed a fierce debate on Anna Hazare's movement against corruption. The movement raised two major issues—people's discontent against corruption and apparent failure of Indian representative democracy. Electronic and print media posed Anna Hazare as another 'Gandhi.' Gandhi, again, with his views on democracy becomes relevant in the present perspective. Gandhian concept of democracy is different from the western representative democracy. Gandhi takes an individual as free moral agent who is self-regulated. Self-restraint and non-violence becomes the means to achieve the desired goal in his democratic set up. This paper deals with Gandhian views concerning different aspects of democracy. It submits that the original contribution of Gandhi lies in his emphasis on moral foundation of democracy.

"FOR REMOVING DISCONTENTMENTS," wrote Bacon, "or at least the danger of them; there is in every state (as we know) two portions of subjects; the nobles and the commonalty. When one of them is discontent, the danger is not great; for common people are of slow motion, if they be not excited by the greater sort; and the greater sort are of 'small strength', except the multitude be apt and ready to move of themselves."1 Similarly Anna Hazare's fast like 'small strength' led the eruption of people's discontent against corrupt practices of the ruling class of the politicians and bureaucrats as well as, indirectly though, the capitalists. This movement could be regarded as an eye -catching phenomenon since the initiation of liberalisation in India. Academicians and media persons extensively debated the issues raised during the movement. Whether the method adopted by Anna was Gandhian or not was one of the points of discussion. The supporters visualised him as another Gandhi while for others the 'messianism' of the former was 'fundamentally anti-democratic.'2 On

the other hand the Anna team and the supporting intellectuals laid emphasis on people's sovereignty in the true sense of the term. Moreover, there were different opinions regarding the social base of the movement led by Anna among media persons, and some of them were accused of making him a larger than life figure. Interestingly, there was a sharp linguistic divide within the media. Arvind Rajgopal pointed out, "Thus coverage of the movement was mainly in terms of a 'with-us-or-against us' approach. It should be noted that the Hindi channels adopted a more positive attitude on the whole than the English language media, who were more critical."[3] One of the main issues of contention was the social base of Anna's movement. Whether it had mass support or was narrowly restricted to urban middle class? All the above issues were in the focus of extensive debates through various forums. Therefore, they have not been addressed in this paper.

Amidst euphoria and reasoned discussions two issues appeared to be crucial, which were completely overlooked. First, it was the apparent failure of the Indian representative democracy to satisfy people's expectations. In other words, the legitimacy of the elected representatives was questioned. Consequently, citizens' participation in the decision-making emerged as an important issue in the context of Indian democracy. Secondly, Gandhian method of political action captured the attention of the commons who could get a glimpse of what a non-violent movement was like. The Gandhian view of democracy was the missing link in all these debates. This paper is a modest attempt to fill this gap. How did Gandhi visualise democracy in India? It is well-known that he was critical of western representative democracy. Could he provide an alternative model? What was the meaning of democracy for him? Was it only a method of electing government or a means to build a just socio-politico-economic order? For Gandhi what was the proper function of representation? What was the role of citizens in a democracy in his thought? All these issues deserve to be discussed.

Liberalism appeared as a response against autocratic monarchy, feudal economy, and the powerful Church claiming superiority over society and the State. It advocated for maximum freedom for individual, regarded as a rational and free subject. To counter absolutism of the state and supremacy of the church, liberalism laid emphasis on the distinction between society and the State and separation of politics from religion respectively. In the economic sphere, it stood for free market economy based on free competition in which the state had to adopt the policy of *laissez-faire*. In both, politics and economy, liberalism accorded primacy to individual and society was regarded as a sum total of atomistic individuals. Consequently,

an individual ceased to be a member of his community. Liberal conception of individual also impinged upon its variant of democracy. Ramashray Roy rightly remarks, "The essence of a democratic system is the centrality of individual *qua* individual as free agent responsible for determining his wants derived from his own nature and doing all he can to satisfy them."[4] Hence, the problem related to harmony of individual freedom and social interest remained unsolved in the framework of liberal democracy for the reason of apparent dichotomy between economy and polity. In the economic activity, an individual was expected to pursue his self-interest while in politics he had to make a rational choice taking account of public interest.

An individual, for Gandhi, is a free moral agent and to realise his moral capacity of development he has to control his self-interest, to renounce his desires of material comfort, and to minimise his life needs voluntarily. So,"...a democrat must be utterly selfless."[5] Democracy provides opportunities for individual's moral progress and enables him to be enlightened enough to live self-regulated life. He realises his freedom by obeying 'self-imposed law of moral restraints.' Gandhi suggests that individual's moral sense impels one to 'willing submission to social restraints for the well-being of the whole of society.' Hence individual is not alienated from his fellows and he works for the interest of the whole community. Gandhi is critical of 'unrestricted individualism' that "is the law of the beasts of the jungle."[6] Here a question may arise that in Gandhian thought individual has to live under social restraint that is, sometimes, antithetical to his freedom. On this issue Gandhi proposes that individual can resist unjust social practices and satyagraha is an appropriate technique of action for fighting all types of injustices. Satyagraha constituting truth, non-violence, and voluntary suffering, presents a solution of the problem emerging out of the dichotomy of individual freedom and social control. In addition Gandhi does not make a false distinction among individual's various activities like social, economic, political, etc. He is primarily concerned with community or society and State is secondary for him. The individual, in all walks of his life, is always expected to be guided by moral principles and he voluntarily identifies himself with social good. He is also a votary of non-violence that connotes love for all and respect for the dignity of all human beings. Thus, Gandhian conception of individual is fundamentally different from that of liberalism and it has a different implication for democracy.

Western representative democracy has been primarily considered as a form of government in which power rests with the people. They exercised their power through election of the representatives who,

on the basis of people's mandate, have the legitimate right to rule. Therefore representative democracy is procedural and far from being responsive and accountable to citizens. In this system citizens have no control over collective decisions affecting their lives because they have not been provided opportunities and institutional arrangements to take part in the decision-making process. David Held appropriately remarks, "... the requirement of democratic participation, the form of democratic control, and the scope of democratic decision-making are all insufficiently examined in the liberal democratic tradition."[7] Consequently, common people become apathetic to political participation and the same is reflected in declining percentage of votes cast in the election in the western countries. That is why Gandhi argues that western democracy is only 'so called' where common people feel helpless against the repressive power of the state. He is critical of Western democracy that is 'diluted Nazism or Fascism' because it is 'no less based on violence' than the latter. In view of Gandhi exploitative systems such as capitalism and imperialism can only be sustained through violence. In addition, democracy narrowly conceived as a political system in liberal framework fails to take proper account of socio-economic bottlenecks which tend to hamper proper functioning of democratic government. Carter and Stokes remark, "... liberal democracy does not take sufficient account of economic and social realities that inhibit individual fulfilment and the creation of a fully democratic society and polity."[8] Thus Gandhi extends the meaning of democracy from being a form of government, predominant in liberal framework, to socio-economic spheres.

Gandhi admires democracy as 'a great institution' but he also warns against its abuses. Furthermore, he qualifies his concept of democracy as 'disciplined and enlightened' which is 'the finest thing in the world.' Democracy, for Gandhi is not only a form of government but it relates with all walks of human life. He accepts that individual is the centre of democracy which can be evolved by his continuous endeavour. Therefore, Gandhi suggests, "Democracy has to be built up inch by inch in economic, social and political life."[9] Thus he stands for the democratisation of socio-politico-economic structure. But in his view this goal cannot be achieved by the State as an embodiment of coercive power. It requires a collective effort on the part of individuals. Hence brotherhood becomes an important ingredient of Gandhian conception of democracy. He writes, "The spirit of democracy requires the inculcation of the spirit of brotherhood..."[10] He suggests a different kind of social relationships based on brotherhood with all in place of interplay of self-interests of individuals. Gandhian concept of brotherhood is based on his belief

in spiritual equality of man because "… there is the same self in all of us; everyone has a hidden power which he can make manifest at any time and become great. Democracy consists in developing that power."[11] Democracy has a moral purpose that is to promote moral progress of all people. The basic goal for Gandhi is the common good of all especially the weakest section of society. Through democracy it can be fulfilled because it 'essentially' means "… the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all."[12] Hence the individual feeling the spirit of brotherhood for all his fellows can sacrifice his self-interest voluntarily for the promotion of the common good. In this way he also works as a catalyst for change in the power structure that is likely to be exploitative for the weaker.

Non-violence, for Gandhi, is the basic principle of human life and it is integrally linked with democracy. Therefore, his ideal system is essentially non-violent that is 'self-regulated' where "…there is no political power because there is no state."[13] Gandhi is a well-known critic of the State which is based on violence. He visualises an ideal condition of society in which the State ceases to exist by virtue of moral progress of men. Hence theoretically Gandhi is regarded as an anarchist but he qualifies his ideal as 'a state of enlightened anarchy' in which 'everyone is his own ruler.' However he realises that the 'ideal is never fully realised in life'.

As an alternative Gandhi propounds his conception of ideal political order or *Ramrajya*. He makes two suggestions to avoid misunderstanding for readers. First, the concept of *Ramrajya* has no relation to any religion including Hinduism as commonly understood. Secondly, Gandhi is not concerned with its historical reality. He elaborates some broad features of *Ramrajya* in these words: "It can be religiously translated as Kingdom of God on Earth; politically translated, it is perfect democracy in which, inequalities based on possession and non-possession, colour, race or creed or sex vanish; in it, land and State belong to the people, justice is prompt, perfect and cheap and, therefore, there is freedom of worship, speech and the press—all this because of the reign of the self-imposed law of moral restraint."[14] For him, *Ramrajya* symbolises 'one of true democracy' which entails a just and equitable social order in which "…the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest."[15] Therefore, justice is a basic determinant of his ideal non-violent socio-political system and Gandhi points out, "The first condition of non-violence is justice all around in every department of life."[16]

Politics aims at seizing and maintaining political power where

morality has no role to play. But Gandhi posits an entirely different conception of politics which tends to change the social relationships and it is 'a means of enabling people to better their condition.' In this regard he pins his hope in people's power and goal of democracy can be achieved through 'mass effort and mass education.' Constructive work, for Gandhi, is a means to build up democracy by maintaining contact with the people and to educate them. Thus it can work as an instrument to generate people's power. In his life he simultaneously worked for both, constructive programmes and political movement. In his view politics is integrally linked with morality and it requires 'purity of conduct.' By active involvement in the constructive activities an individual becomes morally capable to associate himself with higher life purposes and free himself from the 'slavery of desires.' At the same time, it is also conducive to the growth of non-violence in his life. Therefore, Gandhian politics makes men better, it promotes harmony in social relations, and it also aims to change society through non-violent means. This concept of politics is moral and spiritual that is in sharp contrast to the power-centric view.

Gandhi maintains that democracy is that form of government where 'power is shared by all.' It implies that the powerful people are not in a position to suppress the voice of the common man. In Gandhi's view "... democracy means the rule of the man in the street"[17] Therefore, the lowest limb of society has also an effective say in the government which works for the full protection of the former. Gandhi proposes that proper safeguard of the rights of the weakest is a crucial yardstick of any democratic government. His famous '*talisman*' also prescribes the same. Secondly, Gandhi lays emphasis on the delivery of justice. In his view true democracy is one in which a common citizen is sure of 'swift justice without any elaborate and costly procedure.' Therefore justice for all regardless of status and wealth is another parameter of democracy and when common people lose their faith in the justice delivery system, it will be ruination of the democratic government.

Gandhi advocates that a democratic government must be decentralised and for that matter he propounds his central concept of 'village republic' which symbolises 'perfect democracy.' He argues that participation of common men, a *sine* qua *non* of any democracy, can be achieved only through decentralisation. Therefore, establishment and proper functioning of grassroots institutions is essential for involvement of the common people in the decision-making process. Consequently, people collectively take decisions for furtherance of common interest which connotes self-government. Gandhi suggests that only self-government can foster good

government. In addition, democratic government is based on non-violence which can be possible only in a decentralised system because centralisation leads to violence.

Gandhi firmly believes in the liberty of individuals but he does not adhere to its negative concept that is the absence of restraints. He argues that freedom is a precondition of full expression of one's personality. In addition he reiterates that man is 'essentially a social being.' He suggests 'a mean between individual freedom and social restraints.' Furthermore, Gandhi opines that "No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom."[18] Moreover, he advocates freedom of thought and expression for all individuals and in his view 'independent thinking is the very essence of the spirit of democracy' and 'freedom of speech and corresponding action is the breath of democratic life.' Democracy, in its proper form, must ensure equal freedom for all. Obviously it implies tolerance towards dissent as well as criticism of the State. But at the same time he prescribes voluntary restraints on the individual who voluntarily submits to the rule of law in the common interest. Therefore individual's freedom is determined by his own moral endeavour to be free from his desires which is the main reason behind conflict in any society.

Gandhi admits that democracy must be free from exploitation. It should promote equality because inequality spawns exploitation. Therefore, the remedy lies in 'equitable relationship' between the owners of the means of production e.g. landlords and capitalists, and the labourer. Gandhi also points out that political freedom 'must include real economic freedom of the starving millions.' Apparently, he is concerned with the poor, the most vulnerable section of society and at the same time he adds the word 'real' which means freedom from economic hardships in the real sense of the term. Similarly, economic equality in his views denotes satisfaction of the basic needs as he clarifies: "Economic equality must never be supposed to mean possession of an equal amount of worldly goods by everyone. It does mean, however, that everyone will have a proper house to live in, sufficient and balanced food to eat, and sufficient khadi with which to cover himself."[19] Furthermore he advocates equality of status of all human beings regardless of wealth and power that is the hallmark of democracy. Equality before law is one of the basic principles of liberal conception of equality. Gandhi also accepts this principle, but he also asserts equal opportunity for all. Therefore, liberty and equality are integrally linked together and the latter must be concrete or real in view of Gandhi. However, the goal of equality cannot be achieved by the coercive power of the State, but the same can be realised only through non-violent means.

Democracy cannot flourish without secularism because equality of all citizens presupposes that power of the State must not be used in favour of any religious group. Rajeev Bhargava, exploring the interrelationships between secularism and democracy writes, "Secularism is a condition of democracy. If democracy is to exist or survive, different religious groups, no matter what their numerical strength, must renounce the idea that they can use the political process to implement an agenda in toto, to create a society congruent only with their particular values and interests."[20] However, secularism entails the separation of the State from religion which, as Bhargava maintains, is political secularism. In addition freedom of religion and recognition of individuals as equal citizens regardless of their religion are two other cardinal features of secularism.[21] Gandhi, commonly misunderstood on the issue of the relation between religion and politics, submits in clear terms that his politics cannot be divorced from religion. In this regard his meaning of religion should not be overlooked. Religion, for him, connotes 'a belief in ordered moral government of the universe' and it has nothing to do with any religious sect. On the issue of religious freedom, Gandhi's stand is crystal clear that every citizen must be allowed to practise his own religion. At the same he exhorts people to cultivate tolerance and to respect one another's religion. In addition, Gandhi affirms that State is based on 'religious neutrality' which does not favour any religion. He succinctly points out, "In free India every religion should prosper in terms of equality..."[22] Gandhi adheres to the principle of the separation between religion and the State as well as politics and categorically tells, "Religion is a personal matter which should have no place in politics."[23] Moreover he is also critical of intermingling of politics and religion and in his view it is 'wrong to import religious differences into political discussion' and appeals to the Congressman to 'make religious neutrality his creed in every walk of life.' Therefore, Gandhi is in full agreement of the different aspects of secularism and their crucial importance for democracy.

Democracy epitomised government by the people. In practice, it is characterised by the rule of popularly elected representatives. Election not only provides the basis of legitimacy for representative democracy, but is also considered as an instrument in the hands of people to check their representatives. Barring elections, people have little control over the elected persons and their decisions. Eric Hobsbawm rightly comments, "Between elections— that is to say, usually for several years— democracy exists only potential threat to their or their party's re-election."[24] Therefore, representative democracy is very often criticised for limited scope of people's

participation. Rousseau, a well-known critic of representation, comments on the British system, the earliest model of representative democracy, in these words: "The people of England regards itself as free; but it is grossly mistaken; it is free only during the election of members of parliament. As soon as they are elected, slavery overtakes it, and it is nothing."[25] Similarly Gandhi is also a harsh critic of British Parliament which is 'sterile woman and prostitute' and it is 'really emblems of slavery' in his views. Therefore he is seriously concerned with the problem of the gap between the elected representatives and the people in-between the elections. The legitimacy of the ruler, as Gandhi submits, depends on moral imperatives. The ruler and the ruled, both are morally bound to exercise self-restraint. He urges the rulers to use their power judiciously. Secondly, Gandhi is reluctant to allow immoral practices of the ruler to take cover under the veil of private life. Hence he clearly states, "The public life and the private life of a public servant are interrelated."[26] Besides Gandhi also wants to bridge the gap between the ministers and common people and exhorts the former to live a simple life. He strictly warns that nation's "representatives dare not to live in a style and manner out of all correspondence with their electors."[27] In addition, he suggests that the children of both, ministers and the common man, should study in the same school. Individual has a crucial role to play in democracy. Hence the responsibility lies on his shoulders too. Gandhi urges the public to watch those persons who are elected to positions of power. It seems to be true that "A most democratic Minister is likely to go wrong without ceaseless watch from the public."[28] Legislators and ministers are supposed to be the servants of their electors and they are obliged to work according to the wishes of the people. Gandhi admits that public opinion is 'the only force at the disposal of democracy.' Therefore, the yardstick for the existence of democracy is that the people's voice is not only allowed to be heard, but also accorded due honour. Public opinion must be pure, and an expression of public interest. Gandhi detests public opinion which is artificially created. What is crucial in public opinion for him is the spirit of public good, not the number of people holding certain views. Like Rousseau's General Will, Gandhi accepts that even one person having purity of heart can represent the public opinion regardless of the support of the majority.

Election is the pillar of democracy. Gandhi supports adult suffrage in unequivocal terms. Every adult citizen must enjoy the right to vote regardless of any distinction. Gandhi does not approve the principle that literacy, as suggested by some persons, can be a precondition of adult suffrage. Nonetheless he lays emphasis on the

education of the people. Free and fair election is regarded as the cornerstone of democracy. On this issue Gandhi suggests some important measures. In the election the candidate should seek public support, and try to persuade the voters to cast their votes in his favour. Gandhi suggests that the process of persuasion must be based on reason. He also criticises the tendency of playing upon the passions of the masses. While referring to the test of literacy as a criterion for suffrage he points out that the election campaign itself can provide sufficient education to the voters. Furthermore, he suggests that people's support can be garnered by none other than the 'inner purity' of the candidates. "Preparedness to lose all elections", writes Gandhi, "rather than sacrifice a principle, is the surest way to success at every election."[29]

In a vast and populous country like India elections have become very costly and huge amount of public money is spent in conducting the elections which are likely to be influenced by (black) money power. Another issue is concerned with the extent of the parliamentary constituencies. The Member of the Parliament is supposed to represent more than one or two million of people and it is almost impossible to be in constant touch with his electors. On the other hand he is, in most of the cases, not elected by the majority of the voters thanks to first-past-the-post system. Therefore, it is hard time to ponder over the issues related to election expenditure, population of the constituency, and the method of election. Gandhi presents a proposal for election of the legislators at the different levels as follows: "We must remember that we have 700,000 villages. I believe that the 700,000 includes the Princely India also. I speak subject to correction. We have perhaps 500,000 units. Each unit would elect its own representative, and these representatives would be the electorate that would elect, if you will, representatives to the Central or the Federal Legislature."[30]It is another matter that it has its own merits and demerits. But the merit of the proposal lies in its organic link among the three tiers of the government and it can surely minimise election expenditure to a great extent. The election would be likely to be more free and fair than that of the present one and the electors as well as the elected would be in constant touch. Consequently, the former would be in a position to influence the decisions of the latter.

Representative democracy in India is in crisis due to its manifest failures to cater to the aspirations and needs of the people. In addition, the corrupt practices of the persons in power have further aggravated the distrust for the politicians in general among the people. The election, influenced by money and muscle, is no more a sound basis of the legitimacy of the representatives. Besides, people have become

disillusioned with the justice delivery system, badly known for its delay and it has failed to sustain their trust that everyone is equal before the law in the real sense of the term. Gandhi's insistence on swift and cheap justice for the weakest, satisfaction of the basic needs of the poor and effective decentralisation of polity and economy in which common people can have an effective say are some systemic remedies. But he seems to be correct that a basic solution of all evil lies in moral imperatives. Gandhi's original contribution is his addition of the moral foundation to the concept of democracy which has been overlooked in liberalism. Individual is the centre of the democracy and who is morally bound to perform his duties as a citizen. Gandhi, therefore, has primarily focused on moral uplift of the individual reflected in voluntary minimisation of his wants, association with his fellows, and concern for the welfare of the weakest people. Nonetheless he has also a moral duty to take part in politics. The persons having purity of conduct can only be able to mobilise people for the promotion of the public good as well as to fight against all types of injustices. Gandhi is correct in his suggestion that democracy requires continuous generation of moral power to keep the rulers in control and one can hardly disagree with his following statement: "Any system of government can fail if people do not have honesty and a feeling of brotherhood."[31]

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Decentralized Political Order: The Gandhian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the rationale of local democracy by looking at the democratic discourse surrounding the usefulness and limits of the representative form. Stalwarts like Jefferson called for the creation of 'elementary republics' by dividing counties into wards. Such intimate communities are not only a more reliable means of addressing public problems, but also avenues of the inner growth of the citizens in self-responsibility. This means reversing the pyramid of authority and power. The Gandhian scheme of decentralized political order is more than a technical device; it is, at one and the same time, an institutional strategy for facilitating and sustaining spiritual regeneration of human existence in the backdrop of a simple economy based on limitation of wants.

Yearning for freedom lies deep in human psyche. However, this yearning is in most cases frustrated because of adverse circumstances. Even if this yearning is satisfied by snatching freedom out of the clutches of an alien ruler, it can either be suppressed or circumscribed because of certain kinds of political institutional arrangement. And then what happens is the evisceration of freedom and eclipse of justice.

This situation is characteristic of a democratic republic. Shunning direct democracy, it elects to create a top heavy super-structure of representative democracy. By doing so, it preserves the traditional structure of political organization that makes the apex of the system the source of authority and power. In this system, influences of all sorts flow downwards; it is these influences that determine the character of the political system at large. Even the federal system of

government does not easily escape the overbearing influence of the national government.

This is well illustrated by the examples of two countries, United States of America (USA) and India. Both these countries won their freedom after launching a successful revolution against alien rule. They had then to face the task of installing a new body politic that would be equipped with a political institutional arrangement capable of supporting the exercise of freedom by all. After all, both these countries launched their freedom struggle not only to gain freedom but also to retain it. And the retaining of freedom was to enable not a few but all the citizens to exercise their freedom.

This is an important task. Revolutions represent only a transitional stage; they wipe the slate clean signifying the closure of the past; it has to be written upon again by installing a new body politic. This signifies that "the course of history suddenly begins anew, an entirely new story, a story never known or told before, is about to unfold."[1] The plot of the story may, as Alexis de Tocqueville suggests, be shrouded in obscurity; however, the moral of the story is never in doubt; it is neither insignificant nor ambiguous. This moral is, of course, the celebration of freedom. It opens the way for every citizen to exercise freedom not only to mould his own destiny but also to participate in the task of giving a preferred direction to collective political life and relations. This is possible only when a proper institutional support base is provided to freedom so that it is not prevented from making its appearance.

The story that grandmothers tell, always ends with the good triumphing over the evil. However, this does not apply to the formation of a new body politic. What happens is that the demon of highly centralized political order appears to put freedom in fetters and deny it the space where it could make its much awaited appearance. The experience of the United States of America (USA) and India testifies to it. The American experience is particularly instructive since it brings to the fore the factors that put freedom in fetters. It was against this sacrilegious act that Thomas Jefferson argued and suggested what he called "elementary republics" to replace it for safeguarding freedom.

The Constitutional Convention that sat in Philadelphia called to mind the bitter experience during the war of independence. Alexander Hamilton set the tone when he criticized direct democracy. Direct democracy must by definition involve the splintering of a large body politic into small political bodies. However, he pointed out that "if men are ambitious, vindictive and rapacious, so are states." He argued that "most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to

kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts." Referring to the examples of Greece and Italy, he pointed out that they were constantly agitated; the rapid succession of revolutions kept them in a state of perpetual vibration, moving between the extremes of tyranny and anarchy. If they exhibited occasional calms, they only serve as occasional contrasts to the furious storms that are to succeed."[2]

Hamilton characterized direct democracies to be "an infinity of little jealous, clashing, tumultuous commonwealths, the nurseries of unceasing discord, and miserable objects of universal pity or contempt.[3] James Madison also declared them to be the "spectacles of turbulence and contention." He found them "as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths."[4] This is, he argued, due to the nexus that is formed among liberty, interest and opinion. The reason for this is the primacy of economics in modern times. Madison argued that the regulation of economic life and relations constitutes the principal task of the government and of legislation. This necessarily involves the spirit of parties and factions in the necessary and ordering operations of the government. Most acts of legislation are nothing but the political determination concerning the rights of large bodies of citizens. By the same token, different classes of legislators are advocates and parties to the cause they determine.[5]

For Madison, then, all decisions about economic policy involve questions of private rights and of justice since the primacy of interest transforms the question of justice into a burning question. Interest breeds factions and liberty proves to faction what the air is to the fire. It fans the fire of hunger for ever more possessions and proves instrumental in dividing the society into antagonistic, hostile, economic camps, each sticking to its own vision of what is good for the system. Moreover, it is interest that plays a decisive role in the formation of opinion. Thus the interplay among liberty, interest, and opinion throws up a multiplicity of interests and a diversity of opinions which become the cause of the fragmentation of society into highly contentious groups. This is symptomatic of the coming into prominence of self-regarding action that swamps the public spirit and goes a long way to deaden it. Shareable commonality is lost and society is turned into an arena where, as MacIntyre notes, civil war by other means goes on unabated.

When a majority, based either on passion or interest, becomes the ruling faction, it tends to "sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest both the public good and private rights of citizens."[6] This is true particularly of a direct democracy consisting of "a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person." It

is easy in this case for a majority faction to form and be animated by common passion or interest. And there would be nothing to check the inducement to sacrifice the weaker party or an obnoxious individual. If this inducement becomes compelling, neither religions nor moral motives can then be relied upon to checking the action by the majority faction from sacrificing public good or private rights of others.

Alternatively, the majority faction may perhaps happen to be just containing several smaller factions. In such a case, a serious threat is posed to the smooth functioning of the popular government. Additionally, there is also the danger of private interests eclipsing collective good. It need not be pointed out that every individual has his own passion or interest which moulds the way he thinks and acts. When he speaks in the public, he is most likely to express his views that reflect his interest or passion. Similarly, when he acts in public, passion or interest exerts more control over his conduct than general or remote considerations of policy, utility or justice.[7]

This is also true of groups and political parties when common passion or interest bring them together for political action. Perhaps one can rely on the wise counsel of enlightened statesmen for protecting the republic from contrary pulls and pushes of partisan politics. However, they are not always available for advice and guidance, nor it is certain that their wise counsel would be heeded at all when the passion of partisan politics invades man's better judgment. Thus opinions of individuals and groups of individuals including also those of legislators are usually expressions of self-interest, often biased. Not infrequently they express the views of those whose integrity has been corrupted. The result is that self-regarding opinions have "divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress than to cooperate."[8]

The division of society into rival factions and parties is likely to give rise to two different situations: either a dominant majority faction or a badly splintered space of public opinion. In the case of the former, the majority would most likely use its power to benefit itself at the cost of both individual rights and public good. If the space of public opinion is badly splintered, coalescence of different factions proves difficult. This is likely to lead either to recurrent crisis of deadlock in the making of public choices, or to intrigues, manipulations, and horse-trading by "ambitious, vindictive and rapacious politicians."[9]

All this makes it necessary to guard against the confusion of the multitude. Also, when popular governments become turbulent and very prone to instability, violation of individual rights and the

eclipsing of public good become possible. This gives added weight to Madison's observation that "it is of great importance in a republic not only to guard the society against the oppressions of its rulers but also to guard one part of the society against the injustice of other parts," and "to save the rights of individuals or of the minority from interested combinations of the majority."[10]

This exigency calls for a political solution. So the founding fathers of the American Constitution opted for a solution that would prevent, on the one hand, the formation of a permanent majority, and, on the other, obviate the possibility of concentration of power into one political organ. The political institutional device capable of realizing these double-pronged objectives was considered to be the one that "offered the expedient for extending the sphere of popular governments and reconciling the advantage of monarchy with those of republicanism."[11] Such a device was found in the principle of democratic republic. This device was based on the principle of representation of the people that would incorporate the idea of democracy, to be sure; however, to prevent the confusion of the multitude, it would be necessary to empower "a chosen body of citizens whose wisdom may discern the true interest of their country and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations."[12]

Thus the American Constitutional Convention preferred "a technical device for governments among large populations" because "limitation to a small and chosen body of citizens was to serve as the great purifier of both interest and opinion, to guard against the confusion of a multitude."[13] This technical device allowed regular distribution of power among distinct departments; the introduction of legislative balance and checks; the institution of courts composed of judges holding their office during good behaviour; the representation of the people in the legislatures by deputies of their own choice. The adoption of this device put aside the case of popular government or democracy where "a small number of citizens assemble and administer the government in person." The solution retained the principle of representation but sacrificed pure democracy.

This solution paid a heavy cost, the cost of what Manicas calls "the victory of democratic ideology over democracy."[14] It signifies a political order where power and freedom part company. It is this separation of power and freedom that stimulated Thomas Jefferson to react and propose an alternative to it, an alternative that would bring them together in peace and harmony. At first he insisted that the constitution was not a permanent, unchangeable document; he criticized those who "looked at constitutions with sanctimonious

reverence and deemed them like the ark of covenant too sacred to be touched." [15]

He pooh-poohed the idea of a permanent constitution as plain "vanity and presumptuous to govern beyond the grave." He asserted that "nothing is unchangeable but the inherent rights of rebellion and revolution."[16] For him, revolution was necessary because no government stays for long on the path of virtue; sooner or later, it is tempted to test its power and, in doing so, it frequently dips its fingers in the muck of oppression and the warmth of blood and robs the people it rules over of their tranquility, resources, even their power to think and act. Only occasional outbursts of rebellion or revolution can check the tendency of the government towards self-aggrandizement.

Jefferson proposed the idea of "founding anew and building up" of the constitution by each succeeding generation. This would, he thought, safeguard the liberty of the future generations to choose the constitution they would like to live under. This, in effect, amounted to a "recurring revolution" but without violence. However, it would have "thrown the whole body politic out of gear periodically or, more likely, have debased the act of foundation to a mere routine performance, in which case even the memory of what he most ardently wished to save—'to the end of time, if anything human can so long endure'—would have been lost."[17] When this realization dawned upon him, he proposed decentralization of the political order.

In proposing this, Jefferson was concerned mainly with the protection of individual rights against encroachment either by the government or some section of the society. He was convinced that there was "in every government on earth some trace of human weakness, some germ of corruption and degeneracy, which cunning will discover and wickedness insensibly open, cultivate and improve."[18] He also believed that the rulers tend to turn into wolves and destroy the herd of sheep. And the people, shorn of their freedom, are pushed to "lethargy, the forerunner of the death to the public liberty, or the preservation of the spirit of resistance to whatever government they have erected" since the only power they retain is "the residual power of revolution."[19] And if once the people become inattentive to public affairs, "you and I, Congress and Assemblies, judges and Governors shall all become wolves."[20]

In effect, then what the democratic republic did was to resurrect the age-old distinction between the ruler and the ruled that the revolution had set to abolish. As a result, the people were denied admission to the public realm where collective choices are made; once more the business of government became the privilege of the

few. With the resurrection of the distinction between the ruler and the ruled, the well-being of the people came to depend on those who "alone may exercise their (virtuous) disposition."[21] And if they failed or proved unable to so, the way was then paved for "elective despotism", as Alexis Tocqueville was to find in the case of the United States later on.

The only way out of this predicament was the establishment of what Jefferson called "elementary republic" that traditionally existed in townships and town councils. Emerson called them "schools of the people" which provided the citizens the space where they could assemble, discuss and decide matters of common interest fully and freely. These schools taught the People the art of ruling and to be ruled.[22] These townships and town councils represented "the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together and its true space lies between people living together no matter where they happen to be."[23] The possibility of enlightened opinion becomes real when men communicate freely with one another and have the right to make their views public. And it is the confrontation between opposing viewpoints that conduces the people to exercise their reason coolly and freely.

In short, while the American Revolution won freedom for the people, it failed to create the space where freedom could have made its appearance. Only the people's representatives, not the people themselves enjoyed the fruits of freedom and could engage into activities of "expressing, discussing and deciding, which are, in a positive sense, the activities of freedom."[24] Jefferson therefore called for providing the organs of true democracy; his proposal was to divide counties into wards to establish elementary republics. Only this, he believed, would secure to the people the right to exercise freedom, which was their inalienable birth right. Jefferson was convinced that if the plan of elementary republics were adopted, it would deliver representative democracy of its shortcomings and remove most of its blemishes. "Could I once see that," Jefferson wrote to Cartwright on 5 June 1824, "I consider it as the dawn of salvation of the republic."

But could Jefferson's hope of seeing a new dawn of the salvation of the republic be realized? It is true that the scheme of elementary republic does provide for its members the scope for exercising their freedom in managing local affairs. But would the elementary republics be powerful enough to successfully counteract the centralizing tendency that grows stronger with the growing complexity of economic life and relations? Even more important in this connection is the question whether the modern conditions of living would allow the individual to cultivate self-responsibility that self-rule demands?

It is not necessary to point out that the success of democracy depends on the degree to which the people who participate in the management of public affairs are capable of self-transcendence as a necessary condition of moral self-development.

Globalization of economic life and relations has radically changed the conditions that bear upon the question of establishing elementary republics. The material aspect of human existence has driven spiritual orientation far out of human consciousness. Local communities have reached the stage of maximum obsolescence. The rise of subjectivity has made disengaged instrumental mode of existence the regnant pattern today. The vision of the good has been eclipsed by the consideration of "what is good to me." Consequently, there has occurred a loss of auto-control; this drives men to think and act in terms of what benefits them.

It must be emphasized that the establishment of elementary republics is inexorably linked with the life conditions prevailing today. Also, this question cannot at all be delinked with the idea of who man is. The idea of who man is, is currently understood in terms simply of a body-mind complex with the spiritual aspect effectively drained out. As a result, man emerges as a broken totality; he is at odds with his inner reality and alienated from both society and nature.

Alienation creates inner vacuum which is sought to be filled by the acquisition of more and more wealth. This means that the more the environment of human being is judged in terms of its congruence with or subservience to self-needs, the less fulfilling it becomes. When expectations of fulfillment become at once so vast and amorphous, the possibilities of fulfillment are diminished. As self-needs become irresistible, social relations assume instrumental character. This destroys what Plato calls *philia politike,* friendship among the members of a political community. When shareable commonality loses its salience, there is less of a reason to serve the common good.

All these taken together have conspired to empty life of meaning and threaten public freedom, that is, the institutions and practices of self-government in both spiritual and political senses. What is all the more disturbing is the ascendance of the will, the wayward will that is supposed in modern times to be the bastion of freedom. For the wayward will, reason and rule represent a sort of impersonal tyranny in relation to which, however, the will represents perfect freedom. Wrapped in subjectivity, the individual finds himself alone and separated from his fellowmen. It is not surprising then that the individual personality dwindles to pure egoism eroding the bases of morality.

To repeat, the question of installing local democracy is inexorably

linked with the conditions that now prevail. And the prevailing conditions do not augur well for the smooth functioning of the decentralized political order. As long as man remains separated from the divine entity, his status as a broken totality will continue to bedevil his attempt to self-transcendence. Looked at from this perspective, Jefferson's scheme of elementary republics has no fair chance of success. This is so because it stops short of total renovation of the idea of who man is. Jefferson takes man as he is, man who seeks his earthly salvation through what Mahatma Gandhi calls "body worship." This means a greater reliance on technologically induced economic growth to supply goods and services to make man happy. But the effect of body worship is the proliferation of needs. As a consequence, demand of goods and services will go on escalating as standard of living swings upward. This will nourish the culture of what *Chhandogya Upanishad* calls *kamachar,* behaviour driven by passions. This drowns the love of God in the sea of self-indulgence; this, in turn, promotes self-interest at the cost of shared ethical commitments to the public good.

Given the primacy of material well-being and the globalization of economic life and relations, local communities have lost economic autonomy, an important dimension of human existence that constitutes the core of activities at the local level. As a result, local communities have become highly dependent on the world beyond themselves for meeting their ordinary life needs. They have become highly vulnerable to influences that emanate in their external environment. Economic inter-relatedness demolishes barriers between different economies, breaks their self-sufficiency, disturbs their internal coherence, and sets in motion a process of homogenization by linking them with national, even international economy.

This linkage tolerates no deviance and suffers no autonomy. Would elementary republics have enough inner resources to cope with the forces of change is a question that cries for answer. The question is important inasmuch as economic factors constitute today the prime mover of thought-ways and work-ways. However, they would be beyond the jurisdiction of local communities; the local communities would not be able to control and manage them. Wards would certainly enjoy self-rule and citizens would personally participate in local decision-making. However, at higher echelons it would be their representatives who will take part in the decision-making process. Thus wards would have their presence not directly but only indirectly through their representatives at the higher echelons of collective decision-making. Given the present apex-dominated

system of governance, the representatives of the wards would exercise little influence on the process of decision-making that has a direct or indirect bearing on their own affairs.

To make a success of the scheme of elementary republics in conditions that prevail now, two conditions have to be met. The first condition refers to the need of self-transcendence as a necessary condition of rising above self-interest and self-regarding action for overcoming disengaged instrumentality. The second condition concerns the need to reverse the pattern of locating authority and power at the apex of the system and rejoining freedom and power at the local level.

This means reversing the pyramid of authority and power in a way that permits the base units of the political order to have the primary authority and the power to manage their affairs themselves. This will allow them to play a more significant role in the management of public affairs than they currently do. This will make local communities the primary building blocks of political organization by treating higher echelons as residuary holders of authority and power. In short, the scheme of decentralization that Mahatma Gandhi suggested long ago.

The significance of the first condition lies in the fact that the partners in the self-rule must have a fully developed sense of self-responsibility. They must be ever conscious of reconciling the good of one individual with the good of all individuals. This is consequent upon the reining in of unruly passions that have been given a free hand in modern times. This has created a situation in which the faith in the divine has been lost arid there is no other means of than the brittle barrier of the laws to control them. It is this situation that prompted Montesquieu to ask: "Punishments will cast out of society a citizen who having lost his mores, violates the law but if everyone loses his mores, will punishment re-establish them?"[25]

This brings us to contemplate the problem of moral crisis that cannot be surmounted by ejecting everyone from the society. This should make us aware of the fact, as it did Rousseau that "private interest, which in the case of conflict necessarily prevails over everything, teaches everyone to adorn vice with the mask of virtue."[26] The vice of cupidity masquerading as virtue cannot be mitigated by the simple-minded changes in the institutional structure of society or by a recourse to political reforms. Nor will the reform of laws and institutions lead willy-nilly to political improvement, unless they are accompanied by an underlying improvement of the spirit of those who operate them.

What this means is that it is the neglect of the spiritual or moral

dimension that is the source of the civilizational crisis that we face today. Moral regeneration is the only way out of it. Obviously, changes in the exterior of man are of no help in this; what is required is the internal change signifying self-transformation. Once internal change occurs, outward form would take care of itself. What everyone should, Mahatma Gandhi insists, be concerned with is "a radical change more in inward spirit than in the outward form. If the first remains unchanged, the second, no matter how radically changed, will be like a white sepulchre."[27]

The process of inward change is the process of self-transformation. It implies the taming of the beast in man. It is accomplished when man recognizes his true nature. When man succeeds in developing his real nature to the fullest, he attains the status of *dwija.* This allows him to recognize that "he is a special creation of God precisely to the extent that he is distinct from the rest of his creation."[28] The realization comes to him that he cannot "rely on external freedom to protect internal freedom because relying on it, we often find that the laws made to secure freedom turn out to be shackles binding us."[29]

For Mahatma Gandhi, then, *swaraj* (freedom) is primarily the rule over oneself; it cannot come from any external circumstances or paying a lip service to it. "It is an inward change ....It is the transformation of the heart ....And that absolute transformation can only come by inward prayer and a definite and living recognition of the presence of the mighty spirit residing within.[30] Thus, as *Chandogya Upanishad* 8.1.1 notes, this transformation is possible when man accepts the suzerainty of the mighty spirit within. By doing so, he becomes *swarat*, self-sovereign and acquires the capacity to terminate his status as, in Plato's words, 'the slave of many mad masters'. It is the attunement of the soul to the divine ground of being that forms the firm foundation of a self-governing society.

Self-government is only of value if human beings attempt to govern themselves in order to reach their full human nature. This means renovation of spiritual orientation, which is possible only when man renews his link with the divine. This renewal helps man "attain mastery over our mind and our passions." In doing so, we come to know ourselves." Even more importantly, we come to rule ourselves both as individuals and as people. The implication is clear. Direct democracy demands not the pursuit of individual or collective self-interest, but a transformative popular self-rule (that is, the rule of the people over themselves) or *swaraj* in the spiritual sense. "It is *swaraj* when we learn to rule ourselves."[31]

Swaraj implies willing surrender to God. When the individual does so, he "gets in touch with his highest; he has then a broader and

higher vision of man and his place in nature. When he identifies with God, he realizes that he has no special interest of his own to serve.... He perceives God in all things and all things in God." This realization is the fountain-head of both morality and sociality. It becomes instrumental in demolishing the separation between the individual and society and establishes between them the relationship of the drop and the ocean. "In this ocean of life we are little drops" and, as such, we must share, as Mahatma Gandhi puts it, "the majesty of life in the presence of God."[32]

Thus, for Mahatma Gandhi, there cannot be any distinction between individual and corporate growth. However, the focal point of this growth is the individual; the corporate growth is dependent upon individual growth.[33] It follows, then, that self-development is as valuable as the sustenance the individual receives from his community. This prompts Mahatma Gandhi to reject the Enlightenment view of man and his world, which is "utilitarian in its ethical outlook, atomistic in social philosophy... and looks to social engineering to organize man and society for happiness."[34]

Mahatma Gandhi therefore stresses the need for reviving community living; this will allow man to enjoy more "effective ties, to experience some closer solidarity than the nature of urbanized and industrialized society seemed willing to grant."[35] The maintenance of closer solidarity is possible only in small, face-to-face communities. Unger therefore argues that "the development of the person has to be accomplished through the decentralization of society" Only such a society "can strive for natural harmony by giving free play to instinctual needs within personality and by simplifying the conditions of social life, that man's life-giving relationship to nature can reassert itself."[36]

Thus, small, intimate communities are not only a more reliable means of addressing public problems but also the more invisible, although more crucial avenue of the inner growth of the citizens in self-responsibility. "Feelings and opinions are recruited, the heart is enlarged, and the human mind is developed only by the reciprocal influence of men upon one and others."[37] Through experiencing the art of association, men acquire a taste for cooperation and develop the virtues indispensable to the maintenance of the order in which they live.

One other condition is, Mahatma Gandhi insists, necessary for a decentralized political order. The economy must be very simple and cater only to minimum material needs. This will allow greater dependence on locally available resources, check the invasion of larger market forces, and protect social institutions and cultural ethos from

pollution. Mahatma Gandhi therefore insists on the minimization of wants as a condition of promoting self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

It is clear then that the scheme of decentralized political order is more than a technical device; it is, at one and the same time, an institutional strategy for facilitating and sustaining spiritual regeneration of human existence. This makes the attainment of wholeness possible, the wholeness without which wholesomeness is not possible.

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Politics of Presence: Socio-Economic Background of Members of Kerala Legislature Assembly: 1957-2006

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ABSTRACT

The representative character of democratic institutions is a significant area of study in modern political analysis. As a society is always marred by socio-economic cleavages stretching from religion to class, ethnicity and beyond, it is only in the fitness of things that the representative bodies radiated those social cleavages. This 'politics of presence' is much more urgent today as the very mundane process of seeking majorities within a representative system, of building new coalitions, leads to the mobilization of new groups, unsettles existing power equations and produces new openings. Failure to accommodate these groups in representative bodies, therefore, would lead to group based, often identity based, assertions and mobilizations.

THE DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER of a representative body – whether it is the Parliament or State legislatures or, for that matter, local bodies – depends, at least partially, on the extend to which it becomes a microcosm of the society which has politically constituted it. Needless to say, a society is always marred by socio-economic cleavages stretching from religion to class, ethnicity and beyond. In such a situation it is only in the fitness of things that representative bodies radiated those social cleavages (some of which are even cross-cutting) in their varied hues and shades. This is particularly so in a country like India where the social world is constitutive of not merely class and gender-based polarizations but also of deep-cutting ascriptive divisions like caste and sub-caste.

Therefore, if Indian democracy is to be consolidated[1] then various

social groups need to be represented in the power structure. This 'politics of presence'[2] is much more important today as the very mundane process of seeking majorities within a representative system, of building new coalitions, leads to the mobilization of new groups, unsettles existing power equations and produces new openings[3]. As K.M.Panikkar puts it, these social groups, previously unaware of their strength and barely touched by the political changes that had taken place, suddenly realized that they were in a position to wield power.[4] Failure to accommodate these groups in representative bodies, therefore, would lead to group based (read identity based) assertions and mobilizations. Pre-independence history of Kerala offers innumerable examples in this regard – of educated sections, lower caste groups and religious minorities who were denied power coming together and organizing joint political agitations for redressing their grievances[5].

The arguments adduced so far, however, need not be construed to mean that convergence between social cleavages and social composition of a representative body, *per se*, would enhance its capacity and, therefore, the possibility of bringing about social change in a society. Nor does this paper argue that, what is basically expected of an elected representative is allegiance towards his primordial group at the cost of a holistic perspective and national outlook. A deputy definitely has to have a broader vision and the ability to unify social groups towards fostering certain common national goals. What Edmund Burke said – 'Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole: where, not local purpose, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member, indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not a member of Bristole, but he is a Member of Parliament'[6] – still holds good. That said, however, one could not also totally ignore the relevance of Socio-Economic Status Factors (SES Factors) of representatives as a measure for understanding the level of exclusion (inclusion as well) of different social groups from democratically constituted institutional structures.

Therefore, any authentic narrative of the history and the role played by a legislative body should take into account the above aspect of representation. The present study, however, goes beyond this as it also focuses on the sources of political recruitment of the members. This is based on the express understanding that the alchemy of a legislator – a successful legislator at that – depends, to a significant degree, on such sources. For instance, imagine the social capital of a Member of the Legislative Assembly who has graduated as a legislator through working in feeder organizations or through long and

continuous involvement in grass-root level socio-political activities. Contrast this with the social capital and acceptance of a person who is suddenly inducted into politics from above. While the former can boast of a strong organic linkage with the society, the latter suffers from its deficit and this can make a tremendous difference in their world-view and thereby the working of the legislature itself. It may be remembered that what matters in a democracy, in the ultimate analysis, is the sensitiveness of the elected representatives to the life, difficulties, aspirations and future emerging problems of the world outside the legislature,[7] and political recruitment of the legislator plays a key role in this.

It is against this theoretical background that this study looks at the social background of the members of the Kerala Legislative Assembly. Gender, age, education, occupation, religion and caste, and the pattern of political recruitment of members are the chief factors taken up for detailed examination. An important limitation of this analysis, however, is the paucity of data. Not only that complete information for all the members of various assemblies is unavailable, but there is a total deficit of information in the case of certain indicators for an entire House. Details regarding caste and religion, and political recruitment are examples. While in the case of the latter (political recruitment) the First and Third Houses have no information to offer, in the case of the former (caste and religion) we don't have a recorded governmental source to depend on for any of the Houses. However, the Delhi based Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) has a database for caste and religion (up to 2001) which has been used by G. Gopa- kumar[8] in one of his studies. The present study, therefore, has made use of this source in the case of these two indicators and for the rest dependence was on *Who's Who* published by the Secretariat of the Kerala Legislature for various years.

I. Gender and Age

Gender and age are always two key factors in understanding the internal dynamics and representative character of a legislative body. This is particularly significant in the case of women as gender based exclusion from political power has been rampant and universal irrespective of the nature of the society, whether traditional, modern or even post-modern. The critical issue that is raised in the context of democracy is its capacity to stem this tide. However, if Indian experience is any indication, democracy has not succeeded so far in addressing this foundational issue as gender still continues as the chief source of political deprivation in our country, even after more than six decades of democratic practice.

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Not only that women are left under-represented in the legislative institutions, but also find themselves in the same position in other structures of power including Cabinet and even Civil Service. Paradoxically this stands in stark contrast to their participation in civil societal movements. In such movements – for instance Chipko Movement, Anti-Liquor Movements,[9] Environmental Movements, or Movements Against Price Rise – we find women in large number as active participants. This is true of American women as well.[10] This means that in mass movements organized around quotidian concerns women's co-operation is solicited by political parties but only to leave them high and dry when the issue of power sharing comes. In fact, this is the case in Kerala also. Though, Kerala has a matrilineal tradition in which women had a much larger measure of autonomy and freedom of movement, all these have not translated into higher political representation.[11] There is something amiss here particularly when one sees that states like Uttar Padesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar which are known for their low level of education and repressive cultural norms for women, have not only sent a relatively larger proportion of women to the Lok Sabha but have also elected relatively more women MLAs.[12] Tables 1 and 2 clearly bring out the various dimensions of gender representation in the Kerala Legislative Assembly.

Table 1

**Gender Representation in Lok Sabha and
Kerala Assembly: A Comparison**

	Lok Sabha		Kerala Assembly	
House	**No. of Women**	**Percentage**	**No. of Women**	**Percentage**
First	22	4.4	6	4.76
Second	27	5.4	7	5.55
Third	34	6.7	1	0.75
Fourth	31	5.9	2	1.5
Fifth	22	4.2	1	0.71
Sixth	19	3.4	5	3.57
Seventh	28	5.1	5	3.57

Eighth	44	8.1	8	5.71
Ninth	28	5.29	8	5.71
Tenth	36	7.07	13	9.28
Eleventh	40	7.36	8	5.71
Twelfth	44	8.07	8	5.71
Thirteenth	49	9.02	7	5.00
Fourteenth	47	8.5	N A	N A
Total	471	6.37	79	5.04

Note: 1. In the case of Kerala 1965 election is not taken into account for the purpose of calculation and comparison with Lok Sabha.

Sources: 1. G.C.Malhotra (ed.), *50 Years of Indian Parliament*, New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 2002, p.120.
2. Secretariat of the Kerala Legislature, *Who's Who* (for various Assemblies), Trivandrum: Secretariat of the Kerala Legislature, 1957-2006.
3. www.kerala *assembly.org/election/index-php?year* = 2011 accessed on 30.3.2012.

Above Table explains the distribution of women legislators in all the thirteen elections in the State.[13] It also lends scope for a comparative analysis with that of the Lok Sabha which has fourteen Houses during this period. Total number of women in the Kerala Assembly so far is just 79 (5.04 in percentage terms) which is less than that of the Lok Sabha which has a gender representation of 6.37 per cent. The only time when it (women representation) touched the magical two digits was during the 1996 Assembly elections in which thirteen women got representation (9.28 per cent). That women representation in the State is less than the national average (roughly less by one per cent) is a real challenge to its modernist pretensions. One is definitely at a loss to explain this 'politics of absence' in a State which boasts about total literacy, high incidents of female education, better male-female ratio, and high per-capita availability of newspapers. Interestingly there is also an obverse side to this issue – women have better representation in the grass-root level political institutions, from Gram Panchayats to District Panchayats [14]. This shows that women representation here is inversely connected with the power and

prestige of the institutions involved – the more the power of an institution, less the representation for women and vice-versa. This clearly brings out the patriarchal nature of Kerala society.

Table 2
Gender Representation in the Assembly: Party-wise Account

Party	Female	Male	Total
INC	28 (5.47)	94.53 (484)	512 (100)
CPM	26 (6.50)	374 93.50	400 (100)
CPI	16 (6.15)	244 (93.85)	260 (100)
Muslim League	NIL	188 (100)	188 (100)
Independents	2 (4.35)	46 (95.65)	48 (100)
Others	67 (0.003)	367 (99.99)	373 (100)

Notes: 1. Figures given in brackets indicate percentage distribution.
2. Others include Kerala Congress (various factions), NCP, JD(S), JSS, BJP, CMP, RSP (various factions) and other splinter parties.
Source: Secretariat of the Kerala Legislature, *op.cit*.

Party-wise, Communist Party of India (Marxist) has a slight edge over other parties in this regard (Table 2). Gender representation for the party is 6.50 per cent as against 6.15 for the Communist Party of India. Indian National Congress is close behind with 5.72 per cent women representatives on its side. Interestingly, Indian Union Muslim League hasn't got any female members on its side so far.

In the case of age, however, Kerala is slightly ahead of the Lok Sabha in giving representation to youngsters. The average age of the Assembly is 49.54 as against 50.39 for the Lok Sabha[15]. Table 3 points towards a prominent feature of the Kerala Legislative Assembly – the average age of MLAs keeps on increasing with each passing decade. From 40.91 in the 1950s, it reached an all time high of 58.81 in the 90s

Table 3
Age-wise Distribution of Members (1957-2006)

Period	Age Groups						Average Age	Total
	23-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and above		
1950s	21 (21.65)	45 (46.39)	21 (21.65)	7 (7.22)	3 (3.09)	Nil	40.91	97
1960s	19 (7.39)	113 (43.97)	83 (32.30)	36 (14.01)	4 (1.56)	2 (0.78)	45.91	257
1970s	27 (9.93)	89 (32.72)	102 (37.5)	46 (16.91)	8 (2.94)	Nil	46.82	272
1980s	39 (10.71)	109 (25.95)	153 (36.43)	92 (21.90)	27 (6.43)	Nil	46.70	420
1990s	14 (5.09)	83 (30.18)	84 (30.55)	63 (22.91)	29 (10.55)	2 (0.73)	58.81	275
2000-2006	4 (1.45)	50 (18.12)	107 (38.78)	88 (31.88)	25 (9.06)	2 (0.72)	58.08	276
Total	**124 (7.74)**	**489 (30.52)**	**550 (34.33)**	**332 (21.04)**	**96 (5.99)**	**6 (0.37)**	**1597**	**49.54**

Note: Figures given in bracket indicate percentage distribution (row-wise) and may not count up to 100 as the number of not available members, is not taken into account in the calculation.
Source: Secretariat of the Kerala Legislature, *op.cit.*

and came slightly down to 58.08 between 2000-2006. The highest percentage of youngsters (23–44 age group) the Assembly had was in the 50s (68.04 per cent), with 60s having 53.36 per cent and 70s, 42.64 per cent. Reversely constructed, Kerala Assembly in the 1990s had the largest chunk (34.18 per cent) of members representing the older generation (55 and above age group) followed by the 80s (28.33 per cent) and 70s (19.85 per cent).

Party-wise, CPI has the best track record of sending the largest contingent of younger generation to the legislature as shown by its lowest average age – 44.49 (Table 4). Surprisingly, various Kerala Congress factions put together came second in this regard with 46.48 and Indian National Congress came third with 46.83. On the reverse side, among the major political parties, CPI (M) topped the list with an average age of 48.75. By implication this means that Members of the Legislative Assembly of that party has more representatives belonging to the older generation. Next to CPI (M) come representatives belonging to Independents and Other Parties. Similarly, if one looks at the 65–74 age group, representatives belonging to Others, Kerala Congress (various factions) and Indian National Congress, respectively, share the claim for the top three slots with 8.02 per cent, 6.77 percent and 6.72 per cent. Muslim League and CPI (M) have the lowest representation here – 3.03 per cent and 5.17 per cent respectively. CPI comes third with 5.60 per cent.

II. Religion and Caste

Religion and caste are always considered as two variables which define the course of Indian politics, both at the state and the national levels, to a very great extent. Of these, caste has a strong hold in the country's politics and the questions posed by Rajni Kothari almost four decades back – What form is caste taking under the impact of modern politics? and What form is politics taking under the influence of caste? – are still relevant.[16] If anything, elections have only helped in reconfirming ordinary people's community orientation instead of undermining it.[17] This generalization holds good in Kerala as well, since the fundamental issues of Kerala Society are articulated largely with caste or community overtures.[18] At times, even political leadership is recruited from caste/ communal organisations or with their tacit approval. Hence it is only in the fitness of things to see how these two factors are reflected in the state legislature in terms of representation of various caste/religious groups.

For caste we have information up to 2001 and for religion information for 2001 is missing though it is available for 2006. In both cases, comparison could also be made with that of the Lok Sabha.

Table 4: Party-wise Distribution of Age Groups

| Party | Age Group | | | | | | | |
	23-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Average Age	Total
INC	47 (10.20)	142 (30.80)	152 (32.07)	89 (19.31)	31 (6.72)	NIL	46.83	461 (100)
CPM	17 (4.89)	95 (27.30)	131 (37.46)	87 (25)	18 (5.17)	NIL	48.75	348 (100)
CPI	20 (8.62)	80 (34.48)	82 (35.34)	37 (15.95)	13 (5.60)	NIL	44.49	232 (100)
Muslim League	11 (6.67)	54 (32.72)	64 (38.79)	31 (18.79)	5 (3.03)	NIL	47.46	165 (100)
Kerala Congress	18 (13.53)	46 (34.59)	43 (32.33)	15 (11.28)	9 (6.77)	2 (1.50)	46.48	133 (100)
Others	9 (4.25)	59 (27.83)	65 (30.66)	58 (27.36)	17 (8.02)	4 (1.89)	48.50	212 (100)
Independents	2 (4.17)	13 (28.26)	13 (28.26)	15 (32.61)	3 (6.52)	NIL	48.67	46 (100)
Total	**124 (100)**	**489 (100)**	**550 (100)**	**332 (100)**	**96 (100)**	**6 (100)**	**---**	**1597 (100)**

Note: Figures given in brackets indicates percentage distribution (row-wise) and may not count up to 100 as the number of not available members is not taken into account in the calculation.
Source: Secretariat of the Kerala Legislature, *op.cit.*

Table 5
Religious Profile of Legislators in Kerala

Religion	1957	1960	1967	1970	1977	1980	1987	1991	1996	2006
Hindu	86 (68)	70 (56)	86 (65)	77 (58)	82 (59)	83 (59)	86 (61)	79 (56)	71 (51)	80 (57)
Christian	25 (20)	25 (20)	23 (17)	32 (24)	34 (24)	28 (20)	30 (21)	32 (23)	34 (24)	34 (24)
Muslim	12 (10)	19 (15)	21 (16)	15 (11)	24 (17)	28 (20)	24 (17)	29 (21)	26 (19)	26 (19)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage distribution. Column figures may not add up to 100 per cent due to non-availability of information for all the legislators.
Sources: CSDS Data quoted in G.Gopakumar, 'Socio-economic Background of Legislators in Kerala', in Christopher Jaffrelot and Sanjay Kumar (eds.), *Rise of Plebians? The Changing Face of Indian Legislative Assemblies,* New Delhi: Routledge, 2009, p. 403.

Table 6
Caste Profile of Legislators in Kerala

Caste	1957	1960	1967	1970	1977	1980	1987	1991	1996	2001
Upper Caste	62 (49)	58 (46)	56 (42)	57 (43)	73 (52)	58 (41)	61 (44)	60 (43)	56 (40)	54 (38)
Middle Caste	36 (27)	33 (26)	44 (33)	40 (30)	28 (20)	37 (26)	39 (28)	35 (25)	40 (29)	44 (31)
SC	12 (10)	3 (2)	11 (8)	11 (8)	13 (9)	15 (11)	15 (11)	13 (9)	13 (9)	15 (11)
ST	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage distribution. Column figures may not add up to 100 per cent due to non-availability of information for the reset of legislators.
Source: CSDS Data quoted in Gopa Kumar, *op.cit.,* p., 400.

Religion-wise, both the Hindu and Christian communities are slightly over-represented and it could be inferred that this is achieved at the cost of Muslim representation which is slightly less than the population of that community (Table 3.5). This would be clear if one looks at the average number of legislative seats and the percentage thereof obtained by these communities. For the Hindus, this average works out to be 80 (59 per cent) as against 30 (21.7 per cent) for Christians and 22 (16.5 per cent) for Muslims.

Hindu representation was at its height in the first election in 1957 (68 per cent) and began to decline slowly reaching the lowest mark in 1996 (51 per cent) and then consolidating around 57/59 mark. On the other side, the Christian representation varied from 17 to 24 per cent, while that of the Muslims showed a high fluctuation rate as it moved from 10 (1957) to 21 per cent (1991) and then stabilized at around 19 per cent.

Significantly, a comparison of Muslim representation in the Assembly with that of the Lok Sabha shows that there is substantial gain for the community in the State, as the average representation it got in the latter (Lok Sabha) was a mere 5.87 per cent (Table 7). Needless to say, Christians, as already mentioned, have a slight advantage in representation compared to their population. This clearly shows both the strength of minority politics in Kerala – the extent to which it is organized and articulated – and the inclusive nature of state politics, in religious terms – a claim which other states and the country as a whole can hardly advance.

An analysis of caste-wise distribution of MLAs reveals certain important trends in the state's politics. Of these, the most noteworthy one is the dominance of the upper castes in politics and the challenge posed to it by Other Backward Caste groups. If membership in the legislature is any guide, it has to be acknowledged that the upper castes definitely have a substantial hold over Kerala politics. Their strength in the Assembly so far i.e., until 2001, on an average, was 43.8 per cent and it even touched the magic figure of 52 per cent in the 1977 elections, i.e. the elections held immediately after the national emergency (Table 6). That this is not going to be a perennial feature of state politics is clear from the increasing representation of the Middle Castes/OBCs in the Assembly since the late 1960s.

If the 1970s is viewed as the period of the 'plebianization of Indian politics'[19] in Kerala it started much earlier – in the late sixties – and consolidated itself by the eighties. OBC/middle caste representation in the Assembly which stood at 26 – 27 per cent in the fifties and early sixties suddenly rose to 33 per cent in the 1967 elections and remained at 28 per cent (average) since the latter half of the eighties. Significantly,

Table 7 : Lok Sabha: Caste/Religion- wise Distribution of Members (1957-2004)

Period	Caste/Religious Groups					
	SC/ST	OBC	Upper Castes	Muslims	Other religious Groups	Not Available
1957	120 (24.1)	70 (14.0)	242 (48.6)	24 (4.8)	23 (4.6)	19 (3.8)
1962	112 (22.0)	68 (13.4)	264 (51.9)	25 (4.9)	21 (4.1)	19 (3.7)
1967	119 (22.8)	87 (16.7)	246 (47.1)	28 (5.4)	23 (4.4)	19 (3.6)
1971	116 (22.2)	84 (16.1)	248 (47.6)	28 (5.4)	19 (3.6)	26 (5.0)
1977	124 (22.9)	107 (19.7)	238 (43.9)	32 (5.9)	20 (3.7)	21 (3.9)
1980	126 (23.7)	91 (17.1)	218 (41.0)	49 (9.2)	27 (5.1)	20 (3.8)
1984	125 (23.0)	78 (14.3)	275 (50.5)	45 (8.3)	14 (2.6)	7 (1.3)
1989	121 (22.8)	119 (22.4)	229 (43.1)	26 (4.9)	9 (1.7)	27 (5.1)
1991	128 (23.7)	128 (23.7)	221 (40.9)	28 (5.2)	18 (3.3)	18 (3.3)
1996	129 (23.4)	125 (22.7)	231 (42.0)	24 (4.4)	21 (3.8)	21 (3.8)
2004	136 (24.62)	138 (25.0)	219 (28.66)	35 (6.34)	24 (4.35)	Nil
Total	**1356 (23.2)**	**1095 (18.7)**	**2631 (45.0)**	**343 (5.9)**	**219 (3.7)**	**197 (14.53)**

Source: B L Shankar and Valerian Rodrigues *The Indian Parliament, A Democracy at Work, New Delhi*: Oxford University Press, *2011, pp. 77-90.*

if this development is considered along with the increasing assertion of the Muslim community[20], particularly since the eighties, and the representation of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities, the picture would become clearer.

A comparison between OBC representation in the Assembly and the Lok Sabha also makes an interesting reading here (Tables 6 and 7). While the national average in this regard stands at just 18.65 per cent, in the State it was 27.5 per cent for the period from 1957 to 2001. Thus both in OBC and Minority representations, Kerala situation is different from the national scene. This shows the extent to which democracy has deepened in the State. Incidentally, the representation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes hovers round the constitutionally mandated number (reserved seats) both at the state and national levels. This is partly due to the scattered nature of their dwellings and partly due to their organizational weakness. They are poorly organized compared to the OBCs and other groups like minorities and upper castes.

III. Education and Occupation

Tables 8 to 11 discuss the educational and occupational profile of the legislators. In regard to education, Table 8 shows that the largest chunk of MLAs have been graduates. In fact this has been so ever since the first general election in Kerala in 1957. In the fifties they accounted for 41 per cent of the total strength and they are able to retain this position even today with a marginal decrease of just one per cent. The lowest tally they registered was in the seventies and eighties. Even then this cluster constituted 21 per cent. On the other side, Post-graduates got highest representation in the seventies (16.16 per cent), and the lowest in the sixties (4.47 per cent). Notably size of the under-matriculates has been coming down drastically during this period. From 36 per cent in the seventies and 22 per cent in the subsequent decades it has now come down to a mere four per cent. A few of the members also hold research degrees like Doctor of Philosophy and degrees in Engineering, Medicine and Business Administration. All these definitely point towards the qualitative improvement Kerala Assembly attained over a period of six decades.

Party-wise distribution of education also reveals certain interesting trends. Among the political parties, Muslim League has the largest number of under-matriculate members (33.33 per cent) followed by CPI (M) – 25.07 per cent. Surprisingly, Kerala Congress (all factions combined) has the largest number (in percentage terms) of graduates, post-graduates and graduates in law. This is 22.71, 11.36 and 43.18 per cent, respectively. Under-matriculate members are also least for

Table 8
Decade-wise Distribution of Education (1957-2006)

Education Qualification	Period					
	1950's	1960's	1970's	1980's	1990's	2000-2006
Under Matriculates	10 (10.20)	34 (13.82)	95 (35.85)	95 (22.20)	26 (9.96)	7 (3.52)
Matriculation and Higher Secondary	27 (27.55)	75 (30.49)	61 (23.02)	142 (33.18)	90 (34.48)	72 (36.18)
Graduates (Arts Sciences & Commerce)	13 (13.27)	42 (17.07)	31 (11.70)	66 (15.42)	58 (22.22)	63 (31.66)
Graduates in Law	40 (40.80)	76 (30.89)	56 (21.13)	91 (21.26)	64 (24.52)	77 (38.69)
Post-graduates	5 (5.10)	11 (4.47)	16 (16.16)	26 (6.07)	15 (5.75)	27 (13.57)
Other	3 (3.06)	8 (3.25)	6 (2.26)	8 (1.87)	8 (3.07)	189.05
Total	**98 (100)**	**246 (100)**	**265 (100)**	**428 (100)**	**261 (100)**	**199 (100)**

Notes: 1. Figures in bracket indicate column wise percentage distribution
2. Other qualifications include Ph.D, MBA, B.Tech, CA and Medical Degrees
3. Table does not contain information for all the MLAs due to non-availability of details
Source: Secretariat of the Kerala Legislature, *op cit.*

that party (3.03 per cent). Among the major parties, Indian National Congress has 18.55 per cent graduates, 6.79 per cent post-graduates and 33.26 per cent law graduates in its camp. And for CPI (M) the same is 17.87, 2.88 and 17.87, respectively. However, compared to CPM, CPI has a better track record in having members with better educational qualification in the Assembly as shown by the data: 17.12 percent graduates, 6.31 per cent post-graduates and 25.68 per cent law graduates among its MLAs. For the Muslim League This is 9.42 per cent, 2.90 per cent and 13.04 per cent respectively. Independents, have a more or less equal distribution in regard to general degree-holders , post graduates and graduates in law.

Occupation–wise distribution shows that members belonging to three professional categories – social activists/political workers, lawyers and trade unionists, in that order – dominated the Assembly (Table 10). A cumulative index prepared for the period from 1957–2006, indicates that they had a representation, respectively, of 39.56, 20.83 and 10.35 per cent. Except in the seventies, in every other decade, these three occupational categories, taken together, had a seat sharing of over 70 per cent of the total membership of the House. In the seventies, however, this dipped by about 10 percentage point to reach an all time low of 61.40 per cent. A major reason for this is to be found in the steep fall in the representation of lawyer politicians. From that of the previous two decades, it fell by about one-third to reach 16.18 per cent (Figures in square bracket).

On the obverse side, this was also the period in which agriculturists and educationists registered maximum representation. The former got a seat share of 13.60 per cent and the latter 13.24 per cent (figures given in square brackets). Another noteworthy feature pertains to the presence of journalists and businessmen in the legislature. MLAs with journalism background seem to be a vanishing lot. From 3.42 per cent in the fifties, their representation showed a slight improvement in the seventies (4.78 per cent) and eighties (4.20 per cent) and thereupon fell to 2.16 and 1.07 per cent, respectively, in the two subsequent decades. Does this mean that people belonging to the profession who once had a modest presence in the national as well as state politics, particularly during national struggle for freedom and responsible government and a couple of decades thereafter, are now migrating to greener pastures or getting themselves displaced by others belonging to other professions? If so why? These are definitely important problems for a serious student of political science to pursue.

However, the case of businessmen politicians is different. They made their presence for the first time in the sixties and slowly began moving up the ladder reaching 3.95 per cent in the eighties (highest

Table 9 : Party-wise Break-up of Education

Party	Education Qualification						
	Under Matriculation	Higher Secondary	Degree	Post Graduation	Law	Other Qualification	Total
INC	55 (12.44)	119 (26.92)	82 (18.55)	30 (6.79)	147 (33.26)	9 (2.04)	442 (100)
CPM	87 (25.07)	122 (35.16)	62 (17.87)	10 (2.88)	62 (17.87)	4 (1.15)	347 (100)
CPI	39 (17.57)	66 (29.73)	38 (17.12)	14 (6.31)	57 (25.68)	8 (3.60)	222 (100)
Muslim League	46 (33.33)	51 (36.96)	13 (9.42)	4 (2.90)	18 (13.04)	6 (4.35)	138 (100)
Kerala Congress	4 (3.03)	14 (10.61)	30 (22.71)	15 (11.36)	57 (43.18)	12 (9.09)	132 (100)
Others	35 (15.91)	85 (38.64)	27 (12.27)	14 (6.36)	52 (23.64)	7 (3.18)	220 (100)
Independents	1 (2.22)	10 (22.22)	7 (15.56)	12 (26.67)	10 (22.22)	5 (11.11)	45 (100)

Notes: 1. Figures in brackets indicate row - wise percentage distribution
2. Other qualifications include Ph.D, MBA, B.Tech, CA and Medical Degrees
3. Table does not contain information for all the MLAs due to non-availability of relevant details
Source: Secretariat of the Kerala Legislature, *op cit.*

Table 10
Occupational Background (Decade-wise)

Occu-pation	Period						
	1950's	1960's	1970's	1980's	1990's	2000-2006	Total
Agricul-turists	4 [3.42] (2.96)	14 [5.51] (10.37)	37 [13.60] (27.41)	41 [10.12] (30.37)	20 [7.19] (14.81)	19 [6.79] (14.07)	135 [8.32] (100)
Educati-onists	11 [9.40] (7.19)	21 [8.27] (13.73)	36 [13.24] (23.53)	44 [10.86] (28.76)	18 [6.47] (11.76)	23 [8.21] (15.03)	153 [9.43] (100)
Lawyers	33 [28.21] (9.76)	71 [27.95] (21.01)	44 [16.18] (13.02)	75 [18.52] (22.19)	50 [17.99] (14.79)	65 [23.21] (19.23)	338 [20.83] (100)
Journa-lists	4 [3.42] (7.55)	10 [3.94] (18.87)	13 [4.78] (24.53)	17 [4.20] (32.08)	6 [2.16] (11.32)	3 [1.07] (5.66)	53 [3.27] (100)
Medical Practiti-oners	2 [1.71] (7.69)	4 [1.57] (15.38)	5 [1.84] (19.23)	6 [1.48] (23.08)	5 [1.80] (19.23)	4 [1.43] (15.38)	26 [1.60] (100)
Trade Union-ists	14 [11.97] 8.33	34 [13.39] (20.24)	25 [9.19] (14.88)	46 [11.36] (27.38)	26 [9.35] (15.48)	23 [8.21] (13.69)	168 [10.35] (100)
Social / Political workers	44 [37.61] (6.85)	83 [32.68] (12.93)	98 [36.03] (15.26)	168 [41.48] (26.17)	135 [48.56] (21.03)	114 [40.71] (17.76)	642 [39.56] (100)
Business-men	Nil	3 [1.18] (6.38)	8 [2.94] (17.02)	16 [3.95] (34.04)	10 [3.60] (21.28)	10 [3.57] (21.28)	47 [2.90] (100)
Other	5 [4.27] (8.20)	14 [5.51] (22.95)	6 [2.21] (9.84)	7 [1.73] (11.48)	10 [3.60] (16.39)	19 [6.79] (31.15)	61 [3.76] (100)

Notes: 1. Figures in parentheses indicate row -wise percentage and those in square brackets column-wise percentage

2. Other occupations include Clerks, Writers, Planters, Film Artists, Chartered Accountants etc.

3. Table does not contain information for all the MLAs due to non-availability of relevant details

Source: Secretariat of the Kerala Legislature, *op cit.*

ever representation) and 3.57 between 2000- 2006. This is no small thing considering Kerala's political background. Each passing phase in the history of the legislature thus shows that the composition of the House – in professional sense – is getting diversified as more and more people with different occupational profile are getting elected. Engineers, doctors, professors, planters, film artists, writers, businessmen and chartered accountants, to name a few, are now seen entering state politics and holding responsible elected positions.

From the decennial account of the occupational profile of elected representatives as one moves on to the party-wise breakup, the picture becomes different. Naturally the two left parties – CPI and CPI (M) – have the largest number of trade union representation in the Assembly. With 17.28 per cent, CPI has the highest tally here and CPI (M) comes second (12.11 per cent), and the difference between the two is also substantial – 5.17 per cent. Among those who have declared their profession to be full-time social activism/political work, CPM has the highest number, 56.90 per cent. CPI comes second (46.09 per cent) in this respect and the Indian National Congress third – 37.20 per cent. Trade union and political/social worker categories together form the largest block for both CPI (M) and CPI – 69.01 and 62.12 per cent respectively. For the Congress, on the other hand, lawyers and full-time politicians jointly form the largest group, 64.51 per cent.

Incidentally, advocates constitute the largest category of MLAs for the various Kerala Congress factions put together – 37.59 per cent – followed by agriculturists, 21.05 per cent. Interestingly, business interest finds maximum representation for it under the aegis of the Muslim League. Until 2006, 47 businessmen have entered the House out of which 35 (74.47 per cent) were elected in the League ticket. Thus for the Kerala Congress agriculturists and lawyers, and for the Muslim League full-time social/political workers and businessmen together constitute majority. Further, as could be expected, these parties have the least number of MLAs from trade unions, whereas the farming community finds the second and third largest representation in the Muslim League (12.05 per cent) and the Congress (10.97 per cent), respectively. However, surprise is in store for us in regard to the representatives hailing from educationists. Kerala Congress has the highest representation (16.54 per cent) in this respect, followed by CPI (9.88 per cent) and Muslim League (8.43 per cent).

IV. Political Recruitment

In democracies the source of political recruitment is an important factor in understanding the nature of the political elites and the channels and the processes through which they are inducted into various power

Table 11
Occupational Background: Party-wise Account

Occu-pation	Political Parties					
	INC	CPI (M)	CPI	Muslim League	Kerala Congress	Others
Agricul-turists	51 (10.97)	21 (5.92)	5 (2.06)	20 (12.05)	28 (21.05)	10 (3.83)
Educati-onists	37 (7.96)	22 (6.20)	24 (9.88)	14 (8.43)	22 (16.54)	34 (13.03)
Lawyers	127 (27.31)	42 (11.83)	39 (16.05)	19 (11.45)	50 (37.59)	61 (23.37)
Journa-lists	11 (2.37)	7 (1.97)	10 (4.12)	19 (11.45)	Nil	6 (2.30)
Medical Practiti-oners	5 (1.02)	1 (0.28)	2 (0.82)	6 (3.6)	6 (4.51)	6 (2.30)
Trade Union-ists	42 (9.03)	43 (12.11)	42 (17.28)	3 (1.81)	2 (1.50)	36 (13.79)
Social / Political workers	173 (37.20)	202 (56.90)	112 (46.09)	44 (26.51)	18 (13.53)	93 (35.63)
Other Occu-pations	14 (3.01)	16 (4.51)	8 (3.29)	6 (3.6)	7 (5.26)	10 (3.83)
Busi-nessmen	5 (1.02)	1 (0.28)	1 (0.41)	35 (21.08)	Nil	5 (1.92)
Total	**465 (100)**	**355 (100)**	**243 (100)**	**166 (100)**	**133 (100)**	**261 (100)**

Notes: 1. Figures in brackets indicate column-wise percentage distribution

2. Table does not contain information for all MLAs due to non-availability of relevant details.

Source: Secretariat of the Kerala Legislature, *op cit.*

structures. This, in a sense, is indicative of the ways in which politicians are molded and shaped. The fundamental questions to be posed here are: How are these people initiated into politics - through Students' Unions, Youth Organisations, Trade Unions? Or are they initiated directly through the party channel? Alternatively, it is possible that a certain percentage of them are elected to various representative institutions without being members of any political parties or even their feeder organizations. Such representatives are called 'direct entrants'. The attempt here is to analyse these aspects of political recruitment in regard to the Kerala Legislative Assembly.

A prominent feature of the process of political recruitment in the state is its connection with student organizations of various political parties. Brute majority of the members were initiated into politics through student organizations. This also shows a definite upward movement. If in the sixties only 22.69 per cent of MLAs came to politics through these organizations, their number tremendously increased in all the subsequent decades for which we have statistics. For instance, this became 36.53 per cent in the seventies, 47.13 in the eighties, 58.52 in the nineties, and an all-time high of 67.35 per cent in the last decade (Table 12, figures given in parentheses). In fact, this is also indicative of a rising trend in regard to the education of members – that they worked in student organizations, means that they have a certain background of education.

Next to student organizations, came parties, i.e., MLAs skipping other agencies of recruitment viz., student organizations, youth wings, trade unions, other feeder organizations etc., and becoming party card holders directly. However, the point to be noted here is that this trend is progressively declining in Kerala. If in the 1960s, 31.93 per cent of MLAs belonged to this category, their percentage began to come down since the eighties (Figures in square brackets). This was 29.43 during that decade, and the figure was significantly reduced to 20 per cent in the next decade and touched an all-time low of 14.34 per cent during 2000- 2006. What does this mean for the process of political recruitment in the State? The answer is loud and clear – direct entry to the party as a mode of political recruitment is fast ceasing to be an option for Keralites. Reversely constructed, people who seek politics as a career option have to graduate themselves through various feeder organizations – preferably students' wing – before they could become full-fledged political activists and people's representatives.

Two other points also make interesting reading here – the number of direct entrants to the legislature shows signs of diminution, and so is the case with regard to trade union activists. In the sixties, if five

Table 12
Pattern of Political Recruitment (Decade-wise)

Structures of Recruitment	Period					
	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000-2006	Total
Student Organ	27 [22.69] (4.09)	99 [36.53] (15.00)	197 [47.13] (29.85)	158 [58.52] (23.94)	179 [67.55] (27.12)	660 [49.14] (100)
Youth Wing	1 [0.84] (1.61)	4 [1.48] 6.45	17 [4.07] (27.42)	18 [6.67] (29.03)	22 [8.30] (35.48)	62 [4.62] (100)
Trade Union	9 [7.56] (14.75)	14 [5.17] (22.95)	19 [4.55] (31.15)	13 [4.81] (21.31)	6 (9.84) [2.26]	61 [4.54] (100)
Feeder Organ	38 [31.93] (25.33)	18 [6.64] (12.00)	61 [14.59] (40.67)	25 [9.26] (16.67)	8 [3.02] (5.33)	150 [11.17] (100)
Party	38 [31.93] (9.84)	133 [49.08] (34.46)	12.3 [29.43] (31.87)	54 [20.00] (13.99)	38 [14.34] (9.84)	386 [28.74] (100)
Direct Entry	6 [5.04] (25.00)	3 [1.11] (12.50)	1 [0.24] (4.17)	2 [0.74] (8.33)	12 [4.53] (50.00)	24 [1.79] (100)
Total	119 [100] (8.86)	271 [100] (20.18)	418 [100] (31.12)	270 [100] (20.10)	265 [100] (19.73)	1343 [100] (100)

Note: Data for the 1950s were not included in the Table as the same is not available.

Source: Secretariat of the Kerala Legislature, *op cit.*

per cent of all MLAs had no previous experience of participation in political activities, their number has reached the lowest tally in the eighties (0.24 per cent) and improved slightly in the next decade and closed at 4.53 per cent during 2000 – 2006 (Figures in square brackets). This shows that there is only very limited scope for 'consensus candidates' or 'men of social acceptance' gaining direct entry into representative bodies. At the same time, decline in the number of trade unionists in the Assembly has to be viewed seriously. Whereas they had 7.56 per cent representation in the sixties, it has now reached

Table 13
Pattern of Political Recruitment:
Party-wise Distribution (1960 – 2006)

Party	Structures of recruitment						Total
	Student Organ	Youth Organ	Trade Union	Party	Other Organs	Direct Entry	
INC	208 [31.52] (50.98)	29 [46.77] (7.11)	12 [19.67] (2.94)	97 [25.13] (23.77)	58 [38.67] (14.22)	6 [25.00] 1.47	410 (100)
CPM	[20.45] 135 (46.08)	17 [27.42] (5.80)	25 [40.98] (8.53)	90 [23.32] (30.72)	25 [11.67] (8.93)	1 [4.17] (0.34)	293 (100)
CPI	[10.67] 70 (43.48)	8 (4.97) [12.90]	14 (8.70) [22.95]	46 (28.57) [11.92]	21 (13.04) [14.00]	2 [8.33] (1.24)	161 (100)
Muslim League	76 [11.52] (54.29)	2 [3.23] (1.43)	1 [1.64] (0.71)	49 [12.69] (35.00)	9 [6.0] (6.43)	3 [12.5] (2.14)	140 (100)
Kerala Cong-ress	74 [11.21] (58.27)	1 [1.61] (0.79)	NIL	41 [10.62] (32.28)	8 [5.33] (6.30)	3 [12.5] (2.36)	127 (100)
Others	87 [13.18] (49.15)	5 [8.06] (2.82)	8 [13.11] (4.52)	51 [13.21] (28.8)	24 [16] (13.56)	2 [8.33] (1.13)	177 (100)
Indepe-ndents	10 [28.57] (1.52)	NIL	1 [1.64] (2.86)	12 [3.11] (34.29)	5 [3.33] (14.29)	7 [29.17] (20.00)	35 (100)
Total	**660 [100] (49.14)**	**62 [100] (4.62)**	**61 [100] (4.54)**	**386 [100] (28.74)**	**150 [100] (11.17)**	**24 [100] (1.79)**	**1343 (100)**

Note: Data for the fifties were not included in the Table as the same is not available.
Source: Secretariat of the Kerala Legislature, *op.cit.*

just 2.26 per cent. This raises many significant questions, the most important of which is whether the prospect of trade union activity as a means of political mobility is becoming grim. A related question that emerges pertains to the potential of trade union work as an important method of political mobilization itself – Is it ceasing to be the chief source as well as a method of organizing people?

While we don't have any reliable proof to answer these questions in the affirmative, we could not also totally negate them. The fact that emerges out of Table 12 is that trade union activity is hardly an important channel of recruitment to state structures in contemporary Kerala. As stated earlier, in the 1960s, while the percentage of MLAs with trade union background stood at 7.56 per cent, this has dipped considerably to reach 2.26 per cent during the last decade. This forces one to conclude that trade union activity has lost its earlier sheen both as a mode of mass mobilization and a source of political mobility. One last question that remains to be answered is whether this has anything to do with the reduced role of trade unions in industrial relations in the unfolding neo-liberal economic context. Here again there is space for certain amount of conjecture as the figures given in parentheses indicate that trade union representation in the Assembly increased, gradually, till the 1980s, and began to dip thereafter i.e., from 1990s onwards. Incidentally this was also the period in which the neo-liberal economic reforms were launched by the Indian State. The coincidence between these two, therefore, needs serious research.

From the decennial pattern of political recruitment as one moves on to the party-wise break-up (Table 13), it could be seen that for all parties the largest contingent of MLAs came from those category who were initiated into politics through student organizations. Surprisingly, Kerala Congress (all factions put together) and the Muslim League shared first and second positions, respectively, in this respect with 58.27 per cent and 54.29 per cent. However, among the three main parties – Indian National Congress, CPI (M) and CPI – Congress has the largest share here (50.98 per cent) followed by CPM (46.08 per cent) and CPI, 43.48 per cent (figures in parenthesis). Further for all the parties, the second largest contingent of MLAs hails from politicians who became members of their respective parties directly i.e., without any experience of working in the student/youth wings or any other feeder organizations. This figure is 35 per cent for Muslim League, 32.28 for Kerala Congress, 30.72 for CPM, 28.57 for CPI and 23.77 per cent for the Congress.

Another revealing feature of Kerala politics is that even independent MLAs have a strong political legacy. Table 13 gives ample proof in this regard. The Table shows that 34.29 per cent of these

members had strong party background, 28.57 percent a history of being part of student movement and 14.29 per cent experience of working in feeder organs (figures given in parentheses). Only 20 per cent of them constitute 'true independents' ie., those without any party connections, whatsoever. Others are/were people who became independents by severing their party identity and/or abandoning their connections with various feeder organs/student and youth wings, at various times in their career.

However, to get a comprehensive account of the political recruitment, one has to look at Table 13 from a different ankle as well: column-wise percentage given in square brackets. This gives a clearer picture about the number of elected representatives various political parties have from each segment. The category of 'Trade Unions' is a clear case in point. Of the total of 61 members who declared that their initiation to political life was through trade union activity, the largest chunk goes to the two Communist Parties. In percentage terms this is 40.98 and 22.95, respectively.

Another instance is the case of 'direct entrants' in the Assembly. The chances of people with no political experience or membership in political organizations, including feeder organs, getting tickets for Assembly elections are brighter in the case of Congress, Kerala Congress and Muslim League. For the Congress this forms a substantial number (25 per cent), whereas for the other two parties this is 12.5 per cent each. And such a prospect is very bleak in the case of left political parties which is proved by the fact that direct entrants constitute just 4.17 per cent for CPI (M) and 8.33 per cent for CPI. This attests to the cadre nature of these parties.

The discussion above points towards the nature and type of political leadership that wielded/wields political/state power in this part of India. When compared to other states in the country and even with the Lok Sabha, the legislators are largely more educated, younger in age with more or less a balanced representation for various religious groups. But when it comes to caste representation upper caste dominance is still a fact, though this trend is facing severe challenge from various lower caste groups. Also, it is worth noting that, as in other states, Kerala's political leadership is overwhelmingly male centric, with full time social/political workers, lawyer politicians and Trade Union leaders forming its main stay. This political reality constitutes the backbone of the 'idea of Kerala', an idea and an identity that distinguish it from the rest of the country, particularly its politics.

Notes and References

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5. For details see, Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance in Kerala*: *Society and Politics in Travancore*, *1847- 1908*(New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, Pvt. Ltd., 1976); N.K.Bhaskaran, *Democratic Movements in Travancore* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Trivandrum: Department of Political Science, University of Kerala, 1983); M.J.Koshy, *Genesis of Political Consciousness in Kerala (*Trivandrum: Kerala Historical Society, 1972); K.K.Kusuman, *The Abstention Movement* (Trivandrum, Kerala Historical Society, 1976); J. Prabhash, 'Malayali Memorial: Class Interest Through Community Interaction', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Vol.XIV, Parts 1 – 4, March, June, September, December 1987; and Prof.A.Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala and Freedom Struggle* (Kottayam: DC Books, 1997).

6. Edmund Burke, 'He is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of Parliament' Brian Mac Arthur *The Penguin Book of Historic Speeches* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1995);pp.115-16.

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8. G.Gopakumar, 'Socio-economic Background of Legislators in Kerala' in Christophe Jaffrelot and Sanjay Kumar (eds), *Rise of Plebians? The Changing Face of Indian Legislative Assemblies, (New Delhi: Routledge, 2009), pp.393-406.*

9. A clear case was the anti-liquor struggle organized by women in Andhra Pradesh on May, 1993. Initially the struggle was confined to one of the hamlets in the state, but soon it spread, like wildfire, to forty villages. Liquor shops were forcibly closed by women and they announced a fine of Rs.500 on those who drank/sold liquor and by the end of July 1993 two hundred out of 864 shops were closed. As a result arrack auction was postponed thirty two times. Seeing the determination and political will of women, political parties decided to come to the forefront of the struggle. It came to be appropriated by both the Congress and Telugu Desam Party and eventually got reduced to symbolize the mutual antagonism between the two. For details see Kalpana Kannabiran and Vasanth Kannabiran, *De-Eroticising Assault: Essays on Modesty*, *Honour and Power*, (Calcutta : Stree, 2002), pp.232-33.

10. For details see Nancy E McGlen, Karen 'O' Connor, and Lawea Van

Assendelft, *Women, Politics and American Society*(New York: Longman, 2002).

11. Madhu Kishwar, *Off the Beaten Track*: *Rethinking Gender Justice for Indian Women* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.140.

12. *Ibid.*

13. It may be noted that, due to the differences in timing of the elections of the Lok Sabha and Kerala Legislative Assembly, there is actually a difference in the period of the Houses of the two elected bodies. For instance, when the first general election to the Lok Sabha was held in 1952, and consequently the first House was from 1952 to 1957, in Kerala, practically, 1957 election is considered as the first election, and hence the tenure of the State Assembly begins from that period onwards.

14. District Council election of 1991 needs special mention here as the Council was then supposed to be much more powerful than other local self-governing institutions. It may be remembered that about 150 subjects were transferred to them by the State Government. Women came to have 34 per cent seats in the Councils even though only 30 per cent was mandatory. For details see Institute of Social Sciences, *Social Background of District Council Members in Kerala in 1991 (ISS Occasional Paper Series – 8)*, (New Delhi: Institute of Social Sciences, n.d), p.3.

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19. Shankar and Rodrigues, *op.cit.,* p.83.

20. In Kerala, Muslim community is considered as a backward social group and hence is given the benefit of reservation in the Civil Service.

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Mapping Nonviolent Movements in Conflict-Ridden Manipur

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ABSTRACT

Non-violent movements are gaining momentum throughout the world after the UN declared 2nd October as the International Day of Non-Violence. The decision has indirectly paid a tribute to the Indian non-violent movement for freedom led by Gandhi. But, the present situation in India is far from the Gandhian legacy. For instance, armed forces are used regularly as a means of governance, particularly in the Northeast. This paper discusses the legitimacy of non-violent movements in Manipur drawing on movements and actions of Nupi Lan (Women's War of 1904 & 1939), Meira Paibi and Irom Sharmila. The paper argues that India's security considerations in Manipur have superseded all other concerns.

Introduction

THE WAR RESISTERS International handbook for nonviolent campaigns defines nonviolence as desire to end violence — be it physical violence or what's been called 'structural violence' (deprivation, social exclusion, and oppression) — without committing further violence. It further adds that it is also a desire to change power relations and social structures, an attitude of respect for all humanity or all life, or even a philosophy of life or theory of social action.[1] The definition of non-violent movements is almost similar with one or the other, inspired by popular leader like Gandhi or Martin Luther Junior in particular. Besides, everyone tries to trace the history of non-violent movement to Gandhi. O Brien & O Brien suggest that Gandhi was not the first leader to use the nonviolent method to challenge injustice.[2] There are some scholarly accounts of early uses of nonviolent techniques, starting with Jewish and Christian

civil disobedience towards the Roman Empire.[3] Similarly, United States Institute of Peace observed that, Henry David Thoreau's 1848 lecture "The Rights and Duties of the Individual in Relation to Government," later renamed "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience," helped shape the thinking of prominent nonviolent twentieth-century practitioners such as Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Junior. In his essay, "Thoreau reflected upon his experience of being jailed for not paying a poll tax. He questioned if unjust laws, which violate a person's morality, should be obeyed. If not, he asked, should citizens wait until a majority of legislators are persuaded to alter the law? Thoreau argued that because the state depends upon the consent of the governed, upon which its power and authority are derived, citizens could withhold their allegiance with a clear conscience".[4]

But, there is no doubt that the modern nonviolent movement is credited to Gandhi for developing the ideas as well as its practice. Dudouet Véronique say that nonviolent action "appeared as a strategic and conscious method of collective political action with Gandhi's satyagraha campaigns in South Africa (1906-1914) and India (1919-1948). His methods have subsequently been emulated and adapted to various national contexts, and have achieved worldwide success through the productive demonstration of "people power" on all continents".[5] O Brien& O Brien agree with this view calling Gandhi the "Father of Non-violent Resistance". They further add, that he combined truth, love, and the refusal to cause harm into a force that could overcome the most brutal form of violence and oppression. This has been acknowledged by the International community particularly the United Nations when it declared the 2nd October, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, as the **International Day of Non-Violence** through the United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/61/271 of 15 June 2007. The resolution reaffirms, "the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence" and the desire "to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence" and also to "disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness".[6]

The resolution has projected India as a model for non-violent movement, at least at the government level. But, the situation in India presented a different version with more than 20 out of the 28 states in the grip of armed violence of different magnitudes. The response of the state is largely military in character. This militaristic response has become an entrenched element of state policy on national security particularly since the 80s.[7] This has resulted in human rights violations of various degrees particularly in the armed conflict areas such as North East India, Jammu and Kashmir and later in the Naxalite

areas. Thus, in-spite of celebrating the country's 65 years of independence, the issue of human rights violation in different forms and intensity is getting even more pronounced with the passage of time.

Manipur, which become part of India after her forced merger in 1949, is not an exception to it. The state has been witnessing the problem of armed conflict demanding right to self-determination since the merger. The asymmetric armed conflict between the state and non-state actors has threatened the very survival of life and livelihood of the people of Manipur. Moreover, it has created many more issues that are affecting the daily life of the common people.

The UN resolution has been used as a means to conceal the human rights situation in India. However, the movement for human rights through carried out nonviolently is also gaining momentum in-spite of the fact that the government never responded significantly to any of these movements positively. For Instance, Irom Sharmila, who has been fasting for more than a decade (since 2000) to revoke the draconian Armed Forces Specials Powers Act (AFSPA)1958, has been detained in the name of violating a state law by attempting to commit suicide rather than looking at the reasons behind such extreme acts of desperation.

Manipur

Manipur has experienced different phases of administrative change ranging from village polity to constitutional monarchy as in many ancient countries of Europe and Asia. For a long period the state was under a centralized monarchy based on feudalism. Monarchy was the prevalent form of government. Gangumei Kabui observes that the state emerged as a result of the gradual growth of human civilization with development of economic organization, social order and steady means of livelihood. The King was the head of the state and all veto powers were vested in him. However, there was no evidence of the King being possessed with despotic power. The power of the king was limited by the *Ninghou Pongba Tara*, *Nine Khunpangthous*, *Sixty four Phandous* and *Clan Pibas*. The Council of Minister(*Ningthou Pongba Tara*) was regarded as a vital organ for the administration of the country. The king should enlist a competent person as minister. It is not hereditary. The members of the council can be represented by any person who is considered to be of marked ability and loyalty to the throne. Both the King and Council of Minister controlled each other. Besides, there was always scope of intervention

in the decisions made by the king. For Instance, Maichou Oinam Bogeshwor in one of his unpublished monographs traces the Meitei style of administration based on joint collaboration between the people and the King, which has been expressed by the proverb *"Leibanka Nama, Ningthouna Nama"* meaning "One part by the people and another by the king".

In A.D 1110 the governance of the country was based on the written constitution "Loyumba Shinyen" which was proclaimed by the king Loiyumba (1074-1112 A.D). Later, it was further expanded by kings like Kyamba (1467-1508), Khagemba (1597-1652), Garibniwaz or Pamheiba (1709-1748), Bhagyachandra (1763-1798) and Chourjit (1803-1813). There is another text known as *Mashin* as pointed out by N Khelchandra. If we read together then it will give a mine of information on the social and economic history of Manipur. All the events in Manipur are recorded in the Kingdom Chronicle "Cheitharol Kumpaba" which is available in the Royal Palace of Manipur, Local custodians as well as archives around the world especially in the United Kingdom.[8]

The persistence of violence in Manipur is a legacy of the state to defend itself from attacks by neighbouring powerful kingdoms such as Ahom, Burma, Tripura and the Mughals etc. Besides, British were interested in using Manipur as a strategic location in their operations in South East Asia. The importance of Manipur can be reflected in the maps beginning from 1500 AD by Henry Yule, which indicates an identifiable territory of Manipur.[9] So, most of the time, the male members were always ready to go on war in order to expand the territory or to defend the territory. That is how the emergence of "Lallup" came into existence, which means Association for War (Lal-War, Lup- Organisation or Association). It was compulsory service for all the commoners between the ages of 16 to 60 for 20 days. The significance of Lallup was also to restructure and administer the kingdom including stationing of 400 regular militias in Kangla- the capital of Manipur.[10] Besides military reasons, they are also assigned different tasks including agricultural works. However, the nature of the movement was not always violent within the kingdom as there was always scope of people intervention particularly the elder women in the administration of the kingdom. So, violence was not the only option available to the people.

The nonviolent movement can be traced significantly after the British occupation of Manipur in 1891. Before the British intervention, Manipur had more than 50 years of significant political relationship with the British since Manipur was helped by the British in restoring her sovereignty. But, the British started sneaking into the state by

establishing their 'friendship relations' through their political agents during the period of Maharajah Gambhir Singh in the 19th century. The friendship was continued mutually by posting Political Agents in each other's territory. Manipur appointed political agents in the British Territory of Lakhimpur (Cachar) and Calcutta. Similar office was opened in Manipur for the British Political Agent. It also resulted in the signing of the Anglo Manipur Friendship treaty in 1762 and the Anglo Manipuri Defence protocol of 1763. There was also mutually protective Anglo-Manipuri arrangement between Manipur and British by holding summit meeting with Maharaja Chandrakirti of Manipur and British in 1874. But after the death of Maharajah Chandrakirti in 1886, the kingdom witnessed a number of palace intrigues and coups which provided a fertile ground to the British to gain political control of the state.

Nonviolent Movements during the British Intervention

The worsening economic conditions coupled with the defeat in the war created a deep anti-British feeling among the people of Manipur. It has been manifested in some of the historic and significant movements against the administration till British departure in 1947. It includes (a) First Women War (1904); (b) Kuki Rebellion (1917-1919; (c) Jadonang (1930-32); (d) Second Women War (1939-41); and (e) Internal self-determination movement. The movements are both violent and nonviolent but the paper will only discuss the non-violent movements such as first and second Women Wars and movement for internal self-determination.

(a) First Nupi Lan (Women War) 1904

The first three to four years of colonial rule experienced numerous instances of fire in and around Imphal town. The British administrators considered the fire in 1891-92 as acts of provovation and expressions of national anger. They were also understood to be reactions to the British attempt to "bring under discipline and into order the evil- disposed and sullen inhabitants of Imphal. In 1904, there were again numerous incidents of fire and burning in Imphal town and on 15th March, the state bungalow occupied by Captain Nuttal, tutor to the Raja and Mr Dunlop-Assistant political Agent was burnt down. The market was also burnt down on 6th July and after a month, on 4th August, the new bungalow was also burnt down. In spite of declaring Rs 500 as a reward for providing any information to catch the culprits, the British could not get any information or arrest anyone. It was because of the support of the people to the movement and the general anti-colonial feeling for destroying the

sovereignty of Manipur.[11]

As a symbol of collective punishment to the people of Imphal, the Political Agent issued an order on 12th September to temporarily resuscitate Lallup in the town of Imphal, with a view to rebuild the Bungalow. The inhabitants of the Leikais (cluster of house) in Imphal were supposed to provide all the necessary materials given in the Government list and build the house. The Cheirap court was to supervise the building operation. The petition and request to the Political Agent to cancel the order was not honoured; instead an order was issued on 29th September, stating that unless the people carried out the order, a punitive Police Force would be posted at Imphal. The Princess took the leadership to mobilize the people to defy the order.[12] It was later supported by the women from the Ima (mother) market, beginning with 1st October by resorting general strike. The women resorted to long marches and sit in sessions. Although the movement eventually died out in the subsequent month, the British realized the people's discontent.

(b) Movement for Internal Self-Determination:

When the administration of the State was handed over to the Maharaja and his Durbar in 1907, the British government deliberately encouraged a tough approach on the part of the ruler towards his subjects. Strongly backed by the imperial force, the Maharaja no longer had the need for the good will of his subjects. On the contrary, they were forced to submit humbly before his feet. The ancient administrative machineries of the ruling monarchs of Manipur were changed into oppressive forces by Maharaja Churachand.[13] As a response to the state administration, Irabot mobilizing peoples especially the peasants which formed the bulk of the population to fight against the oppression of the king. The king realized the position of Irabot and he was made vice president of the newly established state sponsored Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha on 30th May 1934 to counter his rebellious activities. In 1936, he along with his like minded friends established a peasant organization called Kishan Sabha at Nambol to fight the injustice meted out to the peasants.

The people's movement took a new turn after the fourth session of the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha (NHMM). The fourth session of the NHMM was held at Chinga in 1938. Earlier session were held in Imphal, Manipur (1934), Silchar, Assam (1936), and Mandalay, Burma (1937). The fourth session marked a radical change not only in the organizational structure of the Mahasabha but also in the colonial history of Manipur. The session allowed the people from the hills and also from Manipuris outside the state to join the

Mahasabha. In order to accommodate the people of all faiths, the nomenclature "Hindu" was deleted. The Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha became Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha. After the session, it became a political party and was declared so by the Darbar. Thus all the government employees resigned from the Mahasabha. Irabot himself resigned from the Government service. Some of the most important resolutions passed by the Mahasabha were:

   (i)   A full responsible government should be established in Manipur
  (ii)   Adult Franchise should be the basis of election
 (iii)   The plough owner should be the land owner
 (iv)   The administration of the hill and the valley should be amalgamated
  (v)   Rani Gaidinglui should be released from jail

A civil disobedience movement was launched under the leadership of Irabot in 1938. He initiated a burning of all the British made clothes in front of the Cheirap court. As part of the movement, the people cut down trees from the reserved forests, felled fire-wood, caught fish from the lakes and rivers, Ferry tax was not paid, loading and boarding of peon was not supplied, Honey was collected and consumed by the people rather than offering it to the king. This was the first time that the people were defying and disobeying the government orders. Simultaneously, the volunteers of the Praja Mandal helped the poor peasants who come all the way to the Khwairamband Market to sell their paddy. The Praja Mandal forces the peasant to fix the amount of the paddy which was not the case earlier. The civil disobedience movement which spread far and wide in Manipur dealt a severe blow to the government. The government responded by taking up repressive measures and arresting important leaders of the movement.[14] In the midst of this civil disobedience movement, the second Nupi- Lan (Women's War) broke out in demand of a responsible government.

(c) Second Nupi-Lan (Women War) 1939

The second women movement was one of the important movements in the history of Manipur. It was started as an agitation in 1939 against the economic exploitation under the Maharaja and the British administration, but later, evolved into a movement for the constitutional and administrative reform in Manipur. The agitation began in late 1939 at the main market in Imphal. There were two groups of women in the market, one with permanent sheds having a strength of 2000 whereas a large number of women sat outside the sheds as occasional hawkers. The agitation was supported by both

these women groups. The agitation was important as the market (Khwairamband) was located within the British reserve and technically under the control of the British rather than the Manipur State Durbar.

The agitation was a response to the excessive export of rice from Manipur after Manipur became a British protectorate. The export was encouraged by the British through the Marwaris (outsiders or Mayang) as a means to control the economy of the state. The rice exported per unit acre of cultivated land increased phenomenally during 1921-1938. A precarious situation was reached in 1939 when there was a record export of rice at a time when the rice production was affected due to excessive rain and hail-storm. On 13th September, the State Durbar passed a resolution to ban export of rice. However they still had to supply to Kohima Civil Station in Assam as per the agreement, to supply for the battalion of the British Soldiers. But soon the rice ban was lifted following an order issued by the Maharaja on 25 September. The order upset the people of Manipur especially the women. The women intensified the movement by submitting a memorandum demanding an absolute ban on the export of rice. In continuation of the movement, on 12 December, hundreds of women marched to the State office to make their demand known to the Durbar. It was led by the women from the market. Despite the pressure, members of the Durbar could not take a decision. The issue was complicated by the absence of the Maharaja and Mr. Gimson. When the President told that the Maharaja was in Nabadip, the women forced him to go to telegraph office to communicate with the Maharaja about the demand and decided to confine him till the reply from Maharaja was received. The Assam rifles was dispatched to control the situation, but the women resisted by shouting slogans and remained on the road till they got a response from the Maharaja. In the confrontation, 21 women were injured by bayonet and gun butts. Out of the 21 women, 5 were seriously injured and later taken to the civil hospital for treatment. Mr. Grimson met the women in the market and informed them about the Maharaja's order of complete ban of export of rice. After the success of the banning of export, the women decided to close down the rice mills including those owned by the local people as mills were responsible for the heavy export of rice and consequent scarcity of food grain in the state.[15]

The movement took a new turn with the involvement of Hijam Irabot who was invited to lead the movement. Irabot formed a new party Manipur Praja Samelini- as most of the members of Mahasabha did not agree to support the women's movement. Large public meetings were held with Irabot as the principal speaker. The

authorities reacted swiftly to Irabot's attempt to channel the popular discontent over the rice export issue into an attack on the whole feudal system of administration in Manipur. He was arrested and jailed for three years under section 124 of IPC on the ground of inflammatory speech. After his arrest demonstrations were continued by the Praja Sanmelon in the urban areas, and in the rural by the peasants' party- The Kishak Sanmelon.[16]

Manipur State Constitution Act 1947

The incident of Nupilan was brought to the notice of the Governor of Assam and the Governor drew the attention of Maharaja to the need for administrative reforms in Manipur. On 22 April 1940, The Maharaja had submitted a draft proposal of reform to the Political Agent. The proposal was however drafted in consonance with the provincial government framework in so far as the executive and legislative functions were concerned. But the Maharaja had intentionally left out questions on the Cheirap court and Sadar Panchayat. In spite of the Governor's appeal to introduce the reform immediately, up to December, 1940, the Maharaja did not take any action. But when the Maharaja was prepared to accept constitutional reform, if not responsible form of government during the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebration of his reign as a "parting gift" to his people, the Governor of Assam was only in favour of a few minor administrative changes, which he tried to impose unceremoniously on the Maharaja through the Political Agent of Manipur. Dissatisfied with the development, the Maharaja left Imphal on 28 May 1941 for Shillong to plead his case personally before the Governor and then even to the Crown Representatives. But unfortunately he died at Nabadwip. Manipur was declared as "Operational Area" during the Second World War and thus administrative reform took a back seat.[17]

While in Jail, Irabot and like minded people launched the jail reform movement. In the jail, Irabot met a number of activists of the Community Party of India(CPI) particularly the most prominent leaders like Brijesh Misra and Jotirmoy Nanda. Through them, he was exposed to the vast literature of Marxism and his left wing convictions were strengthened.[18] After his release, he was denied entry into Manipur. He was forced to stay in Cachar under the auspices of the CPI. On a special invitation from P.C Joshi, he went to Bombay to attend the first party Congress of the Communist Party of India held during 23 May- 1st June 1943 as an observer. His involvement on behalf of the peasants was increasing and because of his association with the CPI, he was detained for several months by the order of the Assam Government in 1945. He was allowed to visit

Manipur only after the death of his mother-in-law. But finally on March 1946, the ban was lifted.[19]

On his return to Manipur, he quickly established contact with his former political colleagues. The demand for "full responsible government ", "adult franchise" etc were again adopted and passed at the second conference of the Manipur Krishak Sabha held at Nambol on 16th May 1946. In the same year, The Manipur Praja Sammelan also reiterated the "necessity of the legislature in Manipur". On 15 April, 1945, the Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha sent a memo to the British Cabinet Mission through Nehru, in which it demanded an elected legislature for Manipur and what it called 'a united Kingdom of the whole of India' with a central government which will take control over defense, finance, trade, communications, roads and transport, taxes, and foreign policy. Again in 1946 the Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha petitioned the Maharaja for an immediate declaration that there will be a responsible government and that to this end he would set up a constitutional committee and an interim government.[20] The representatives of the Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha, Manipur Praja Sammelan, Krishak Sabha, together with the representatives from the hills requested the Maharaja to set up a committee to facilitate the election to the legislative assembly. The Maharaja on 21 September 1946 wrote to the Political Agent asking for the Government approval to make a declaration which will lead to responsible government. On 12 December 1946 he announced the composition of a committee which would draft a constitution.[21] On 15 May 1947 Manipur Draft Constitution was ready and on 26 July 1947 Manipur State Constitution was adopted.

Conflict Situation in Manipur

After the forced merger of Manipur with India, the Kangla fort in Imphal, from where the kings of Manipur used to rule, was brought under military control in 1949 and retained till 2004. As a result of savage exploitation and decades of uneven development, national liberation struggles have raised their heads. They are based on struggles for self-determination.[22] The movement was raised by the Red Guard along with other civil society segments of Manipur in the late 40s and early 50s. The Red Guard's revolution left a profound, indelible impact on the informed Manipuri world view and onward progression of a composite, egalitarian history of the ancient Asian state.[23] The movement was followed by different groups since then with some of the groups in a very systematic and sustained character. The movement became more active in the mid 1970s. United National Liberation Front of Manipur (UNLF) was formed in 1964, but they

took up arms under the banner Manipur People's Army (MPA) only in the late 80s. In September 25, 1978, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), with a Leftist ideology and alleged training in guerrilla warfare in China, was founded with the aim of restoring Manipur sovereignty through armed struggle. Revolutionary People's Front (RPF) and its military wing PLA have unilaterally signed the Common Article 3 of the Fourth Geneva Convention in 1997 and also have submitted a memorandum to the UN Decolonization Committee. RPF and its armed wing PLA have reaffirmed its stand not to have a political dialogue with the central government except on the issue of independence and sovereignty of Manipur after their second congress (July 14 to December 4, 2008). Many other groups have faded way or become weaker after the military intervention of Indian forces with special powers.

To tackle the situation, the whole Manipur was declared a disturbed area and Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958 was imposed in September 1980, which legitimized full-scale military operations, permitting even a non-commissioned officer to kill on mere suspicion with guaranteed immunity. In addition to empowering security forces, it also acts as a means to militarize the state through massive deployment of armed forces and military actions under different operational code-names, such as, *inter alia*, operations "Blue Bird" (1988), "Sunny Vale" (1993), "Loktak" (1999), "Stinger", (2005), "Tornado" (2005), "Dragnet" (2006), "Somtal I" (2006) and "Somtal II" (2008), and "Summer Storm" (2009) were undertaken under the 1958 **(**AFSPA). Besides AFSPA, Other security legislation including, *inter alia*, (i) Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA), (ii) Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act 1911, (iii) Official Secrets Act 1923, (iv) Maintenance of Public Order Act 1947, (v) Punjab Security of the State Act 1953, (vi) National Security Act, 1980 (NSA), (vii) Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002 (POTA), (viii) Code of Criminal Procedures (Manipur Amendment) Act 1983, and (ix) National Investigation Agency Act 2008 (NIA) also are made applicable.[24]

Now, the situation in Manipur is such that the state actors and non- state actors are unable to dominate each other and are also not retreating to their position. This conflict situation has been witnessed for the last decade or so and even the government is not coming up with any substantial peace overtures except making announcements in the media. While the demands made by the stronger armed groups such as RPF/PLA and UNLF/MPA are not acceptable to the government.

Nonviolent Movement in the Conflict Situation of Manipur

Manipur, in the course of her history particularly after the British intervention, has witnessed both the principled and pragmatic movement. Some selected cases during British intervention were discussed in the previous section and this section will discuss the nonviolent movement in conflict ridden Manipur.

(i) Principled Nonviolent Movement

This approach is more than a moral decision not to inflict suffering on the opponent. There is an understanding that the means and ends to achieving one's goals are indivisible. Violence cannot be used to bring about peace. Fundamental to the principled approach is recognition that both parties have needs, which have to be resolved. Therefore, there is a dedication on the part of the activist group to pursue problem-solving negotiations to achieve a solution equally beneficial to both parties in the conflict.[25] Examples are Gandhi's and Sharmila's movements

Sharmila Movement

Sharmila's movement is part of the larger movement of Armed Forces Specials Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958, which empowers security forces to kill anyone on grounds of suspicion. The act has been condemned by different groups including United Nations, Indian government committees and human rights groups from around the world. But, with the insistence of the Indian armed forces particularly the Indian army, the draconian Act is not yet revoked so far. The movement was ignited after the Malom Massacre (2000), which claimed the lives of 10 civilians. With a commitment and guided by her non-violent approach, she launched her fast unto death on Nov. 4, 2000 demanding to revoke AFSPA, 1958.

But the response of the government, which claims to be the 'world's largest democracy', is very indifferent. Instead of addressing the issue, Sharmila was arrested under section 309 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) and charged with "attempt to commit suicide". Besides, she was forced feed twice a daily through her nose, in order to keep her alive and to refrain from the possible aftermath of her demise.

In spite of being in the land of Gandhi- the pioneer of non-violent movement, she was not recognized by any organization including those who claimed to be Gandhians. She was first recognized by awarding the Gwangju Prize for Human Rights 2007 along with Dr. Lenin Raguvanshi of Varanasi. The Gwangju Prize for Human Rights was established to celebrate the spirit of the May 18 Gwangju Uprising

by recognizing both individuals, groups or institutions in Korea and abroad that have contributed in promoting and advancing human rights, democracy and peace in their work. After that organizations based in India started recognizing her and joined her movement to spread the word to all parts of the country. But, it is very unfortunate to mention that none of the government officials and elected members have significantly raised the issues in any platform. It was more used as election agenda or propaganda to topple the ruling group by the opposition and vice versa. Since 2000, the government has changed several times, but she is still fasting for justice. Considering the situation, non-violent movement in a border state like Manipur, which the government of India always sees through the security lens, is always invisible.

(ii) Pragmatic Nonviolent Movement

Pragmatic activists use nonviolent methods only because they believe they are the most effective means of confronting oppression under the circumstances or because the use of violence is not a realistic option and/or are seen as counter-productive. Pragmatic activists employ nonviolent methods as only one of several possible methods with which to respond to the conflict situation. A firm decision to reject violence in any and all situations may not have been made by the group, and pragmatic activists do not usually incorporate a philosophy of non-harm into their way of life.[26]

(a) Movement for Self-Governance

The movement for self-governance was raised because Manipur, an erstwhile sovereign Asiatic kingdom was reduced to a part C state after its forced merger with India in 1949. The movement was initially raised alongside the armed movement under the leadership of legendary leader, Hijam Irabot. But the armed movement was short lived with the intervention of central forces particularly Assam Rifles. The non-violent movement remains the main movement for self-governance. Moreover, the agitation was fueled by the attitude of the government of India who handed over the affairs of Manipur to a Chief Commissioner made answerable to the centre only. The people of Manipur were neither consulted nor considered on matters affecting them.

The movement was initiated by different sections of people such as youth groups, women groups, civil society and political parties of Manipur. On 6 May, 1953, the United Assembly Demand Committee expressed the same view in their memorandum. Besides, members of Manipur Electoral College, K.N.A. (Kuki National Assembly),

Historical Research Committee, Praja Santi and Journalist Association also demanded for the same. In a conference held on 26 March, 1960 at Aryan Theatre an Assembly Demand Co-coordinating Committee consisting of Congress, Communist Party of India (C.P.I.), Samyuka Socialist Party (S.S.P.), Communist party of Marxist (C.P.M.), and Praja Socialist Party (P.S.P.) was formed. Thus a common platform was also made for the common cause. The movement started on 11 April, 1960. The women and Youth Assembly Demand Committee demanded to the Government of India to end responsive government and establish a full-fledged responsible government. As a part of the movement, memorandums were submitted to the chief commissioner as well as to the Indian government.

Similarly, On 28 February, 1970 all parties viz. S. S. P. (Samyukta Socialist Party), P.S.P. (Praja Socialist Party), C.P.I. (M) (Communist Party of India (Marxist), Congress and M.P.P. (Manipur People's Party), formed all parties Statehood Demand Co-coordinating body. After some months two more parties, Congress (O) and Manipur National Organization, joined the Co-coordinating Body.[27] Manipur Statehood was inaugurated by Mrs. Indira Gandhi on 21 January, 1972.

So, Manipur had to wait for 23 years to become a state and the justification given by the Indian government for the delay was on the ground of small population and lack of economic viability. But, the Naga Hill along with Tuensang Area was combined and granted statehood as Nagaland State in 1963, which is much smaller in population as well as economic strength. Manipur largely relied on constitutional means to attain statehood unlike the armed struggle that was witnessed in Naga Hills.

(b) Meira Paibi Movement

Meira Paibi (in Meitei language) literally can be translated as 'torch bearers', Meira means a torch and Paibi means the carrier or bearer, conjuring up an image of women with torches keeping a vigil on the streets of Manipur at night. The use of *Meira* as a weapon symbolizes the declaration of a just war. The use of fire, a sacred symbol of the *Meiteis,* adds sanctity to the movement. The roots of Meira Paibi can be significantly traced to the *Nupi lan* or women's war against the British in 1904 and 1939. It was initially started as an agitation against the economic policies of the Maharaja and the Marwari monopolists, but, later it became a successful movement for constitutional and administrative reforms in Manipur.

Meira Paibi originated as a movement to prevent public disorder due to alcohol abuse in the late 1970s. But, it soon became a movement for human rights with the massive deployment of Indian armed forces

to counter the armed movement for self-determination in the early 1980s. It was also at a time, when the state was declared a 'disturb area' and sweeping powers in the name of AFSPA were given to the Indian armed forces. This resulted in frequent military operations and human rights violations. The *Meira Paibi* responded instantly with protest demonstrations. The *Meira Paibi* took to patrolling the streets at night. Women of every *leikai* or ward of every town and village participated in the daily patrolling, bearing no weapons but only the bamboo and rag kerosene torches. Every night, in every leikai, at every lane junction, Groups of women sit in vigil against threats and disruptions to peace in the Community. In periods of relative tranquility, a few women would keep the vigil taking turns. But during times moments of high tension, participation is more widespread. The women carry no weapon or defence besides the torch, which burns till dawn when the woman return to their homes. These are not activist or politically inclined wome; they are ordinary women who take on themselves the traditional responsibility for the safety and well being of the community.[28]

The Meira Paibi movement has gained immense popularity because of its staunch resistance to the dastardly acts of the Indian security forces. The military has been armed with immense powers, particularly with the enactment of the Armed forces Special Powers Act 1958. This legal provision permits even non-commissioned security personnel to arrest or even shoot at persons on mere suspicion - without any evidence. The security forces have over the years brutalized and tortured large sections of the youth all over the state. When even elected representatives did not raise their voice against such acts of the security forces, the movement of Meira Paibi took up cudgels all by themselves. Though the movement emerged first at Patsoi a small township, it has spread to almost all over the Imphal valley. All Meitei women by birth are automatically members of the Meira Paibi, so also non-Meitei women married to Meitei men. The Meira Paibi movement is by and large peaceful and operates by resorting to strikes, agitations and making representations. They have not only taken up the human rights issues with the government but also have tried to reach the underground elements leading the armed militancy. Meira Paibis have also tried raise the issue of violation of human rights in Manipur in international forums.

The community- based Meira Paibis have now become defenders of human rights. The Indian armed forces, which used to handle every military operation, are now beginning to involve the local police. But, the culture of impunity has been inherited by the state police particularly state commandos. So the movement is not only against

the Indian armed forces, but against all security forces including the local police. The nonviolent movement for human rights by the Meira Paibis has not been taken seriously inspite of their engagement for the last 30 years. But there are movements which are responded at the highest level such as the Anna Hazare movement. The simple logic behind the difference is the backing of the politicians and also the state where he/she belongs. The strength of a state is reflected in the number of MPs that it returns to the lower house of the Union Parliament and Manipur, which has only two members, does not make any difference to its total strength of 545.

Conclusion

The circumstance under which Manipur merged into India completely bypassing the elected representatives still remains contentious. That is why people of Manipur see their plight as a kind of foreign domination. The resource-rich Kabaw valley was given away to Burma in 1953 without consulting the people of Manipur. The movement of Meira Paibi as well as the anti- AFSPA movement of Sharmila did not get any significant attention. Considering the response to the movement, it can be observed that the demands made by nonviolent movements are considered only when the government faces violent popular outbursts. For instance, the demand for withdrawn of occupation of Kangla by Indian armed forces was granted only in 2004 when the people rose up and burnt down the Manipur Legislative Assembly building. Further, it is difficult to locate a movement that succeeded in achieving its goals in Manipur purely through nonviolent means. So people have a general feeling that raising demands through a nonviolent movement is unlikely to impress the decision makers. The perspectives of security seem to supersede every other consideration in Manipur as far as policy making is concerned.

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Gandhian Nonviolent Action: A Case Study of Aung San Suu Kyi's Struggle in Myanmar

Kaushikee

ABSTRACT

Gandhi's method of nonviolent action continues to be drawn upon by individuals and movements fighting against the tyranny of violence and oppression in India as well as abroad. Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar is a case in point. Suu Kyi emerged on the scene in 1988 when there were demands for restoration of democracy in Myanmar. She formed the National League for Democracy and led a sustained nonviolent protest against the military junta. Suu Kyi has demonstrated indomitable courage and conviction in the face of all odds—making several personal sacrifices in the fight for democracy—yet remaining nonviolent in letter and spirit. The present paper is an attempt to understand Suu Kyi's nonviolent struggle, her philosophy and beliefs, the circumstances in which she has carried out her resistance movement and the challenges before her.

Burma: From Independence till 1987

JOHN KANE SAYS THAT "the story of Aung San Suu Kyi .....is interwoven deeply with that of modern Burma..."[1] Myanmar was earlier known as Burma and was a British colony. Aung San, Aung San Suu Kyi's father, grabbed national attention in 1936 during the strike by university students. He led a revolutionary struggle against the British imperial power by taking secret help of the Japanese. During the Second World War, he raised the Burma Independence Army which fought against the British. When the War was still on, Japan gave independence to Burma and Aung San became the minister of defense. However, soon he got disenchanted with the Japanese, revolted against

them and sided with the Allies to gain independence for Burma. After the War, he negotiated with the British for independence by leading a nationalist coalition. Unfortunately, before Burma could become formally independent, Aung San was assassinated in July 1947 by political rivals at the young age of thirty-two. At the time of his assassination, he was leading the process of writing a constitution for independent Burma on the one hand and on the other talking to the various minority groups "to accommodate all the ethnic nationalities of Burma within a unified democratic state…"[2] He seriously directed his efforts and energies to the latter. "No leader after him had the political support he engendered nor the ability to translate his vision of a united, peaceful, and prosperous Burma into reality."[3] No doubt then that Aung San is revered as a national hero in Burma.

Burma became independent on 4 January 1948 and U Nu became its Prime Minister. In 1961, under Nu's leadership, Buddhism was declared as the official state religion. This alienated the various Christian ethnic minorities and gave rise to insurgency movements. In March 1962, General Ne Win, the head of the armed forces seized power and his Revolutionary Council declared the Burmese Way to Socialism. In 1974, Burma became a Socialist republic under the supervision of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP). People however were frustrated with this one-party rule. Moreover, the economic situation kept deteriorating, so much so that by 1987, Burma "had been forced to apply for the status of Least Developed Country to gain relief from its burden of foreign debt."[4] The paradox was that Burma was once a rich country and a leading exporter of rice in Asia.

The Four-Eights Democracy Movement and Suu Kyi 's Emergence on the Scene: The watershed year of 1988

Trouble started brewing from mid-1987 as there were some riots followed by student demonstrations against the government in March 1988. In July 1988, General Win resigned owning responsibility for various mistakes committed by his government. On 8 August 1988, peaceful pro-democracy protests were being held in Rangoon in the wake of a general strike. The army, locally known as the *Tatmadaw*, retaliated brutally and there was a massacre. This is known in Burmese history as the Four-Eights Democracy Movement (8-8-88 based on the date 8 August 1988).

Meanwhile in 1988 itself, Suu Kyi came to Burma from England to look after her ailing mother. In the wake of the prevailing chaos, she was under pressure to join the pro-democracy movement. John Kane says, "…….it was chance or perhaps destiny that found her

present at the most critical hour of …history. .....was ...on hand when the country erupted into full-scale revolt in August 1988."[5] Finally, in her first public appearance on 26 August 1988, Suu Kyi pledged support to the movement for democracy and termed it as the "second struggle for independence". This is where she first shared her ideals of nonviolence.

Given the anarchic situation, the military seized power on 18 September 1988. This regime was officially referred to as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). The SLORC struck hard on the demonstrators. However, it also promised to hold multi-party elections and even allow political parties to be formed.

In the wake of these developments, Suu Kyi now wanted to pursue the cause of democratization in a sustained and serious way and thus helped found, with some other leaders, the National League for Democracy (NLD) on 27 September 1988. Suu Kyi was the General Secretary of the party. She insisted on strict adherence to nonviolence and reiterated her resolve to resist the military government nonviolently. As she became more and more popular, the military government felt threatened and it cracked down on the supporters and leaders of NLD.

'Burma' to 'Myanmar': 1989 and After

As the days passed by Suu Kyi became more vocal in her criticism of the SLORC and the *Tatmadaw* and campaigned in various part of the country. On 5 April 1989 during one of her campaigns, an army official commanded soldiers to direct their rifles towards her with the intention to kill. However, another army official intervened at the right time and prevented an untoward incident. The junta hence employed intimidation tactics to scare off Suu Kyi but she was undaunted and remained resolute in her resolve.

In June 1989, the military fired upon her and several students during a memorial service, resulting in the death of a student. This led Suu Kyi to cancel a memorial service planned for July 7. However, she still wanted to go ahead with the July 19 memorial service, the day her father had been killed. The military regime wanted her to be part of their events marking her father's death anniversary, which she forthrightly refused. As there was a lot of tension building up, Suu Kyi cancelled her proposed visit to the memorial, so as to prevent any bloodshed. But the very next day, she was put under house arrest and not allowed to communicate with anybody. Other leaders of the NLD were also put under house arrest.

In the meanwhile, the SLORC rechristened the "Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma" as the "Union of Myanmar". It also announced

that general elections for the National Assembly or Pyithu Hluttaw would be held in May next year. In December 1989, Suu Kyi put forward her candidature for the forthcoming elections. The Election Commission initially approved her name but the same was challenged by an opponent belonging to the National Unity Party (NUP), a proxy of the junta. The opponent alleged that Suu Kyi was in touch with the dissidents who were fighting against government forces. Suu Kyi countered this claim by appealing to the Election Commission but her appeal was rejected and she was disqualified from contesting in the elections.

Elections were held in May 1990. In spite of Suu Kyi's complete absence from the election scenario and severe restrictions imposed on canvassing and other election related activities, the NLD won over eighty percent of the seats contested. These results were however declared null and void. This act of the junta was severely criticised by the international community in general and western powers in particular. However, it is pertinent to point out here that there was a lot of confusion and there was no consensus even with regard to what the elections were actually meant for in the first place.

Originally, the SLORC did intend to hand over power to the party winning the elections but later they receded and said that the elections were being held for electing the members of the National Assembly whose main job would be to frame a new constitution. Most political parties however assumed that the elections were meant to hand over power to a democratically elected government. According to the military regime, once the constitution was written and adopted, then another round of elections were to be held for transferring power in accordance with the rules laid out in the new constitution. In any case, what mechanism would be used to adopt the new constitution was never spelled out by the junta. Thus it can be reasonably concluded that "the elections were held in a political vacuum without any previously agreed process designed to lead to the transfer of power, or even a general understanding of how best to proceed."[6]

After the elections, the SLORC did not allow the convening of the National Assembly, which was very frustrating for the newly elected representatives. Some of them thus secretly met in Mandalay in October 1990 and agreed to convene an Assembly later on. In a bid to prevent this from happening, the junta imposed a security clamp-down. Around a dozen representatives fled to areas controlled by the insurgents and established the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) in December 1990, which later went into exile. The NLD however did not associate itself with the NCGUB.

In 1993, the SLORC convened a National Convention with the

help of a few hand-picked delegates. The aim of this convention was to draw up a draft of the future constitution. However, the SLORC directed the delegates to ensure that the military continues to play an important part in the government. Due to pressures from the junta, the NLD agreed to be part of the Convention but withdrew from it in late 1995. By then Suu Kyi had been released from house arrest. She stated that the procedures of the Convention "were undemocratic and discussion too highly controlled."[7] In any case the Convention did not have a fixed time frame. Suu Kyi's statements against the functioning of the Convention were termed as "traitorous" by the SLORC. As a result, the NLD delegates were removed from it.

After being condemned worldwide for its brutal actions and human rights violations, the SLORC tried to legitimise its rule and augment its image by changing its name in November 1997 to "the less threatening sounding State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)."[8] Besides, it declared a ceasefire with all except one ethnic group involved in the insurgency movement.

On 30 August 2003, Prime Minister Khin Nyunt "in a speech to the ministry officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), unveiled a seven-point roadmap for democratic transition in Myanmar that included re-convening the National Convention (NC), drafting a new constitution according to the principles adopted at the NC, holding a national referendum for the new constitution, holding free and fair elections, convening the Hluttaw (parliament), and the formation of a new, democratic government."[9] Once the National Convention was re-convened and then successfully concluded, the required tasks were to be implemented in a step by step fashion that would eventually lead to the emergence of a democratic system. Towards the end of 2003, the National Convention was re-convened by the junta. However, it never revealed a time frame for implementing the rest of the phases of the roadmap. In May 2008 the new constitution was approved in a referendum.

The year 2007 was witness to another wave of peaceful anti-government protests in Myanmar. The SPDC removed subsidies on fuel which led to a sudden rise in prices. This decision was however never announced publicly and led to protests that started on 15 August 2007 and continued up to October. In any case, the common man was fed up of the worsening political and economic situation within Myanmar. The protests were harshly dealt with by the junta. Buddhist monks joined the protests in large numbers, giving it the name, 'Saffron Revolution'.

The Transition Phase: 2010 to the present

2010 was a landmark year in the history of modern Myanmar as several reforms were initiated in that year. On 13 August, the SPDC declared the holding of general elections on 7 November 2010 in accordance with the provisions of the new constitution. After two decades, the first national elections were held in November 2010. However, the NLD boycotted the elections. The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), a proxy of the military junta, won the elections.

Suu Kyi was released from house arrest on 13 November, right after the elections. In 2011, the SPDC or the military junta was officially dissolved and a civilian government led by Thein Sein, who headed the USDP, came to power. However, the military continues to exercise its influence on the civilian government. Thein Sein, the present civilian President, a retired general, has freed several political prisoners. Media restrictions have also been eased. Most of all, Sein met Suu Kyi in August 2011 and tried to convince her and her party the NLD to rejoin the political process. As a result, the NLD was re-registered. It participated in the by-elections held recently on 1 April 2012. The NLD won the elections emphatically and Suu Kyi became the leader of the opposition.

Suu Kyi's Life, Thought and Philosophy: her views on Non-violence, Democracy, Peace and Justice

Suu Kyi's inheritance, upbringing, and education have contributed in shaping her non-violent thoughts, principles and actions. Her father, General Aung San, is revered as the hero of the independence struggle of Burma. Suu Kyi was just two years old when he was assassinated. Her mother, Khin Kyi was a strict disciplinarian, who raised her in an upright and moral way.

Suu Kyi is well-educated, well-read and has travelled extensively and lived in different parts of the world. Her early school education took place in Burma. In 1960, she came to Delhi when her mother was appointed as Burma's Ambassador to India, a post she held until 1967. Suu Kyi completed her schooling in Delhi and then went on to do graduation in politics. Later, she left for Oxford University where she studied, economics, politics, philosophy and the Japanese language. It was there that she met Dr. Michael Aris, a professor of Tibetology, whom she married later. Suu Kyi was a visiting scholar at Kyoto University and also a Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla, India. At the time of her return to Burma, she was pursuing an advanced degree in the School of Oriental and African

Studies, University of London.

Earlier, Suu Kyi was employed at the United Nation's Secretariat in New York. She also worked in the Bhutan Foreign Ministry as a research officer on United Nations affairs, when her husband was in Bhutan conducting research. Suu Kyi also has several published works to her credit: a long essay on her father, a scholarly article on modern Burmese literature, a historical essay comparing Indian and Burmese reaction to colonial rule, which is hailed as a "literary achievement", to name a few.

Thus from 1960 to 1987, Suu Kyi mostly stayed abroad, leading a quiet, scholarly life. In the 1980s, she regularly visited Burma to meet her aging mother. In 1988, she returned to her country to look after her mother, who was now ailing, and eventually got drawn into the pro-democracy movement. In spite of being away from Burma, Suu Kyi was aware of the developments taking place in the country. More than that she was "acutely conscious of her Burmese heritage and of the burden of potential responsibility that it carried......She had mentally prepared herself for the assumption of her father's legacy."[10] Her education and experiences in different parts of the world helped prepare her for the hardships that she was to face from 1988 onwards.

Prior to her joining the pro-democracy movement in August 1988, Suu Kyi had no previous experience of being a part of anything similar. Yet she quickly learned and acquired the skills necessary for leading such movements. She dressed traditionally and spoke directly yet modestly to the people in their language and in words that they could relate to. She spoke about her faith in democracy and how the same had to be achieved non-violently and through peaceful means.

Suu Kyi has abided by the philosophy of non-violence in her struggle against the military junta for democracy and human rights. She, however, chose non-violence for political and practical reasons and not for moral ones. David Hardiman says, "Like Gandhi, she adopts non-violent civil disobedience as a matter of principle. For her, it provides a most active form of resistance. …. She is prepared always to hold out the hand of forgiveness and reconciliation. In all of these respects, she is a leader truly in the Gandhian mould."[11]

Suu Kyi's philosophy of non-violence has its source in more than one tradition. "U Win Tin, a former editor of the BSPP-era government Burmese-language newspaper *Hanthawaddy*, allegedly introduced Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to the writings on non-violence by the 19th century American author Henry David Thoreau…"[12] Gandhi too had been influenced by Henry David Thoreau's idea of civil disobedience. During her stay in India, Suu Kyi had an opportunity to be acquainted with Gandhian thought and philosophy.

She also delved into her own religion, Buddhism to respond to the violence inflicted by the military junta. This made perfect sense for firstly, Buddhism in principle was opposed to violence and secondly, and more importantly, the majority of the citizens being Buddhist, it was easier for them to connect to the idea of non-violence as propounded by Suu Kyi. From Buddhism, she borrowed the concept of meditation especially '*vipasana*' meditation and used it "both as a personal response to oppression inflicted by the regime, and as a weapon in the struggle for freedom."[13] Meditation has helped Suu Kyi and other members of the NLD to remain focused and resolute in spite of the various hardships.

Thus, Suu Kyi's nonviolent actions and belief in democracy and human rights are also guided by Western political theory, Gandhian philosophy and her roots in Theravada Buddhism. She "attempted, in the spirit of Gandhi, to synthesize Eastern (specifically Buddhist) and Western traditions. Her thinking thus carried a ......spiritual resonance...."[14] In her speeches, interviews and essays, Suu Kyi dwelled upon and explained at length the conceptions of non-violence, democracy, dialogue, freedom, peace and justice. In doing so she takes recourse to combining both – the western ideas and her own faith and the faith of the majority of Burmese people, Buddhism. This synthesis is very well spelt out in her essay, "In Quest of Democracy" written in 1988, which she concluded with the following words: "in their quest of democracy the people of Burma explore not only the political theories and practices of the world outside their country, but also the spiritual and intellectual values that have given shape to their own environment."[15]

Suu Kyi defines non-violence as "positive action. You have to work for whatever you want. ......It...means that the methods you use are not violent ones. Some people think that non-violence is passiveness. It's not so. I know it is the slower way, and I understand why our young people feel that it will not work. But I cannot encourage that kind of attitude. Because if I do, we will be perpetuating a cycle of violence that will never come to an end."[16] Suu Kyi, thus, does not believe in armed struggle or violence as it perpetuates the tradition "that he who is best at wielding arms, wields power."[17] This kind of an attitude is not amenable but rather counter-productive in the struggle for democracy. Love and truth are more powerful than any form of coercion.

For Suu Kyi, the main goal of her struggle is democracy. By democracy, she means the resolution of problems through political means. Democracy is not just limited to the will of the people but also "acknowledges the right to differ as well as the duty to settle

differences peacefully."[18] Using violent means to solve problems is not the way out as it will result in deaths. The mechanism that needs to be adopted to settle differences and address conflicts is dialogue. Dialogue would help in building trust and promoting understanding as participants engaged in a dialogue talk to each other as equals and on equal terms. For Suu Kyi, dialogue is thus very close related to democracy. The foremost reason for Suu Kyi's participation in the struggle for democracy was that it was an ideology consistent with freedom and the only ideology that promoted and strengthened peace.[19] Without democracy, human rights cannot be guaranteed, freedom cannot be exercised and sustainable economic development cannot be achieved. However, there is no one set ideal or form of democracy; its characteristics can change depending upon the culture and worldview of the concerned country. But democracy can be successful only when people participate in the process of governance. This would require empowerment of the people.

The means to achieving democracy is nonviolent political action. This requires the cultivation of values like patience and discipline. The road to democracy is a time-taking process and not easy, one thus needs to be patient. Conducting oneself in a disciplined manner in both the personal and political arena was the most important value. Authoritarian regimes are based on fear. Acting against such regimes, despite fear, requires discipline.

The idea of freedom is universal but it cannot be achieved just by guaranteeing them in the constitution. Freedom is not about the absence of restrictions and limitations. There is a psychological and moral aspect to freedom as well. In her famous speech 'Freedom from Fear', given in 1990 on being awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought , which, because of her imprisonment, could not be delivered at the European Parliament, Suu Kyi said: "It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it....With so close a relationship between fear and corruption it is little wonder that in any society where fear is rife corruption in all forms becomes deeply entrenched." It is very evident here that she was addressing her own people, the citizens of Burma, who had been living under authoritarian regimes since 1962. Suu Kyi frequently addresses her own people and sees it as her moral duty and responsibility to transform the 'Burmese mentality' and to educate her people. In this sense, NDL was thus a movement as well not just a political party.

Suu Kyi elucidated on the theme of peace, its indivisibility and how it could be achieved, in her Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech

delivered on June 16, 2012. She explained the Burmese concept of peace "as the happiness arising from the cessation of factors that militate against the harmonious and the wholesome." Peace cannot come when there are "negative forces eating away" at its foundations: "hunger, disease, displacement, joblessness, poverty, injustice, discrimination, prejudice, bigotry" and other such kinds of sufferings and strife. When negative forces are at work anywhere in the world, there can be no peace. Peace thus is interconnected and interrelated. However, it is also a fact that perfect and absolute peace cannot be achieved. But human beings can strive in that direction as they have the capacity to maximize the positive forces of peace and minimize or neutralize the negative forces. The value of kindness or compassion can go a long way in cultivating peace. "To be kind is to respond with sensitivity and human warmth to the hopes and needs of others...Kindness can change the lives of people."[20]

In Suu Kyi's view, laws are often misused for oppressing people. "In Burmese, the idea is officially expressed as *nyein-wut-pi-pyar* (quietened - crouched - crushed - flattened)..... She equated law with justice....Drawing on Buddhist precepts, she wrote that the concept of law was based on *dhamma*, righteousness or virtue, not on the power to impose harsh and inflexible rules on a defenseless people."[21] Thus justice had to be seen in the context of laws that were to be made by the elected representatives of the legislature and the same to be implemented by the executive in letter and spirit and not arbitrarily.

Suu Kyi has been endowed with various qualities that have helped shape her nonviolent thought and action. She is a moderate leader, who responds to the changing situation, both in her speech as well as through her deed. She practices what she preaches whether its nonviolence, fearlessness or following democratic traditions and procedures. Additionally, she is patient, disciplined, courageous, and compassionate. Besides displaying all these qualities, Suu Kyi has made several personal sacrifices, which sets her apart. She spent 15 out of the 21 years between August 1989 and November 2010 under either house arrest or imprisonment. During the long periods of house arrest, she was completely cut off from her family and the world outside, not allowed to contact her husband and two sons. After 1995, her husband, Dr. Aris was even denied a visa to Burma. He died of cancer in March 1999 but Suu Kyi was unable to see or visit him. She was offered freedom by the military junta on the condition that she would leave the country but Suu Kyi refused the offer as she feared not being allowed to come back once she left the country. During the lonely periods of incarceration, Kyi listened to the radio

many times in a day in order to stay in touch with life and with things going on in the world. These long lonely phases could dampen anybody's spirit and courage but Suu Kyi saw it in a different light: "....I felt that being under house arrest was just part of my job – I was doing my work."[22]

In spite of being forced to go through a lot of personal suffering, Suu Kyi does not display any hatred towards the junta. In an interview given to Alan Clements, she says "I've always felt that if I really started hating my captors, hating SLORC and the army, I would have defeated myself.......I did not hate them and you cannot really be frightened of people you do not hate. Hate and fear go hand-in-hand."[23]

When asked about the possibility if the SLORC would face criminal charges once democratic rule is established, Suu Kyi replied, "...truth and reconciliation go together. Once the truth has been admitted, forgiveness is far more possible. Denying the truth will not bring about forgiveness, neither will it dissipate the anger in those who have suffered."[24] Suu Kyi often uses the terms, 'justice', 'reconciliation' and 'dialogue' to drive across her viewpoint, which are symptomatic of and reflect the language and idiom of conflict resolution and transformation.

Suu Kyi constantly strives for self improvement and goodness: "I do try to be good. This is the way my mother bought me up." [25] And for her, meditation has been a constant source of strength in striving towards that self-improvement. Suu Kyi is humble, balanced and pragmatic; she accepts change and death as a way of life: ".....I do contemplate my death, which means to me an acceptance of the principle of change........If you contemplate your own death, in a sense it means that you accept how unimportant you are......Everybody is essential. But it is a matter of having a balanced view of your place in the world. Having enough respect for yourself to understand that you too have a role to play and at the same time, having enough humility to accept that your role isn't as important as you or some people may think."[26] Thus, Suu Kyi, just like Gandhi, often uses spiritual language to explain things and clarify her thoughts and beliefs. She realizes that she is just part of a process and not the process itself. It is because of her strong convictions and courage that the military junta that tortured her followers and her fellow leaders, hesitated to act ruthlessly against her.

Suu Kyi's contribution to the struggle for democracy in Myanmar has been recognized both nationally and internationally. Within Myanmar, people refer to her as 'the lady' or 'Daw Suu'. 'Daw' is a formal title given to her as a mark of respect, which literally means

'aunt'. She received the Rafto Prize and the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 1990. The year after, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights", becoming the first person to be given this award under detention. Her sons received the prize on her behalf. She established a health and education trust for the Burmese people using the Nobel Peace Prize money. On June 16, 2012, Suu Kyi was finally able to deliver her Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, more than twenty years after being awarded the same.

The government of India honored Suu Kyi's struggle by awarding her the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding in 1992. The same year she received the International Simon Bolivar Prize from the Venezuelan government. In 2007, the government of Canada made her an honorary citizen of the country. The University of Michigan awarded her the Wallenberg Medal in 2011. In September 2012, Suu Kyi was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor given by the United States Congress. During the same time, she was also presented the Atlantic Council's Global Citizen Award.

The Challenges before Suu Kyi

Political reforms have been initiated in Myanmar. Recently in April 2012, free and fair elections were held by the present President, Thein Sein. He seems to be genuine and sincere in his efforts to move towards democracy. However, it remains to be seen whether the transition of power from the military to a democratically elected government will be a smooth and peaceful one or not and if the military will continue to exercise influence over the government? These will be determined only in the next elections which are due in 2015. How Suu Kyi handles the issue of future relations between the army and the government and how she chooses to address the issue of violation of human and political rights by the military will be determining factors. If the army perceives any threat in terms of Nuremberg style of trial, it may strike again. This is, however, highly unlikely given the fact that it would not be acceptable to the international community and secondly, the Myanmar economy being in shambles, it cannot do without monetary aid and foreign investments. If the army tries to seize power again, international aid will not be forthcoming.

A major challenge before Suu Kyi would be to keep the minorities within Myanmar and to initiate a process of reconciliation between the minorities and the Burmese majority. However, until now she has failed to directly address the issue of national unity. Her oft

repeated answer is that "once civil government was established it would not be difficult to resolve this question."[27] This has been interpreted by Josef Silverstein in the following terms: "...the organization of a Burman-dominated polity first, then, after the constitution is written, begin negotiating with the minorities. With no say or participation in the parliament at the outset, the minorities will not be equal partners in the future state of Burma."[28] Silverstein is thus critical of Suu Kyi and charges her with departing "as far as possible from the thinking of her father when this issue seized the nation at its birth. His goal was a federal state in which the minorities were full partners from the outset, sharing in governing the country before independence, in writing the constitution, and in the nation's future, whatever it may be."[29]

Suu Kyi has given some serious thought to the question of the economy - whether economic development should be given preference over political growth. Here, she is clear that only material prosperity cannot lead to happiness. Development should include not just economic growth but also empowerment of the people. Participation of the people in the transformation of the socio-political process thus is the key.

When democracy is reinstated in Myanmar, will Suu Kyi occupy any position? This is a critical question and there are no clear answers. Suu Kyi somewhat revealed her stance on this issue towards the end of August 1988 when she said, "A life of politics holds no attraction for me. At the moment, I serve as a kind of unifying force because of my father's name and because I am not interested in settling for any kind of position."[30] However, as far as having a leadership role in the future is concerned, it is likely that she will go by the decision of the people, who would want her to head the government as they "believe that she is the one who can set them on a new course."[31] Being a responsible person, she is likely to humbly accept this responsibility, when the time comes (health is likely to be a major determinant in this decision) but it is one thing to lead movements and quite another to deal with issues of real politick. This only time will tell for "...until she is given the chance to use her new-found skills at democratic politics in the crucible of parliamentary politics and bears the responsibility for her decisions, no one will know if she is destined to lead Burma toward a new and better life than its people have had, or if she will be forced to compromise and accept the realities of Burma that have developed over the past 42 years."[32]

Thus the list of challenges before Suu Kyi is a long one. There are huge expectations from her for "Burmese people have been in search of leadership since the death of Aung San and many believe that they

have found it in his daughter."[33] Therefore her biggest challenge remains to be able to meet these expectations of the Burmese people. In meeting these expectations, it remains to be seen if she continues to follow her principles of non-violence and takes along all the citizens of Myanmar with her. That will be her real test.

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'Cyber Protests and Electronic Disobedience': Examining Non-Violence in Times of Cyber Politics

Sabu Thomas

ABSTRACT

The irresistible social media revolution is taking the world into its hands. Political regimes were replaced; military secrets sold in the streets; governments were commanded and societies undergo a total change in culture and practices. In the domain of politics and democracy, the new social media enhance participation capacities and reinforce political orientations, thus providing for cyber politics. In this background the present paper examines the potentials of non-violence in the new 'wireless' protest movements. It is argued that the new technologies offer potential avenues for the deployment of non-violent tools in social defense. The digital interventions are more participatory and reach even 'unto the last'. Evidently this ensures a spiritualization of technology in tune with non-violent principles.

Introduction

THE MODERN AGE is habitually depicted as an age of technology. Since the late 1990s access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) has seen tremendous growth, driven primarily by the wireless technologies and liberalization of telecommunications markets[1]. By the end of 2011, the number of mobile-cellular subscriptions reached approximately six billion globally[2]. Wireless communication is growing at an unpredicted speed and pace[3,4]. In many countries it crossed the saturation levels.[5]

Table: 1, Global Status of ICT 2011

S. No.	Sector	Performance
1	Fixed-telephone subscriptions (per 100 people)	17.2
2	Mobile-cellular telephone subscriptions (per 100 people)	78.2
3	Households with a computer (%)	36.2
4	Households with Internet access at home (%)	30.3
5	Population covered by mobile-cellular network (%)	93
6	ICT goods exports (% of total goods exports)	11.1
7	ICT goods imports (% of total goods imports)	12.7

(Source: ITU & World Bank, 2012[6])

Technological innovations and interventions of the day radically alter the landscaping of societies and individuals. The development of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) considerably contributed toward the emergence of new patterns of governance. Politics is becoming more and more interactive and conventional politics is redefined as 'politics 2.0'[7]. With the new technologies, the ordinary citizens are acquiring unparalleled privileges and avenues in civil interference. Civil society is strengthened and technology mediated new public spheres are evolving. Democratic deficits are compensated with larger citizen involvement in the governance mechanisms. It is argued that the internet and new technologies possess a vulnerable potential to revitalize political communication in democracy[8].

The growth and proliferation of new technologies is also reflected in the new social movements. The new movements widely make use of ICT and its potential. Internet and new social media are widely used by new revolutionaries. The provision of technological means enable the new participants to derive new ways of existence and institutionalization, possibly free from larger state intervention. This new public sphere is ultimately a strong socialisation tool and agency that promotes freedom and democracy. Consequently, there is an

evident shift of political power from the territory of the sovereign to the civil sphere[9]. The new patterns of power distribution and governance necessarily influence the methods of new opposition and resistance. It is argued that the growth of new technologies promote nonviolent methodologies in the new resistance movements. The new communication technologies helped the nonviolent activists to achieve many impressive victories. It is also suggested that the violence part of any social resistance movement can be eliminated or minimised with the aid of technologies.

Legitimised Oppression

The democratic potential of ICT is well accepted by scholars[10,11]. At the same time the oppressive structures are becoming more and more oppressive with the aid of technologies. Many of the modern ICT innovations were the result of military interventions[12].

> Military funding is the immediate stimulus for studying certain fields, such as cryptography and nuclear physics. It is also the reason why particular technological artifacts, such as tanks and nuclear weapons, have been constructed. The military exerts influence on science and technology not only through direct funding but also indirectly through influence on what areas scientists think worth researching and what problems they think important[13].

With the aid of sophisticated technologies, governments can effectively monitor and subjugate the subjects[14]. The barriers between government and citizens will be more fortified and wired with new technological inputs. For example, the participants of a political agitation can be well identified and can be easily targeted with the help of surveillance technologies. A protest movement can be easily suppressed by the employment of modern sophisticated weaponries. An autocratic regime can become more autocratic and powerful by the tactic employment of ICT[15,16]. Norris warns against the reinforcement impact of new technologies. It is suggested that the internet and new technologies will strengthen the existing patterns of social inequality and political participation[17].There is the possible danger of stabilising and strengthening the social exclusions by ICT interventions[18].

Gandhian Perception of Technology

The debate on nonviolence and technology should be better facilitated with an understanding of the Gandhian perception of technology. Gandhi was an ardent supporter of change and innovations. But, to

him this change should address the downtrodden in society[19]. Gandhian economic ideas were not about the destruction of all machinery, but a regulation of their exercise[20]. He recognised the good influence of machinery on labour productivity and in reducing the burden of human drudgery. Gandhi welcomed machinery as long as it helped in lessening the burden of individual labour.[21]

Gandhi never rejects science and technology as such. In *Hind Swaraj* he demands a reformulation of methodology and approach to science and technology. Later he clarifies this position beyond doubt. *"I am not opposed to the progress of science as such. On the contrary the scientific spirit of the West commands my admiration, and if that admiration is qualified, it is because the scientist of the West takes no note of God's lower creation"*[22].

Again he clarifies the stand in Young India, *"What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour saving machinery. Men go on saving labour till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation"*.

Gandhi attempted a spiritualization of technology. When used in this perspective, technology becomes a tool to attain swaraj[23]. At times it becomes a tool of empowerment in the nonviolent struggle. The demand is for a harmonious co-ordination between science and spirituality. Many know science, but few live with the scientific point of view. Science cleans the outer self and spirituality cleans the inner self, both of which are essential to keep the world in peace. It is with this philosophical awareness that the applicability of modern technologies in the nonviolent movements in contemporary society needs to be discussed.

Non-Violence and Communication

Nonviolent action refers to methods such as strikes, boycotts, rallies, marches, fasts, sit-ins and setting up of alternative institutions. These are techniques of social action that do not involve causing physical harm to people. Historically, the nonviolence culture existed since human beings existed on Earth, and man is as capable of nonviolence as he is also capable of violence. Martin andVarney divide nonviolent actions into two traditions: principled nonviolence and pragmatic nonviolence[24]. In principled nonviolence, refusal to use violence is a moral imperative, based on the acceptance of the sanctity of human life. Gandhi is identified as the most prominent figure of this tradition. On the other side pragmatic nonviolence is based on the assumption that nonviolent action is more effective than other means of action for opposing aggression and oppression, in

particular, more effective than violence. The urge for conversion of the opponent is more or less absent in this tradition.

In the present scenario nonviolence is practised in both principled and pragmatic traditions. However, principled nonviolence is deemed to be more sustainable and stable. But pragmatic nonviolence is less costly and affordable. However, communication is a central element of both methods of nonviolence. At the first level there is the need of communication within the group of nonviolent activists and supporters. It is necessary to decide and coordinate actions. In many of the new social movements internet and its communication potentials were widely used for coordinating nonviolent actions. In the second level success of a nonviolent action depends on effective communication with the outside circles including the targets and general public. Governments and other oppressive instrumentalities should be convinced of the strength of direct action. Further, the neutral public should be converted to activists or at least 'sympathisers'. It is the 'dialogue with the opponents' stage of the action. This can be effectively assured through the intervention of modern digital media.

Table 2, Dimensions of Nonviolence as Communication

Sl No	Communication Target	Output
1	Conversion	Dialogue with Opponents
2	Power Equalization via Noncooperation and Intervention	Preparation for Dialogue with Opponents
3	Mobilization of Third Parties	The Chain of Nonviolence
4	Collective Empowerment	Dialogue within Activist Groups
5	Individual Empowerment	Inner Dialogue

(Source Martin & Varney : 2003).

ICT and nonviolence

Many of the modern social movements were profited from new Information and Communication Technologies. Public actions were coordinated and conducted with the aid of ICT. This also coincides with the evolution and proliferation of 'mass movements' in modern

society[25]. These movements are highly effective with their single interest focus. This is well evidenced with the Philippine 'Smart Mob' of 2001. The Philippine movement was organized with the help of text messaging. The protest against the suspension of presidential impeachment was noticed with unprecedented public participation and the parliament was forced to move in line with the wishes of the people. The protest rallies were attended by tens of thousands. But there were no reports of major violence during a week-long public protest. This was made possible with the effective coordination facilitated by mobile phones.[26]

The 'Occupy Wall Street' movement is another example of the nonviolent impact of new social media. The protest movement started in US on September 17, 2011. The protest was organized in the background of the financial crisis in America. The people protested against the economic policies of the corporate world. The protesters marched in the streets. In spite of the silence of the mainstream media, the movement became popular with the help of new social media. Thousands joined the movement and it slowly became global in scale and nature. The protesters resorted to nonviolent strategies[27].

During the public uprisings in the Arab region popularly called the 'Arab Spring' new social media was widely used to invoke public support[28]. Of course, these revolutions were not the product of social media interventions. Social media helped activists to find each other and enabled their discussions and activities to become more visible[29]. It is admitted that these movements were not altogether nonviolent. But the use of new communication technologies considerably reduced the rate of violence in the movement. It was these activists' tactics of nonviolent disruption that developed into a national crises, which, in turn, forced the military to choose sides. Further, the nonviolent discipline that most civil resisters demonstrated increased the likelihood that troops would defect. If resisters had used violence, troops may have accepted the regime's view that these were radical terrorists. But the fact that most civil resisters were nonviolent made it difficult to justify the use of force.

> *… through their innovative use of technology and social media sources, activists – especially in Egypt – increased the potential political costs that the military would incur if it sided with the regime and violently attacked civil resisters. Since the whole world was watching, this type of crackdown would surely have elicited international condemnation and the potential end to diplomatic relations, trade agreements, and aid. In short, although there were other considerations involved, nonviolent resisters' actions added new incentives and deterrents that undoubtedly helped the Tunisian and Egyptian militaries decide to support the revolutions.[30]*

People were made aware of the potential threats to life and limb of citizens via facebook and social networks. The activities of oppressive regime were also made public through the chat rooms and facebook comments and tweets. The global attention forced the governments to limit violence in suppressing the oppression. Further the information flows in social media enabled the people to make an accurate and learned judgement of the scenario. This also contributed to the nonviolent progress of the revolution. Iskander observes,

…In this way, information was relayed back and forth and across various networks inside and outside Egypt. This enabled Egyptians watching from outside to participate and ensure that all concerned parties were well informed and supported so that a community physically fragmented by location was able to connect around a common concern. This was important especially on the first Friday of the protests, 28 January, when the state media inside Egypt, such as satellite channels Nile News TV and al-Masreya, were focusing their broadcasts on the rumors of looting and violence. This spread panic and fear among people because alternative sources of information were limited and some were convinced that the protests should end. By keeping the information flowing, people were able to judge the situation more clearly, and this helped to maintain the momentum of the protests[31].

Electronic Civil Disobedience (ECD)

Digital modes of nonviolent protests were widely organized and practised. Electronic Civil Disobedience (ECD) is one of the institutionalized practices of civil disobedience in the era of technology[32]. Electronic civil disobedience generally involves large numbers of people and may use legal and illegal techniques. For example, a single person reloading a website repeatedly is illegal, but if many people do it at the same time it can render the website inaccessible and the action cannot be sued. Another type of electronic civil disobedience is the use of the Internet for publicised and deliberate violations of a law that the protesters take issue with, such as copyright law. There are also possibilities of channelizing mass resentment into effective petitions. The government of US initiated a bill to regulate Internet namely, Stop Online Piracy Act, in 2011. The Act is supposed to bring strong regulations on Internet copyright and allied fields. The bill met with heavy opposition from the public and civil society. Wikipedia organized an online campaign against the Act and 162 million individuals signed the online petition[33].

A common form of ECD is coordinated Distributed Denial of services (DDoS) against a specific target, also known as virtual sit-in[34].The Denial of Service attack is described as an incident which

prevents a legitimate user or organisation from accessing a systems resource or the delaying of systems operations and functions. Such incidents or attacks can be related to a specific network service such as email or to the domain name of the target[35]. DDoS attacks emerged as a political tool in 1998, introduced by Ricardo Dominguez, co-founder of Electronic Disturbance Theatre, who built FloodNet, a tool that allowed activists to crash a variety of websites[36]. At times it is used as an effective tool against mighty governmental structures and offices[37]. Government websites were crashed with DDoS in order to register public protests. The activity is nonviolent in principle and practice. Calabrese observes:

> Most familiar among the practices of hacktivists are denial of service attacks on corporate, government and military Web sites, sometimes referred to as "virtual sit-ins." An overloaded Web site cannot be accessed by others, and in a sense this is what occurs when a group of protesters occupy a physical space (say, for instance, a sitting room outside a university president's office) and refuse to move so that others may pass through. Student protesters who conduct such actions do so by presenting their bodies in physical space and allowing themselves to be identified, which of course makes it possible for police to come and arrest them, or for them to be identified for possible subsequent prosecution. By contrast, in cyberspace, a virtual protest aimed at crashing computer servers could in fact be the action of only one or a very small number of individuals[38].

The "Operation Payback," attack during the 'Wiki leaks', incident also needs special mention. Wiki leaks came under sustained DDoS attack after publishing classified US diplomatic cables. Further working of the organization was disrupted by the denial of services from PayPal, Visa, MasterCard and Swiss bank. Supporters of Wiki leaks initiated DDoS attack against PayPal, Visa, MasterCard and Swiss bank to punish the firms. It is argued that these virtual attacks were nonviolent in nature and were highly effective to check violent political interventions. During the Iranian Green Movement protests of 2010, protesters used a page refreshing service to manually execute a DDoS attack against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's website. In February, 2010, a group of people loosely connected through Internet forums calling itself "Anonymous" executed a DDoS attack against the Australian Parliament's website. The attack took down the site for two days. On the same day 'Anonymous' attacked the parliament's website, the group also defaced the Prime Minister's website, briefly replacing the front page with pornographic images. The attack

was against a mandatory Internet filtering policy proposed by Australia's ruling party designed in part to counter pornography[39].

At the same time it is also admitted that DDoS is also used as an unethical tool to settle political and personal grievances[40]. Government websites are attacked by hostile states. Terrorist groups also attack government sites. Many governments declared it illegal. For example the U.S. National Information Infrastructure Protection Act of 1996 took steps to criminalise DDoS[41].

Conclusion

Technology is becoming a key feature of modern life. It influences the pattern of social and individual behavior. The emergence and proliferation of new technologies enlarged the scope for citizen action and participation. It also armored the governance structures with more information and sophisticated tools to establish and stabilize power. The power structures in modern society are becoming more and more 'wired' and subsequently turn more fortified against democratic interventions. At the same time, these new technologies limit the powers of governments. In a globalised world state restraints in ICT are not easy and smooth and may attract high economic and political penalties[42]. For example an American Internet shutdown would require the cooperation of many hundreds of companies and individuals and may result in widespread public debate and protest. Technologies offer new warfronts to the 'Wireless Warriors'. They are more connected with the new tools of digital era. Their fight against the oppressive institutions and structures is becoming more and more sophisticated.

It is suggested that the new technologies offer avenues for better practice of nonviolence. People and groups can be effectively coordinated through technology. They can ensure massive participation of the population in their struggles. Government atrocities can be effectively checked through new surveillance technologies. In both Tunisia and Egypt state violence against nonviolent gatherings led to riots. The state atrocities were widely discussed through new media channels. The riots then opened spaces for organized underground groups to issue nationwide calls for action. They gave increased legitimacy to radical actors and helped underground groups to organise ground actions[43]. Movements apart, ICT has been widely used as an effective tool to promote and protect individual and social rights. It also ensures enlarged avenues of participation to the ordinary citizens. They can easily register their presence and protest at the comfort of their home through a PC or Smartphone. Wireless protestors no more need to bother about the

wired barriers. Oppressive regimes can be easily overpowered by the power of nonviolence mediated through the ICT.

Notes and References

1. In 1998, only 20 percent of people in developed countries and about one percent in the developing world had a cell phone subscription. By 2009, these shares had climbed to 100 percent and 57 percent respectively. Internet access and use have also grown. In high-income countries, Internet users increased from 12 percent of the population in 1998 to 64 percent in 2009, and from near zero to 17.5 percent in developing countries. See, ITU & World Bank,*The Little Data Book on Information and Communication Technology 2012* (Washington D.C: The World Bank,2012),p.255.

2. According to the ITU report the number of individuals using the Internet has risen constantly and reached an estimated 2.4 billion at the end of 2011.

3. Dutta, S., & Mia,I, *The Global Information Technology Report 2010–2011* (Geneva: World Economic Forum,2011).

4. Goggin, G., & Clark, J. (2009), "Mobile Phones and Community Development: A Contact Zone Between Media and Citizenship", *Development in Practice , 19 ,*4-5 (2009).

5. More than a billion mobile phone connections have been added to the global tally in just 18 months of 2009. In many regions, penetration exceeds 100%, where there is more than one connection per person in the country. Source, BBC, *News Technology*, 9 July 2010. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10569081, Accessed on 14 July,2012.

6. ITU, & World Bank, *The Little Data Book on Information and Communication Technology 2012.* (Washington D.C: The World Bank,2012),p.2.

7. Politics 2.0 refers to politics of digital era. It is assumed to be more participatory and interactive. There is the possibility of two way communication. Open administration and accountability is a key feature of the new mode of politics. Citizen engagement is promoted and interactions welcomed.

8. Coleman, S., & Blumer, J. G. , *The Internet and Democratic Citizenship: Theory, Practice and Policy.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

9. Foucault, M. (1997). "Power, Right, Truth", In R. E. Goodin, & P. Pettit,ed., *Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackbell,1997).

10. Lane, J. E. , *State Management* (New York: Routledge,2009).

11. Castells, M., "Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society", *International Journal of Communication , 1* (2007).

12. Certain specific inscriptions of scientific knowledge such as the computer programs used to calculate trajectories for precision-guided munitions are directly attributable to military planning, funding and testing, all in the context of an overall military operation. When it comes to the details of actual artifacts and knowledges-in-use that are part of military operations, it is easy to see the influence of the military on science and technology. In US the link between military and computer establishments clearly marked the birth of modern computer industry itself. During Second World War the American military funded many computing experiments. Navy supported Howard Aiken, a Harvard Mathematics Professor, who dreamed of building a large scale calculator. The project resulted in MARK-I, an arithmetical operation machine that can function without human operator. The army supported ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Calculator) project of University of Pennsylvania. The air force funded a computer project namely, Whirlwind. The Internet system itself is the result of ARPANET (Advanced Research Project Agency Net Work) - a US military initiative. See, Hafner, K., & Lyon, M. , *Where Wizards Stay up Late* (New York: Touchstone,1996).

13. Martin, B., "Science, Technology and Nonviolent Action: The Case for a Utopian Dimension in the Social Analysis of Science and Technology", *Social Studies of Science , 27 ,*1(1997).

14. Bertrand Russell observes, "A totalitarian government with a scientific bent might do things that to us would seen horrifying. The Nazis were more scientific than the present rulers of Russia, and were more inclined towards the sort of atrocities that I have in mind". See Russell, B, *The Impact of Science on Society* (London: Routledge, 1952).

15. Lagerkvist, J, "The Techno-cadre's Dream : Administrative Reform by Electronic Governance in China Today?", *China Information , 19*,2 (2005).

16. MacKinnon, R , "Flatter World and Thicker Walls? Blogs, Censorship and Civic Discourse in China", *Public Choice , 134 ,*1 (2008).

17. Norris,P, *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post Industrial Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

18. Heeks, R, *Implementing and Managing E-Government.* (New Delhi: Vistaar Publications,2006).

19. Practically Gandhi was not sympathetic to large scale technology. In Hind Swaraj he makes an unqualified attack on the dominance of technology. To him "Machinery is like a snake-hole which may contain from one to a hundred Snakes". Again on the impact of machinery he comments, "Machinery has begun to desolate Europe. Ruination is now knocking at the English gates. Machinery is the

chief symbol of modern civilisation; it represents a great sin."

20. Weber, T, *Gandhi, Gandhism and the Gandhians* (Noida: Roli Books, 2006).

21. Sharma, S, "Technology and Man: Gandhian Perspective", In R. P. Misra ed., *Gandhian Model of Development and World Peace* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 2006).

22. *Young India*, 17 December, 1925.

23. For example the spinning wheel is no more the anti-thesis of technology. Thus Gandhi states, "The entire foundation of the spinning wheel rests on the fact that there are cores of semi-employed people in India. And I should admit that, if there were none such, there were no rooms for spinning wheel". *Young India*, 25 May,1926.

24. Martin, B., & Varney, W, "Nonviolence and Communication", *Journal of Peace Research , 40 ,*2 (2003).

25. Drucker, P. F, *The New Realities* (New Delhi: Asian Books, 1990).

26. Shirky, C, The Political Power of Social Media Technology: The Public Sphere and Political Change, *Foreign Affairs ,90 ,*1 (2011).

27. See, Micah White & Kalle Lasn, *The Call to Occupy Wall Street Resonates Around the World,* The Guardian, 19 September, 2011.

28. Iskander, E , "Connecting the National and the Virtual: Can Facebook Activism Remain Relevant After Egypt's January 25 Uprising?", *International Journal of Communication , 5* (2011).

29. In Tunisia the revolution began innocuously enough, on 17 December, 2010, when a Tunisian police officer slapped and spat on a street peddler who had begged her not to confiscate his cart and produce. When Mohamed Bouazzi went to the police precinct to file a complaint he was ignored. Bouazzi returned an hour later, doused himself with gasoline and set himself aflame. In the days that followed, protesters stormed through towns throughout Tunisia. When peaceful protests were met with police batons and tear gas, they morphed into full-scale riots. The army refused to take action against the demonstrators. On 14 January, Ben Ali stepped down. Egyptian youth followed Tunisian events closely. Many Egyptian students, labor leaders and underground organizers had ties to labor and underground groups in Tunisia. On 6 June, 2010, Khaled Said, a 28-year-old upper class youth, had been dragged from a cyber cafe, and died in police custody. Angry demonstrations had followed, and several youth created a Face book page ''We are all Khaled Said'' . On 11 January, the young Egyptian labor activist Asmaa Mahfouz distributed thousands of leaflets in Cairo's slums, and posted the now famous YouTube video exhorting Egyptians to join young women protesting ''National Police Day,'' in Tahrir Square on 25 January. Three days later the

Tunisian dictatorship fell to popular revolt. On 11 February, the armed forces pushed Mubarak out of power.

30. Nepstad, S. E, "Nonviolent Resistance in the Arab Spring: The Critical Role of Military-Opposition Alliances", *Swiss Political Science Review, 17* ,4 (2011).

31. Iskander, E ,"Connecting the National and the Virtual: Can Facebook Activism Remain Relevant After Egypt's January 25 Uprising?" *International Journal of Communication , 5* (2011).

32. Electronic civil disobedience, refer to any type of civil disobedience in which the participants use information technology to carry out their actions. Electronic civil disobedience often involves computers and the Internet.

33. See Balaraman, "US Parliament Nettil Kurungunnu", *Mathrubhumi*, 25 January, 2012, http://www.mathrubhumi.com/story.php?id=247287, Accessed on 25 Janury ,2012.

34. The same principals of traditional civil disobedience, like trespass and blockage, will still be applied in ECD, but these acts will take place in electronic or digital form. The primary site for Electronic Civil Disobedience will be the cyberspace.

35. Klang, M., "Civil Disobedience Online", *Information Communication & Ethics in Society, 2*, (2004) p-77.

36. Source, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/briefings/2010/12/20101221103015800919.html, Accessed on 15 August, 2012.

37. The earliest use of ECD was targeted against the offices of Mexican government in 1997 to protest against Acteal Massacre in Chiapas, Mexico. The web sites of the Mexican presidency, the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, and the Pentagon, were subjected to virtual sit-ins, in solidarity with the Zapatista Army of National Liberation. In 1999 the protestors made a virtual attack on the World Trade Organization site during the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference.

38. Calabrese, A., "Civil disobedience and political violence in the information age", *Info , 6* ,5 (2004),p.332.

39. Zuckerman, E., Roberts, H., McGrady, R., York, J., & Palfrey, J., *Distributed Denial of Service Attacks Against Independent Media and Human Rights Sites* (Harvard: The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, 2010).

40. However it is argued that the cyber disobedience lacks the morality of physical disobedience. Unlike civil disobedients, they did not stand with the courage of their convictions, and thus they may have done harm to the cause they claim to represent.

41. Source, http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/104/s982, Accessed on 30 October,2012.

42. During the 2011 revolution in Egypt, the government shut down

the internet to cut off social media campaigns and the OECD estimate that the network shutdown cost Egypt 90 million dollars. See, *Reaching the kill switch,* The Economist, 12-18 February 2011, p.68.

43. Schneider, C. L, "Violence and State Repression", *Swiss Political Science Review, 17,4* (2011).

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Sartorial is Political
Gandhi's Experiments with Clothing: Imitation, Loyalty and Rebellion

Prem Anand Mishra

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to present Gandhi's sartorial transformation in the context of colonialism. It argues that like in other areas Gandhi conducted experiments with clothing both at the personal and at public levels which had multiple effects; on the one hand, it redefined the Indian clothing tradition helping to forge a national identity essential for national regeneration and on the other, it resulted in undermining the colonial logic of exhibiting civilization through dress. To support the above argument, this paper first examines the issue of clothing in colonial context and then illustrates how Gandhi's personal sartorial experiments that had both symbolic and substantial meaning both for nationalists and colonialists, came under public gaze and opened a public debate.

Introduction

GANDHI'S CLOTHING HAS been studied from various perspectives which can be classified broadly into two sets of interpretations. While the first set interprets Gandhi's clothing in terms of its 'visual effects', the second attempts to read Gandhi's clothing in terms of his 'written and spoken intentions.' Representing the first set, Bean suggests, "Gandhi used his appearance to communicate his most important message in a form comprehensible to Indians."[1] According to Trivedi, "Gandhi regarded visual experience as a neutral and transparent kind of communication that was open to everyone."[2] Extending this line of argument Gonsalves articulates, "Gandhi's sartorial evolution revealed his intuitive grasp of the persuasive power of dress to touch the sensibilities of his audience."[3]

On the other hand, Emma Tarlo presents a brief history of Gandhi's sartorial transformation exploring the question of identity as it wrestles with individual understanding and cultural encrustation that go into clothing and the making of it.[4] Bayle argues that there was a symbolically charged moral language behind Gandhi's clothing, thus, through clothing "Gandhi was reviving the semi dormant magical and moral beliefs that had always been attributed to cloth in Indian society."[5] Besides the impact of Gandhi's sartorial transformation on society, his clothing also conveyed his mental attitude. As M.G Polak argued, "What different phases in Mr. Gandhi's mental career had been proclaimed by the clothes he wore? Each costume, I think, denoted an attitude of mind."[6] Gonsalves echoes the same argument when he discusses Gandhi's sartorial integrity and his clothing as 'an essential part of his inner quest for truth.'[7]

Thus, a brief review of the literature on Gandhi's clothing suggests three seemingly separate but interrelated assumptions. First, Gandhi had an acute sense of dressing and he understood the symbolic effect of clothing on others. Second, his personal change in dressing shows his philosophical evolution. Third, the change in his dress exhibits his continuous search for identity, both personal and national.

With this background, the present study argues that as Gandhi's search for personal and Indian identity through dress was done during the period of colonialism, it will be proper to assume that the colonial practices and discourses on clothing must have exerted a powerful influence on his sartorial transformation. Thus, this paper attempts to map the trajectory of the impact of the colonial discourse on Gandhi's sartorial transformation. Furthermore, the paper also argues that, in the process of attempting to evolve an Indian identity through devising a new dress pattern personally for him and for his co-workers, Gandhi's sartorial transformation not only challenged the British notion of civilized dress but also undermined the very idea of cultural supremacy appended to it.

Colonialism and clothing

The clothing practices under colonialism reveal an important connection between colonialism and dress. Colonialism made a powerful effect on the clothing style of the natives that was both imposed and voluntary in nature. In the early encounters between the West and the non-West, initially, it was the Christian missionaries who imposed a new dress code for the converts in the colonies. In fact, civilizing "the natives" and clothing them accordingly was a central focus of the Christian missionary project and they were pleased when indigenous peoples accepted the new style as a sign of religious

conversion. Thus, it could be seen that 'clothing' was a part of the civilizing mission.

In the colonial system of the nineteenth century, different styles of clothing were of great symbolic significance as they showed the status of and the difference between the rulers on the one side and different groups in the socio-cultural and bureaucratic hierarchy on the other. In fact, the clothing style even paved the way for stereotyping the colonizer and the colonized, marking out the colonizer as superior and the colonized as certainly inferior. Thus, dressing 'properly', which meant following the western style, was viewed as evidence of moral and cultural superiority. Thus, as Cohn notes, "clothes in India came to be viewed as part of a system of codes of conduct that clearly demarcated "Britishness" from "Indianness" and thus reinforced the sense of distance between the colonial masters and their subjects."[8] However, the role of clothing was not only limited to the construction of such demarcation and distancing as Cohn argues, but also helped in creating a clear cut binary opposition between the colonial masters and the Indian subjects. As Bean observes, "The sartorial requirement of the empire forced Indians to humiliate themselves, and revealed the true relationship - of master and slave - between the English and the Indians."[9] Especially after the 1857 revolution, the British rulers asserted their control over Indians by making them conform to their conception of what Indians of particular status were supposed to wear for various official and semi –official occasions. Furthermore, while the British disregarded Indian customs and clothing style totally, Indians had to conform fully to English ideas of what constituted *proper* dress and behavior for them. Thus, clothing generally seen as a constitutive element of tradition and culture became the object of control and domination in colonial practice.

In fact, the idea of *proper* dress was the part of the overall design of British colonial rule and discursive strategy. Thus, strategically, the British encouraged Western educated Indian elites to adopt certain articles of European clothing as a mark of their loyalty to the empire. On the other hand, for the Western educated Indians, the wearing of European dress signified not only their acceptance of the colonialists' liberal ideology but also their rising social status in the socio-political hierarchy of India. In other words, 'properly' educated Indians too could rise to the same 'civilized' status as the British by dressing in the western way. Thus, by the late nineteenth century, British dress came to be seen as the normative sign of being *civilized*. The logical consequence of this representation was that many Indians started perceiving a certain kind of dignity in British style of dressing which they found lacking in their own traditional costumes. Thus, wearing

European clothing was not only a matter of self-respect, but also showed a class status. For Indians, this new appropriated identity was, as Gonsalves mentions, "an escape from the 'stigma' of his real Indianness".[10]

Yet a problem remained: many who dressed as Europeans had, at the same time to face the ridicule of the British who were disdainful of an Indian body in British garb. In fact, for the British their attire was not merely a manifestation of superior fashion; it was more importantly a sign of their self –perception as a superior race. Thus, for them, European dress was a signifier; it signified their racial superiority. That was why Indians in British garments were yet looked upon as the 'other', because their Indian racial identity was considered too inferior to be modified or elevated by the European clothes they wore.

As the above discussion shows a paradoxical situation arose regarding clothing under colonialism. On the one hand, the British wanted Indians to adopt English clothing style, but on the other, they disdained the full appropriation of exclusive English clothing by Indians. They strove to hold on zealously to their cultural standards and feared that by sharing it with brown Indians their cherished values would be compromised. In short, Indians were seen as mass adopters and consumers of British garments, but not as cultural equals. Thus, through clothing the British wanted to 'civilize' the Indian 'others', yet they wanted to fix Indians in 'perpetual otherness'. As Loomba has pointed out, it shows the underlying premise of colonialism that "Indian can mimic but never exactly reproduce English value and that their recognition of the perpetual gap between themselves and the 'real thing' will ensure their subjugation."[11]

Gandhi's Experiments with Clothing

Throughout his life, Gandhi was extremely sensitive to dress as he understood well the correlation between clothing, social status and power. In this context, one might easily note the significance of his statement with regard to his sartorial transformation,

> All the alterations I have made in my course of life have been effected by momentous occasions; and they have been made after such *a deep deliberation* that I have hardly had to regret them. And I did them, as I could not help doing them. Such a radical alteration— in my dress,—I effected in Madura.[12]

But in order to grasp the full significance of what he called *deep deliberation* behind all his sartorial transformations, it has to be examined in the colonial context and to begin with one may cite one

of his childhood experiences of the colonial discursive strategy of subjugation through dress.

Gandhi recollected a fascinating account of an incident that occurred in his family during 1880's when he was just a little boy. At the time when the governor of Bombay had to visit Rajkot Kaba Gandhi was required by the Resident of Rajkot to appear in European-style stockings and boots at a durbar to be held in honour of the Governor. Recollecting the episode Gandhi wrote: "Our household was turned upside down when my father had to attend the durbar during a Governor's visit. He never wore stockings or boots. His footwear was soft leather slippers. If I was a painter, I could paint my father's *disgust and the torture* on his face as he put his legs into stockings and his feet into ill-fitting and uncomfortable boots. He had to do this."[13]

This shows how Gandhi perceived his father's experience of having to wear the colonial dress which indicated the cultural and political control and compulsions of colonialism. So far Gandhi's family was not affected by the colonial dress code and they were critical of the Indian elites' imitation of Western dress.[14] Further, Gandhi was pained to see the ordinary Indians forced to wear European dress after they were converted to Christianity. In his childhood, typical of a boy belonging to a traditional *Bania* family, he usually wore a shirt with a dhoti or pyjama, and sometimes a coat during his school days.

It was in 1888, a boy of 19, when he went to London to study law that Gandhi made his first attempt at sartorial transformation. We read in his Autobiography that as a preparation for life in London he cut off the tuft of his hair and dressed in a Western suit so that he would not be laughed at.

The phase of imitations: Gandhi playing the English gentleman

On reaching London, Gandhi felt uncomfortable in his white flannel suit. In Rajkot, he had seen Englishmen wearing such suits, but nobody told him that they don't wear them in England during such cold season. He was marked out as misfit in his white flannel suit and subsequently tried his best to adapt himself to the English way as he came to know. Thus, as a student of law in England (1888-91) he tried to keep his clothing appearance in line with the best by British standards. He wrote:

> The clothes after the Bombay cut that I was wearing were, I thought, unsuitable for English society, and I got new ones at the Army and Navy store. I also went in for a chimney pot… Not content with this, I wasted ten ponds on an evening suit made in Bond Street, the centre of fashionable life in London…It was not correct to wear a ready-made tie

and I learnt the art of tying one for myself.[15]

At the face of it, Gandhi's Autobiography gives the impression that all these attempts were isolated foibles of an extravagant young man. However, there was a deeper meaning behind this imitative lifestyle: Gandhi was trying hard to become an English gentleman.

It was an acquaintance of Gandhi who met him in Piccadilly Circus who gave an account of the way he was dressed in his attempt to be an English gentleman.

> Gandhi was wearing a high silk top hat 'burnished bright', a stiff and starched collar (known as Gladstonian), a rather flashy tie displaying all the colors of rainbow, under which there was fine striped silk shirt. He wore as his outer clothe a morning clothe, a double –breasted waistcoat, and dark striped trousers, and not only patent –leather shoes but spats over them. He also carried leather gloves and silver mountain stick, but wore no spectacles. His clothe were regarded as very acme of fashion for young men about town at that time, and they were largely in vogue among the Indian youths prosecuting their studies in law at one of the four institutions called the Inns of Court.[16]

The question naturally comes up: why Gandhi wanted to imitate English life style? A close reading of Gandhi's autobiography would show his infatuation with British civilization long before he traveled to London. In fact, the educational power of the British liberal tradition and its official version of English history had already instilled admiration in his young mind, making him proud of the political and cultural achievements of the empire. As he wrote, "I thought to myself if I go to England not only shall become a barrister, but I shall be able to see England, the land of philosophers and poets, the centre of very civilization."[17] As Dalton pointed out, "Gandhi's high school curriculum dictated and dominated by English masters there and abroad, had induced in him an awe of British civilization."[18] In other words, it was the long process of colonization of mind that compelled Gandhi to imitate British clothing. In England, as Hunt pointed out, "politically he seems to have been a liberal imperialist; believing of course that Indians should have increased participation in government, but that England and India were to continue joined in the Empire and the effect of English civilization on India was generally admirable."[19]

Although Gandhi's period of passionate fascination with English way of dressing lasted only for a few months, his carefulness in dress and his infatuation with 'Britishness' persisted long after his arrival in South Africa.

Again, Gandhi's preoccupation with clothing can be seen during

his South African period also. As a British educated barrister-at-law he was well dressed when he landed at Durban with a due sense of importance. Upon his arrival in South Africa (1893), he wore a starched white shirt, a black tie, meticulously pressed, striped trousers which matched his fashionable black turban, an imitation of the Bengali *pugree*. As Martin Green puts it, the young attorney was the "very picture of an Anglicized *babu*, a son of the empire."[20] However, he was surprised by the arrogance with which the English treated him. Dada Abdulla his employer and client was also upset about the way Gandhi dressed. Gandhi wrote:

> Those who looked at me did so with a certain amount of curiosity. My dress marked me out from other Indians. I had frock –coat and a turban, an imitation of the Bengal *pugree*. I was taken to the firm's quarters and shown into the room set apart for me, next to Abdulla Sheth's. He did not understand me. I could not understand him. He read the paper his brother had sent through me, and felt more puzzled. He though his brothers had sent him a white elephant. My style of dress and living struck him as being expensive like of the Europeans.[21]

One might see here that, by his clothing, Gandhi was presenting a hybrid identity that is the identity of an Indo-British gentleman. However, there was a dilemma involved in keeping this identity. It was neither Indian nor English per se. Gandhi had to face the same dilemma when he went to attend the Durban court. Wearing the same outfit, he was subjected to hostile stares of the officiating English magistrate. He was asked by the Magistrate to take off his turban. He refused to do so and left the court. Dada Abdulla later explained the rules to him. Those wearing Muslim costume had to bow but were allowed keep their turban on, while on entering the courtroom, all other Indians were required to bow and remove their head dress. This incident was not just about manners in court by different groups. This reflected the inflexible colonial system of exclusion based on a hardened ideology of difference dividing South African Indians into different categories according to specific religious and ethnic criteria. On the other hand, at the level of daily experience, it meant that Indians were expected to know their inferior position in the colonial system by removing their turbans in court. Thus Gandhi's desirable identity as British –Indian gentleman remained unacknowledged and in the eyes of the Durban magistrate he was merely a "coolie barrister" whose colour and turban marked his inferior place at an official place of colonial regulation.

This 'turban incident' was reported in an article entitled *An unwelcome Visitor*. In another article published the same day in *Natal*

Advertiser, he explained that the disobedience was not intended to offend the Magistrate but he was only following an Indian custom in which one keeps one's head covered as a sign of respect to the authority present. However, to avoid further confrontation, he thought of substituting his turban with a regular English hat. He discussed this idea with Abdulla Sheth, but he was shocked to hear that with a hat he would be mistaken for a waiter and not a lawyer because in South Africa only Indian waiters wore English hats. Again Gandhi was in deep dilemma.

This turban incident was not about manners or about when and how one should wear what. For Gandhi it was a question of identity and self respect. However, it could be seen that Gandhi did not want to break the logic of the Empire's liberal theory by his insistence on self respect and identity. In other words, defending his right to wear the turban was done within the Empire's liberal ideology. He wrote in *Natal Advertiser*:

> Just as it is a mark of respect amongst Europeans to take off their hats, in like manner it is in Indians to retain one's head-dress. To appear uncovered before a gentleman is not respect to him. In England, on attempting drawing –room meetings and evening parties, Indian always keep the head –dress ,and the English ladies and gentlemen generally seems to appreciate and regard which we show thereby. In high court in India those Indian advocates who have not discarded their native head-dress invariably keep it on.[22]

Thus, the turban incident marks an important stage in the transformation of his identity both at personal and public level. Confronted with externally imposed barriers blocking the enactment of his desirable identity as a British –Indian gentleman, he resolved to confront the South African/colonial system of differentiation and exclusion while at the same time maintaining his overall trust in the Universalist ideals of the liberal political theory.

However, events between 1906 and 1914 made significant attitudinal change in Gandhi both in terms of his internal integrity and his response to colonialism. His experience in the Ambulance Corps, the *brahamcharya* vow, reading Ruskin's *Unto This Last* and its magical effect, the experience of community living at Phoenix Settlement and Tolstoy Farm and his participation in the struggles for the rights of the indentured Indians progressively matured his commitment to personal integrity. These attitudinal changes got reflected in his sartorial changes too. Gandhi saw a correspondence between external appearance and internal values and saw that it would redefine the nature of the response that he wanted to give to the

colonial powers. Thus his sartorial thinking took a dramatic turn and it became clear to him that wearing English made clothes and dressing in colonial fashion amounted to accepting colonial values and objectives. Logically, if one has to reject such values one has no right to continue using colonial dress.

Thus, to project his difference with colonialism Gandhi needed an Indianised dressing style to substitute colonial refinements. In this connection, Gandhi's 'Satyagraha clothing' in 1906 might be seen as a temporary replacement to colonial clothing. One the one hand, if this temporary replacement was a kind of clothing of subversion, on the other, it revealed his awareness of the semiotic potentialities of clothing for a just cause. He considered it a milestone in his pursuit for sartorial transformation and he got photographed in it. Moreover, this dress represented two significant political meanings. First it was a symbol of a new form of Indian identity against the colonialists and second it symbolized solidarity with the Indian masses in South Africa. In Durban, in 1913, Gandhi first appeared in a *lungi* and *kurta* with his head shaved as a sign of mourning to protest against the shooting of Indian coal miners. This can be said to be his second landmark experiment with clothing and Indian identity formation. Thus, Satyagraha attire was representing a difference with colonialists in terms of values and corresponding manners; also it was symbolizing the extra constitutional ways of resistance based on Indian civilization.

After returning to India in 1915, Gandhi moved off completely from the colonial sartorial shadow. In fact, on 9 January 1915 when Gandhi disembarked at the Bombay docks he wore a "Kathiawari suit of clothes consisting of a shirt, a dhoti, a cloak and a white scarf, all made of Indian mill-cloth".[23]

This was not just casual but the result of year long planning about dress code while arriving in Indian shores. Months before his departure from South Africa Gandhi had instructed his nephew Maganlal about this dress code.

He wrote, 'I want every child to land in India with Indian style clothes on'. He even said what dresses were to be worn, "The very young should have lungi, a shirt and a cap. The grown up likes you should wear safa and a long coat. …. I see no need for boys to have shoes… The boys …should start wearing dhotis on the steamer…"[24]

This Kathiawadi dress gave him the emblematic identity that the Satyagraha dress did not have. It was, of course, a highly localized dress limited to his native Kathiawad region. However, as Gonsalves puts it for Gandhi "it was double home coming – a return to his true culture and a new definition of civility."[25] It was a symbolic Indian challenge to the modern/western civilization that colonialism tried

to impose. However, its strength was also its greatest weakness. Its regional relevance implied that it did not speak to the wide variety of Indian culture.

Search for national clothing

Thus, in 1917, Gandhi went ahead with his new sartorial quest for a pan-Indian alternative. This pan- Indian alternative needed to symbolize inclusive Indian identity, despite the caste and sub -cultural differentiation that existed in India. This led Gandhi to search out from several options of attire so that no one community could claim it to be of its own. We see Gandhi experimenting with various sartorial options; the *khadi* woven *kurta –pyjama* or kurta dhoti, worn with or without turban and sometimes with or without a Gandhi topi/cap. In fact, these forms of attires were drawn from the masses and people had no difficulty either to identify them or to wear them. What was crucial was that these forms of dressings were actually representing an evolving nationalist Indian identity against the colonial impositions and gradually becoming the uniform of Indian nationalists who craved for swaraj in all walks of life.

At a very personal level, Gandhi's choice of Khadi was representing more than the dress need. It was the material actualization of a moral ideal. Further, it represented not only a challenge to colonialism by securing economic self sufficiency, political independence and national integrity but also challenging the structural violence inherent in Indian society based on social and economic inequality. Thus, Gandhi's Khadi was offering a complete re-making of the nation through re-clothing and herein lies the power of Khadi.

In fact, in the context of colonialism, the power of Gandhi's khadi lays also in its symbolic significance. After 1917, Khadi became the national symbol because everyone who wanted to take part in the national movement had to wear it. Moreover, as Khadi was traditionally the dress of peasants and artisans or common people of India rather than the elite, it could serve as the national uniform for the common masses in the Indian freedom struggle. As Trivedi argues, to this extent khadi was a powerful visual tool in the creation of an imagined national community which for the first time incorporated the non-literate majority.[26]

Thus, through sartorial experimentation or transformation, Gandhi was effectively transforming the political culture of Indian freedom struggle. Especially, white khadi cloth became a powerful presence in public protests which created an image of visual unity as well as a sense of shared community in the struggle for *swaraj* (self-rule). Moreover, Gandhi's invention of a small white khadi cap (Gandhi

cap) signified an attempt to create a single unifying piece of headwear accessible to all Indians. Another significance of Gandhi cap was that it was imperceptibly undermining the existing sartorial diversity which also had divisive and parochial basis on region, religion, caste, social hierarchy and occupational divisions etc.

Yet, there was problem in such a pan-Indian dress. This dress did not adequately reflect the poverty of the bulk of the Indian population with whom Gandhi wished to identify. He intensely pondered over this which led him to take a final bold step in his sartorial experimentation. On 22 September 1921, he announced in Madurai:

> I propose to discard at least up to 31st of October my topi and vest and to content myself with a loin-cloth, and a *chaddar* whenever found necessary for protection of my body. I adopt the change because I have always hesitated to advise anything I may not myself be prepared to follow, also because am anxious by leading the way to make it easy for those who cannot afford to change on discarding their foreign garments.[27]

Initially, he did not desire to make use of this clothing all his life and only wanted to experiment for a month or two, but soon he found that this style of clothing was his obligation to the deprived, and from then on he never wore any other dress.

This major sartorial transformation has been read from a variety of perspectives and by many. Tarlo, for example, points out that this decision had nothing to do with either a desire to emphasize the 'dignity of poverty' or the greatness of Indian civilization. For her it was a kind of manifestation of mourning; as long as the poorest Indians were not able to use khadi, Gandhi would wear only minimal clothing out of solidarity with them.[28]

In Gandhi's own words, "The dress of the millions of agriculturalists in India is really only the loin cloth, and nothing more. I have seen it with my own eyes wherever I have gone."[29] Further, "If you don't get khadi, you will do with mere loin cloth but discard foreign clothing."[30] About this sartorial changes he says, "Unless I went about with a loin cloth, how might I advise others to do likewise? What should I do where millions have to go naked?"[31]

The above statements of Gandhi about his final sartorial transformation seem to suggest two interrelated things. First it appears that he wanted to stimulate Indians to discard foreign cloth and thus to challenge the colonial enterprise, even at the cost of being half naked. Second, loin cloth was a symbol of India's poverty which could be eradicated only through the adoption of khadi and the rejection of machine –made cloth. It also meant the rejection of colonial modernization. Therefore, Gandhi's appearance in loin cloth put two

important political messages - the message of self –sufficiency and liberation from British colonialism.

In the context of colonial discursive strategy, loin cloth had another significance as well. In fact, by loin cloth Gandhi was not only projecting simplicity and asceticism of Indian civilization but also constructing a sharp civilization difference based on the colonial clothing symbolized by modern civilization. Therefore, in very symbolic way, by this construction of civilizational difference (based on dress), Gandhi was able to define a new form of Indian identity and mission against colonial powers that was necessary for nationalist stimulation.

Gandhi's sartorial transformation had two significances: on the one hand it was directed towards Indian people both symbolically and substantially, on the other it offered a vehement critique of the British practice of retaining their style of dress in India despite the fact that it was totally unsuited to the Indian climatic conditions. Gandhi wrote:

> The European style is ugly and utterly unsuitable for Indian conditions. Only their insularity and unimaginativeness have made the English retain their English style in India, even though they admit that it is most uncomfortable for this climate.[32]

In fact, Gandhi's direct criticism of colonial clothing and valorization of Indian clothing style can be seen during his Champaran visit (1917). When he was charged by Irwin that his dress is 'temporarily and specially adopted' and was designed to produce an effect upon the credulous farmer, Gandhi wrote in *The Pioneer*, his dress was a 'national dress which suited India's climate' and which 'for its simplicity, art and cheapness, is not to be beaten of the face of the earth and which answers hygienic requirements.'[33]

Moreover, criticizing Indians who imitated British clothing style he wrote: "I believe that our copying of the European dress is a sign of our degradation, humiliation and our weakness; and that we are committing a national sin in discarding a dress which is best suited to the Indian climate."[34] Making a near satirical remark against the British for their clothing style, he further mentioned, "Had it not been for a false pride and equally false notions of prestige, Englishmen here would long ago have adopted the Indian costume."[35]

In other words, through clothing Gandhi reversed the colonial logic of being civilized through dress and valorized Indian clothing adding new symbols and meanings to it.

Finally, the highly symbolic effect of dress against empire can be seen in what he did in 1931. He wore the short dhoti without a shirt when he went to England for the Round Table Conference in 1931.

He refused to change his attire while attending the official banquet with King George V in the Buckingham Palace. When he was asked by journalists whether he was wearing enough clothes to appear before the King, he retorted that 'the King had enough on for both of us'! This was done to highlight how the empire had plundered India.

Conclusion

The study on Gandhi's clothing hinges around Gandhi's 'intention' and 'interpretations' of it. Gandhi's sartorial transformation may be related with his inner transformation; however, this study locates his sartorial transformation in the broad framework of colonialism and formation of Indian national identity. This transformation had political implications, intended or unintended, given that Gandhi gradually evolved also as a mass leader who was operating within a charged atmosphere of colonial humiliation which challenged national identity. In Gandhi's journey from playing the British gentleman to becoming the half–naked fakir one can trace the stages of imitation, loyalty and rebellion against British Empire. Taken together one can read a clear political message of the need to have and nurture a national and individual identity in consonance with one's own philosophy of life.

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Notes & Comments

Gandhi Today
In the Field and in the Academy: An Outsider's Observations

Thomas Weber

Introduction

I FIRST WENT TO India in 1975 as a young person with a strong interest in the country and its most famous son. I returned in 1979 specifically to find Gandhi and have been back on Gandhi quests about a dozen times since. I have now spent something over three years of my life there, much of it at Gandhi ashrams or in the Gandhi archives of various libraries, or talking to old Gandhians, many of whom I had the privilege of calling friend before they passed away. Hopefully this gives me some small claim to make comments on the status of what may be termed "Gandhism" in India. And, as an outsider, I have no political axes to grind or profit to make from taking any particular stand.

At about the time that I was preparing to return to India in July of this year, I saw a notice for the setting up of yet another Gandhi research centre in India, this time at relatively out of the way Jalgaon. My immediate reaction was: isn't this great, there must be a lot of interest in Gandhi. But then a question also came to my mind: How many such institutions of good quality can India accommodate? With the opening of yet another research centre, my mind has been playing with the thoughts of what all these centres mean. What is the quality of the research that comes out of them? Do they indicate a genuine resurgence in Gandhi scholarship or are they merely a sign that various universities or those high up in the Gandhian firmament had their own personal

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needs that have to be filled? That they cannot be seen to be lagging behind the competition? Are we trying to compensate for disappearing Gandhians by endowing Gandhi institutions? And are these institutions lulling us into feelings about the health of Gandhism in the country while Gandhian activists fade away with us hardly noticing?

A few years ago I attended meetings to help prepare the course outlines for an M.Phil in Gandhian thought which is now being offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University. Most of those around the table were teachers of Gandhian studies or Gandhi-related subjects in their respective universities. At that time similar questions come up for me as I was confronted with the spread of Gandhi-related academic courses. And similar questions were again raised a short time ago when the first issue of the *International Journal of Gandhi Studies* was issued from America and the *GITAM Journal of Gandhian Studies* was launched in India. So, what is going on? Has Gandhi really taken on a brilliant new career? What I hope to explore in this brief comment is the future of Gandhian activists, Gandhian institutions, Gandhi scholarship and Gandhian courses in Indian tertiary education.

Disappearing Field Gandhians

Perhaps Gandhi has taken on a new career, but it is a different one to the one I first encountered in India. If my memory is sound, when I first went to the land of Gandhi in 1975 there were Sarvodaya bookstalls at most large railway stations. They are rare now. And there were far more Gandhian activists who identified as Gandhians (the The Bhoodan/Gramdan movement was not far in the past and the JP movement was at its height). On the other hand there were very few Gandhi courses at universities. As the years have gone by and the old Gandhians have disappeared and their ashrams have been converted into small museums, the number of Gandhi research centers, tertiary level Gandhi courses and Gandhi journals has grown exponentially.

By way of summary, one could say that Gandhian activism, once the main occupation of the Gandhian community, seems to have been replaced by an academic interest in Gandhi. Of course pedagogy and research are not bad things. In the heyday of the post-Gandhi Gandhian movement, in the time of JP and Vinoba, there were training camps and workshops for activists and the JP-inspired Gandhian Institute of Studies at Rajghat in Varanasi was a focal point of international peace and nonviolence scholarship. But now it seems that *most* of Gandhian pedagogy is theoretical and the interest in Gandhi is academic rather than practical. Perhaps times have changed and it is a good thing that there is enough of an academic interest to keep the many Gandhi courses and journals alive. After all, Gandhi was adamant that he did not want

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to found any sect that carried on in his name. Still, as I have not been able to do a count, I wonder just how many Gandhi-related courses there are now being offered around the country. I also wonder just how many Gandhi centers and research institutes there are (someone recently informed me that there are over 400 Gandhi centers in tertiary educational institutions) and how many small Gandhi ashrams have become little more than local museums. Perhaps the academic interest in Gandhi, as Gandhians themselves disappear, was simply inevitable and may yet bear fruit and help shape a more Gandhian future. So far no one seems to have collected the evidence needed for us to understand the outcome of this movement. However, for me at least, there is still a question of whether this evolution, even if it was not a consciously decided one, has been positive.

Of course it may have been merely symbolic, but back then, when I first came to India specifically in search of Gandhi, there were still plenty of self-identified Gandhians plying charkas (and greeting others with hanks of hand spun cotton). Now even in ostensibly Gandhian institutions it is rare to find anyone spinning regularly. And rather than being a symbol of a Gandhian lifestyle, khadi seems to have been co-opted as the uniform of politicians or trendy fashion for the stylish young. And one wonders which of these groups is the least Gandhian. So, is this just a change or is it a loss? Perhaps spinning was a product of its time, but Gandhian activism is timeless and needed more than ever.

A *Directory of Gandhian Constructive Workers*, published less than half a century after the Mahatma's death, lists less than 90 who could be identified as being younger than 60 and only five less than 40 years old among the almost 700 entries. One can only wonder how thin that book would have become if it was updated and republished now over fifteen years later. And one could wonder how thick a book listing Gandhian academics, as opposed to constructive workers, would have become. Almost all of those who were acquainted with Gandhi personally have passed away and, although there are many youngsters in India doing grassroots work in a Gandhian vein, often under the umbrella of the National Alliance of People's Movements, perhaps it is not unjustified to say that there is no longer a Gandhian movement as such in India today. This certainly does not mean that Gandhi has disappeared from the scene—again one needs only to look at the proliferation of Gandhi courses in universities, Gandhi study centres, and Gandhi journals that are on offer to dispel such a notion.

As we near the centennial anniversary of Gandhi's arrival back to India from South Africa as the Mahatma, perhaps it is time to look at the legacy of Gandhi and his followers in his homeland. And perhaps

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it is a task that should be undertaken by all those who consider themselves as part of the Gandhi family. Even outsiders like me.

In 1983, Paul Clements, in his investigation of the Gandhian movement, wrote that,

> [The Gandhian movement] is remarkable in modern times because of its longevity and its combination of institutional strength and ability to maintain a creative edge. Thirty-five years after Gandhi himself was assassinated it continues to attract adherents. It has evolved along with independent India and continues to offer a vital alternative to the prevailing ideas about how India should develop.

Fifteen years ago, that is about a dozen years after Clements' optimistic words, I wrote that this did not seem to be the case fifty years after Gandhi's assassination. Then I noted that following the political battles of the mid-1970s JP Movement, much of the energy of those we could still call Gandhian activists revolved around the work of long-term village development projects. This may have been a logical next-step following upon the heels of the Bhoodan/Gramdan movements and the splits in the Gandhian movement during JP's Total Revolution. However, when I came to write, I could ask whether this was still the Gandhian *movement* or, while valuable, something else. And since then most of the JP-inspired Gandhians have aged and Gandhism in India seems to have taken a very different tack.

As the Gandhians disappear, it does not mean that Gandhi has become irrelevant in all circles. Where benefit can be gained by the co-option of Gandhi, he is still very relevant. A prime example is his employment in the political sphere. Almost twenty years ago, senior Gandhian Manmohan Choudhuri noted that many young people in India saw the then Congress government as Gandhi's party. They saw that the political system was riddled with corruption, and in their minds this tainted the Mahatma and gave the Gandhian movement and philosophy, about neither of which the young knew very much, a bad name. Choudhuri remarked that, "Today Gandhi is being presented to the people as a fusty old grand dad who admonishes children to keep quiet, not to contradict their elders, to have respect for those in authority and so on. As 'Father of the Nation' he has been turned into the "patron saint of the Government of India." Those who do not "care a fig for any of his ideas and principles ... use Gandhi for winning elections". This was an interesting observation in its time, but one cannot help wondering how many of the young today think of Gandhi *at all* when they think of politics. Of course certain politicians still try to appropriate Gandhi for their own benefit. One needs only to remember the recent

self-righteous indignation among certain politicians over the publication of a Gandhi biography by American author Joseph Lelyveld. They had not read the book, but inaccurate hearsay was enough for them to use the Father of the Nation for their own purposes.

In the late 1980s, the American resident Indian scholar Ishwar Harris also wrote about the then current position of the Gandhian movement in India under the title "Sarvodaya in Crisis". In his analysis, coming just a few years after Clements' reasonably positive observations, he noted that the movement, once seen as the guiding star for the future of India, had been more or less reduced to the status of a voluntary social work agency that had become factionalised with its programs faltering and its leading figures aging. He concluded that Gandhi has been defeated in India and was on the verge of being ignored. Although even during the destruction of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya the Gandhian groups could not co-ordinate their efforts in any significant way, resulting in a brave but small and ultimately ineffective action that was overtaken by circumstances, this does not mean that Harris is right in every sense. The Gandhian movement certainly has faded even further since the time he wrote, and neither Swadhyaya, the hope of the 1990s, nor Anna Hazare, the brief hope for some in 2011-12, have filled the gap. However, it is demonstrably not correct to assert that Gandhi has been defeated in India and is on the verge of being ignored. Gandhi is now as present as ever, but he has to a significant degree moved from the field into the academy.

The Gandhi of the Academy

When I started my Gandhi quest in India, there were some small local Gandhian newsletters and there was the more or less scholarly journal *Gandhi Marg*. The American and the *GITAM* journals I mentioned earlier are just the latest manifestation of a more recent proliferation of the many hard copy Gandhi journals, mostly published in India. Having seen the coming and going of titles such as *Ahimsa Nonviolence*, *Anasakti Darshan*, *Journal of Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti*, *Gandhian Studies*, *Gandhians in Action*, *Sarvodaya*, *Sansthakul*, *Journal of Peace and Gandhian Studies*, *Gandhian Perspectives*, *Gandhi Jyoti* and the *Journal of the Gandhi Media Centre*, makes one wonder about their viability and, indeed, desirability. Being blunt, there really is not enough quality research and writing to justify so many journals and often they tend to be second rate and do not last for too long. I have often wondered why the Gandhi scholars in India have not concentrated their efforts on one journal, say *Gandhi Marg* as the most obvious candidate, and made it into a world quality resource of top-notch Gandhi scholarship, before this opportunity slips overseas as may now be happening.

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When I first came to India there were few Gandhi courses offered in universities and even fewer in English. And I did not come across any Gandhi research centers except the then exceptional ones at Rajghat in Varanasi, which, when I last visited, was a shell of its former brilliant self, and the Gandhi Peace Foundation in Delhi. As I have already mentioned, more recently many Gandhi-related journals have come and gone and yet another major Gandhi research centre has opened and new Gandhi-related university courses, such as the one currently being advertised by IGNOU, are regularly being introduced. Is there really enough interest to make all these endeavors viable? Should we be cooperating to enable a few world-class centers and journals to flourish? Because I do not have the figures, I have been wondering how many Gandhi journals are actually published, how many university-level courses there are on Gandhi and Gandhian thought, and how many Gandhi research centers there really are. And I have been wondering why there are so many. In my most optimistic imaginings I like to think that it is because of an increased genuine hunger to understand Gandhi by the youth of the country. Perhaps the young who had their appetites for Gandhi whetted by the movie *Lage Raho Munnabhai* now have a variety of places to go to further their knowledge and are flocking to tertiary institutions and devouring the journal literature. But it would be nice to have concrete evidence for this.

Gandhi was greatly concerned with education and championed a scheme based on socially and culturally appropriate work related to basic human needs, such as the provision of food and clothing undertaken by the school community of children and adults. While it is probably unrealistic for university level urban academic courses to expect the students to develop rural self-sufficiency skills through manual work as part of their study program in the 21st Century, it would be interesting to know how many Gandhi-related courses are purely academic and how many have a community outreach program. Such programs exist at Gandhigram rural university in Tamil Nadu, where participation in the Shanti Sena (peace brigade) is built into the curriculum, and at the Gandhi-founded Gujarat Vidyapith, where the Gandhi course has a large practical component. It would be instructive to determine what difference there is in the levels of participation in socially responsible activism among the graduates of those courses that included community work and those that did not.

There are also other questions which could profitably be asked about the many Gandhi courses being taught around the country. The course outlines that I have seen, and I assume all the others, have noble sounding preambles and learning objectives. But are they in fact being

fulfilled? Perhaps if there was some research available on who did these Gandhi courses and why, and what the outcome for them was, we would be pleasantly surprised. Who does enrol in the courses? Are they young people with a genuine interest in Gandhi, perhaps young activists or potential activists who are looking for theory to guide their actions? Why else might students do these courses? Just to get certificates for job or promotion prospects? Do the students, in fact, become more activist from having done the courses? And if not, why not? What happens to them? Are the courses appealing to non-Hindu students? Why are more overseas students not coming to India, the land of the Mahatma, to study Gandhi through these courses? We might also ask who are teaching these courses, what their qualifications are, whether these teachers have any field experience, what is on the course syllabuses and what efforts are made to ensure that the courses are stimulating, up to date and relevant?

More recently I again had cause to wonder. I was involved in an advanced seminar on Gandhi held at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Simla. Many of the wonderfully keen students were doing peace studies courses at some of India's best universities. Of course they had heard of all the major Western peace and conflict resolution theorists (they were well versed in the writings of Johan Galtung and John Paul Lederach) but they knew nothing about Vinoba and JP's Shanti Sena that was so innovative and important in India in the 1960s and 1970s and set an example for peace teams worldwide. Ironically, I was teaching the lessons of the Shanti Sena to my peace studies class in Melbourne while the Indian students had, incredulously, never heard of it. Presumably the Gandhi study courses are a little less blinkered and their students know of this great legacy.

Taking Gandhi Seriously

If, as I have been suggesting, Gandhi seems to be disappearing from the field but becoming of more and more academic interest—we need to consider whether this has been a worthwhile trade off. To me it seems clear that there are not enough scholars doing original research to keep all the journals viable and it seems that every second university or Gandhi centre wants its own journal. This results in the publication of a lot of second rate articles that repeat well worn themes and even, far too regularly, plagiarise each other. In the competition, Gandhi is spread "too thin". Gandhi deserves better. If we want Gandhi to be taken seriously, those of us who have scholarly leanings must also take him seriously.

There was a time when you could say nothing bad about the Mahatma (or given some of the protests about the production of

Attenborough's classic film, perhaps say nothing about him at all). Now, possibly because of an early lack of critical research, the pendulum has swung too far the other way. Now it is fashionable to do hatchet jobs on Gandhi. It appears that the best way to get published and read is to write about Gandhi's sexuality or emphasise that he was a bad husband or father, or that he was a racist, as a way of debunking what is often referred to in these writings as the "myth of the Mahatma". Rather than a saint who attracts uncritical and superficial hagiographies relegating him to the position of cute mascot and hence scholarly or policy irrelevance, or a deviant who is not to be taken seriously because of sensationalist debunking, we need to see Gandhi as the complex human being that he was, one who deserves careful attention because, in the final analysis, he got most things right and has a great deal to teach us. Gandhi is too important to be above criticism and too important to be merely the target of sensation seekers.

Perhaps I should go back to the beginning and explain where these particular thoughts of mine have come from. One of the best (but least known) analyses of Gandhian nonviolence available in the English language is in the book *Gandhi and Group Conflict: An Exploration of Satyagraha*. It was written by that great Norwegian philosopher, and founder of the Deep Ecology movement, Arne Næss. One day, when he was staying at my family's house while he was in Melbourne for a conference, I got him to sign copies of his Gandhi-related books that I had on my bookshelves. He found another of his early books on my shelves, one that I had to admit that I had only glanced at rather than read. I recalled that Gandhi was not mentioned anywhere in the text or index and I asked him about that. He explained that the 1966 book, *Communication and Argument: Elements of Applied Semantics*, was about a Gandhian way of arguing but he deliberately left Gandhi out in order that the book be taken seriously.

Why would this have been the case? Why was Gandhi not being taken seriously? Why in the circles the book was aimed at, was Gandhi so unrespected that his message had to be provided surreptitiously? Let me reiterate, if we want Gandhi to be taken seriously we must take him seriously. And if we have a seeming cottage industry churning out uncritical biographies, copying material from each other with very little original thought or research, who is going to take the subject seriously? I suspect that most of us are aware that there is too much mediocre writing on Gandhi and this means that many intellectuals disregard the Mahatma because of his less than rigorous interpreters. If we have dozens of Gandhi journals, that all have to be filled, it is almost inevitable that they will be filled with articles that cover the same shallow ground and will continue to make the dismissal of Gandhi easy in learned

circles. (Of course I am not suggesting that these are the only circles that should be written for, Gandhi books for children and Gandhi beginners are also important and can be inspiring, but they will not get the notice of policy makers or those in positions of power.)

Far too much has been published on Gandhi that is neither original nor particularly good. It seems that it is important for every Indian academic to produce a book or at least an article on Gandhi and every time I am in India I see hundreds of new titles, many of which will most probably never be read. I always buy several of them and when I return home, and have time to go through them, realise that the gems are few and there are far too many that should never have been published. Perhaps, in the Gandhian spirit, we should keep more trees alive. While there is certainly writing of exceptional quality on Gandhi in India, to a large degree I think that it is not a preposterous assertion to say that quality is being drowned by quantity.

Gandhi Centres and the Ashram

During my most recent trip to India, I again had a chance to walk the hallowed ground of the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad and do some work in the archives. I have been a regular visitor to the Ashram since 1982 when I was preparing to re-walk Gandhi's Dandi yatra. And since then I have been there fairly frequently to catch up with Ashram friends and to do research work while completing writing projects. During these periods, as well as times spent visiting Sevagram Ashram and other Gandhian centres, I have often wondered as to their relevance and future in the 21st Century. Over the years I have imagined, in particular, what the Sabarmati Ashram might become and how it could play its role in spreading the message of Gandhi, how it could be ensured that the most effective use is made of this unique world significant resource. Of course, as with Sevagram, it probably has a large role to play as one of India's most historical sites, as a museum and as a pilgrimage place (or even just a green oasis in the bustle of chaotic Ahmedabad). And it has just as important a role as an educational resource for school children, and as a place that fosters various educational programs and craft undertakings. My particular concern, however, is to think through ways that the Ashram could be made an even more satisfying venue for visiting researchers. Gandhi research needs more than universities.

For researchers such as me, and at least a few others who come from outside India each year, besides the historical atmosphere which in powerful ways supports the research experience, the heart of the Ashram is the archive. The Ashram probably has the best collection of Gandhi letters and other documents in existence, but the collection is not complete. If I am not mistaken, at the moment there are still

important papers at the Nehru Memorial Library and the National Archives in New Delhi (when will the Pyarelal papers be released?) that the Ashram does not have copies of and vice versa. Is it possible for the institutions to get together to ensure that they each have as complete sets as possible? A "one stop shop" would greatly assist overseas scholars with limited time, and there is still something special about doing Gandhi research at the Ashram where the Mahatma walked and worked, and where one can still feel his spirit rather than in a museum/library in Delhi or Jalgaon. Of course, in the fullness of time all the Gandhi documents will presumably be digitised and made available to scholars from around the world via computers without them having to visit India at all. However, there will always be times when it will be important to see the actual documents to check margin notes, writings on the back, or to take care of missing information from incomplete scanning (which will always happen regardless of care— just have a look at problems introduced into the revised edition of Gandhi's *Collected Works*), or to provide perspective to scholarship by actually being at a Gandhian site that much of the material refers to.

This leads me to another possibly important issue. Of course this may merely be the idle dreams of a far off scholar who does not understand the politics behind the management of Gandhi institutions, but could the Ashram be positioned so that it ensures that its outstanding collection is used by scholars in a way that helps to promote first-class Gandhi scholarship, and possibly to help to create a world-wide community of Gandhi scholars?

Some sort of international Gandhi research hub in India would be invaluable. And it seems to me that if it could be instituted at the Sabarmati Ashram, it could become the most important place in the world for scholars to come and work, to meet other scholars, to share information and discuss ideas. It could foster greater contact between various Gandhi experts and ensure that Gandhi scholarship is carried out at the highest level. I have long had a vision of there being a place in India where Gandhi scholars from around the world could come and work with the best of local scholars and inspire each other. Having access to documents, whether in hard copy or digital form, is not the same as having a group of like-minded people working in the one place. And if the place had a Gandhian atmosphere (such as the Ashram could provide, but simple academic libraries and archives, no matter how good they are, cannot) it would be a wonderful thing.

This dream may be worthy, but there is a problem. As with the Gandhi journals, there are now many Gandhi centres. Of course it is important to enthuse young people with a sense of Gandhian activism and so universities should have Gandhi centres. But, at least from an

outside view, the question arises as to how many quality Gandhi *research* centres the country can accommodate. I do not think that in this sense competition is productive. The materials and the scholars to work on them, like the articles in Gandhi journals, end up being spread too thin. No critical mass that could form into an international scholarly Gandhian community is likely to develop. How much real Gandhi research is done at Gandhi research centres? How much of the time are they lying idle? All Gandhi researchers have friends they made serendipitously at the canteen of archives or ashrams. Imagine the cross-fertilisation of ideas that could occur if there was one really good centre that attracted the best of Indian and overseas scholars. In short, perhaps one or two quality research centres may be of greater value than a proliferation of many largely unused ones. Less can be more.

Conclusion: Gandhi, Cooperation and Competition

By way of conclusion, it appears to me that there is a trend to giving us a less activist and more bureaucratic Gandhi. Perhaps it is time to think through the implications of this development. Perhaps the trade off in relocating Gandhi from the field to the academy has been inevitable with the arrow of time. Once, committed Gandhi disciples dedicated their lives to service. This is fairly typical in newly formed organisations. After the passing of the leader the organisations tend to become bureaucratic and sources of employment. This is a fairly well established general trend. Given that Gandhism faces these new realities, can it be seen as being positive, or could any positive elements in it be fostered so that there is still a viable and meaningful Gandhi establishment in India? Here we must ask a question of why everyone seems to need their own bit of Gandhi. While ashrams close, university courses open. And each university with a Gandhi centre seems to desire a Gandhi journal. As local sarvodaya workers disappear, bureaucracies with Gandhi in their names flourish. Have we traded Gandhian praxis for Gandhi certificates and degrees that seem to be mere markers of having done tertiary study? Is there really enough interest to make all these endeavours viable? Should we be cooperating to enable a few world class centres and journals to flourish? If we knew that this flourishing of the academic approach to Gandhi leads to Gandhian praxis, it would be wonderful. Until we do know, and we should be making efforts to find out, we need to ask whether it wouldn't be better if there was some scope for cooperation so that there was a really good Gandhi research centre (at Sabarmati Ashram say) and one top class journal (say *Gandhi Marg*) instead of all the competition. Why is there this seeming scramble to set up centres, courses, journals? Surely fewer top quality examples would be better for spreading the message, for making

Gandhi research respectable and perhaps even influential. And this means a cooperative rather than competitive approach to Gandhi courses, journals, and research centres.

Regardless of the saintliness or otherwise of Mahatma Gandhi, unsurprisingly even Gandhians are human and have all the possible human foibles and the movement, if it can be called that, is not free from politics and competition. Of course this should not come as a surprise. The question becomes, given this situation, what is the best way forward?

Now there are far more institutions for the seekers of Gandhi to go to, far more Gandhi-related conferences to attend, far more avenues to publish in. Do they provide the best facilities, are they relevant to the current political situation, are they inspiring? Are they driven by a selfless desire to spread the word of the Mahatma (in a way that tries to ensure that it is taken seriously), or are they a reflection of competition, of not wanting to be left behind, of a perceived need to be seen to be doing good? In the end we need to ask whose needs are being met. Are they those of people who want to write "editor" or "conference organiser" on their bio data pages? Of those who want to see their names in print when they have little to say? Of university administrators who need to promote their institutions? I think that it would be a worthwhile project for someone in the Gandhian community to genuinely try to answer the question of why there are so many courses and centres. Surely it cannot be just because there is money in the form of the University Grants Commission largesse to set them up. I would like to think that it is because of a demand by the young who long to know more about the Mahatma and his message. If this is the case, there should be a large cohort graduating from their courses and emerging from the centres to return to the field to complete Gandhi's constructive work tasks. If this is not happening, we should be asking, why not? If the courses, centres and journals are there without a positive and observable objective, is there any way to tweak the content of the courses, programs of the centres and contents of journals to aid the outcome of fostering Gandhian praxis and to inform public policy?

If there is any value in what I have been trying to say and the questions that I have been asking, it should be possible to agree that the biggest need is to spread the message of Gandhi in the most effective way. Is smaller with increased quality better? Or is the sheer number of avenues for the spreading of Gandhian philosophy an opportunity we could make more of with a little creative thinking?

Some of what I have been saying may sound like criticism, but it is more due to envy and to point out a great opportunity. Where I come from there will never be a Gandhi research centre or a viable Gandhi

journal and only a few university students, mostly those doing regional studies with an India focus, will be introduced to Gandhi at all, but even that will generally only be to Gandhi the Indian politician. In India there is the possibility to do so much more. Imagine Gandhi courses with serious constructive work components that were training the future troublesome people we need to make the world a more just and sustainable place. Of course if they proved to be too troublesome, even in the best possible sense, University Grants Commission funds would probably quickly dry up. But this is no reason to remain uncontroversial. Imagine students getting course credits for lengthy work placements with programs deemed Gandhian. Imagine foreign students coming to India to qualify in Gandhian philosophy and work in the research centres so that they can take Gandhi back home with them, the way those who set up international peace brigades took the lessons of the Shanti Sena to the world. Imagine policy makers looking for direction in the output of Gandhi research centres and scholarly journals published in India. Either this future is grasped or Gandhi becomes just another philosopher studied at university and the Gandhi ashrams become tourist theme parks.

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Knowing Together in Compassion and Confrontation: Social Movements, Gift of Knowledge and the Challenge of Transformations

Ananta Kumar Giri

The new social movements grapple with the problem of nature and are concomitantly posing questions about the conative underpinnings of modern society, thus problematising what motivates people, what meanings are being pursued and ultimately what human needs are being fulfilled [..] bringing about a change in the elementary cultural structures underpinning modern society, thus redefining the boundary between society and non-society, between culture and nature, and transforming our human social relationship to and appropriation of nature. Central to their endeavour, therefore, is the identification of what counts as authentic needs under contemporary conditions.

It is from this viewpoint of authentic needs that the new social movements open up the possibility of a new kind of critique. It is neither a critique of ideology nor a critique of instrumental reason and even less a critique of functionalist reason, as in the case of Marx, Horkheimer and Habermas respectively, but rather an aesthetic social critique or what I propose to call *endeetic* critique. This critique is directed at what is unquestioningly taken for granted in modern society, namely an exploitative relation to nature, and hence at the *endeetic* foundations of economics, politics, labour and social life in general – that is, foundations as determined by the prevailing definition of human needs. The outcome of this critique is the question of authentic needs which can be answered neither by science nor by the political institutions since it concerns what we really want, how we really want to live, what kind of a society we really desire, what we would really find good, and so forth.[1]

The promise of a movement is its future victory; whereas the promises of incidental moments are instantaneous, such moments include, life-enhancingly or tragically, experiences of freedom in action [..]. Such moments— as no historical 'outcome' can ever be—are transcendental, are what Spinoza termed eternal, and they are as the stars in an expanding universe. [..] Today the infinite is beside the poor.

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True compassion is not just an emotional response but a form of commitment founded on reason. [..] If we wish to learn, we should consider our enemies to be our greatest teachers.[2]

The Calling of Knowledge and the Adventure and Invitation of Knowing Together

In the Bible we read about a woman who is wailing in the streets and her name is Wisdom. She is weeping because despite knocking we are not opening our doors. But in human journey as well as in our contemporary world it is not only wisdom which is weeping knowledge is also weeping as it has become imprisoned within varieties of structures of domination, commodification, human interest, illusion, isolation— both objectivist and subjectivist—and epistemological fixation. But to know is not only to know of but to know with—a practice of knowing with which involves both self-knowledge and knowledge of the world.[3] It is a process of knowing where we hold each other's hands, look up to the face of each other and learn together. This helps us realize our primordial need for self-knowledge ("Know Thyself") and the knowledge of the other. It is in this process of knowing together that knowledge becomes a journey of co-realization, co-learning and collective learning involving both ontology and epistemology, joy as well as suffering. Suffering comes from structures of domination imposed upon us limiting our reality and possibility of coming together and learning freely and sharing our heart; joy comes from the very striving towards it despite imposed restrictions and fears of many kinds. Suffering also has a much deeper root, for example, suffering emerging from our lack of readiness to embrace a new definition of self and society and clinging to our earlier conception of self. Joy emerges from experiences of breaking open such boundaries and realizing liberation.

Such practices of knowing together involve both compassion and confrontation. In practices of knowing together we create a compassionate community and help each other to learn. This is also a space of solidarity, a solidarity which is always in a process of fuller realization rather than a fixed thing. In knowing together we compassionately understand each other, our points of view, including those of the ones we confront and in the process our points of view become circles of view capable of more generous embrace. In knowing together we also confront each other, our existing conception of self, nature and society especially those conceptions which reiterate structures of domination and do not facilitate realization of our human, societal, divine and cosmic potential. But this confrontation takes varieties of forms—violent, non-violent, dualistic as well as non-dual.

There are also practices of knowing together which involves compassionate confrontation where partners of confrontation are not eternal demons; though we fight, we realize that we are part of a bigger of drama of co-realization where we are not just to annihilate our enemies but create a field where transformation embraces both the self and the other.

Knowledge as knowing together helps us overcome varieties of philosophical and social illusions, for example, of both objectivism and subjectivism but it does not reduce knowledge only to public communication. It cultivates both self and social knowledge in a way that one helps the other to blossom in non-reductive and multi-dimensional ways.

Social Movements as Fields of Knowing Together in Compassion and Confrontation

Knowledge is at the root of realization of living and in spaces of togetherness living is nurtured and cultivated. It is in these spaces of togetherness with all their challenges and contradictions that life has learnt the art of living and facing the challenges of evolution. It is in the spaces of togetherness that humanity has also learnt about life, self and society. These spaces are not just collectivist spaces they are also spaces of self, co- and societal meditation. We find examples of such spaces of togetherness as spaces of knowledge and meditation in many different traditions of human striving—religion, art and sciences. In the Christian quest, early Christianity was characterized by such spaces of togetherness where co-travelers with Jesus realized the significance of his teaching by living together and confronting their earlier self conception as well as structures of domination which hindered realization of human, social and divine potential. These spaces of togetherness were animated by a spirit of compassion and confrontation. We find similar experiments in the pathways inspired by the Buddha. The Buddha embodied both compassion and confrontation. He inspired practices of living and sharing together and share the gift of knowledge, i.e. each of us already have sparks of Enlightenment with us, with all sections of society, especially the downtrodden and outcastes. The Buddha also confronted existing structures of domination, especially dominating knowledge with reason and not to accept anything in the name of custom and tradition.[4]

In human histories we see such spaces of togetherness unfolding in varieties of social movements—socio-political and socio-political. Movements such as Bhakti and varieties of social, political and spiritual movements in our multiple histories have presented fields in which fellow beings have come together, have learnt new knowledge about

themselves, each other, society, Nature and cosmos. In these fields they have also learnt how to overcome their existing conceptions of self and social order and feel confident about such self-knowledge and social knowledge. For example, in our turbulent histories in the last two hundred years workers' movements and anti-colonial and post-colonial struggles for freedom have been critical factors of transformation and these movements have challenged existing structures of self and social formation. Workers' movements have fought for dignity of labour and against the oppression by the bourgeoisie struggling for not only their freedom but also for fuller social becoming and freedom for all. Struggles for freedom have also created new knowledge of self, society and the world confronting the existing colonial structure of self-formation, social governance and exploitation. In Gandhi's anti-colonial and post-colonial struggle for freedom this process of knowing together transcended many boundaries. As a space of togetherness Gandhi-inspired mobilizations, like the Buddha and Jesus before him, created spaces of compassion and confrontation in which seeking and struggling participants knew together in struggle. This struggle brought together men and women from diverse backgrounds including sympathetic transformers such as C.F. Andrews from the national space of the colonizers.

In our contemporary world as it is in the last half century varieties of movements despite inevitable and understandable human and social limitation continue to create multiple fields of knowing together. They act as agents of self-production, both self and social and challenge the available conceptions of normality and pathology.[5] In our most recent past gay and lesbian movements have challenged dominant structures of sexuality by creating spaces where people feel confident to share with each other their deepest self-knowledge and enjoy the spiritual grace of their sexual preference. Similarly an emergent world-wide differently-able movement confronts the existing structure of domination vis-à-vis physical handicap and disability by creating physical and emotional space for expressing ourselves in our own "differently-abled ways." These movements follow other expressive movements in art, literature, social criticism and politics. Environmental movements and now the emerging movements for global justice such as World Social Forum movements continue to create fields of knowledge as knowing together challenging our existing self conception and relationship between self and society, nature and society.

We can also briefly consider here some other movements such as Habitat for Humanity, Swadhyaya and integral education with which I have done fieldwork over the last two decades.[6] Habitat for Humanity

is a Christian socio-religious movement which builds houses for low-income families and through its vision and practice it creates a field of knowing together that sends out the message that we are not helpless and we can create a world where there are "No More Shacks." Swadhayaya is a socio-spiritual movement from contemporary Hindu space which challenges that none of us are poor because God is in our hearts. Integral education is a vibrant educational movement in India drawing inspiration from the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo which strives for the integral unfolding of individuals and societies—physical, vital, mental, psychical, and spiritual. All these three movements, like many such other movements, present a new self-knowledge intimating a greater path of transformation though they are also entangled with many conflicts and contradictions. It is by taking part in these movements that participants realize the significance of such new self-knowledge and then learn to put into practice in wider social experiments such as building houses, schools and inter-village agricultural projects.

Social movements thus facilitate knowing; they are agents of knowledge—cognitive agents. They are fields of learning—self as well as collective. In the creative work of Piet Strydom social movements are not only cognitive agents of collective learning, they are also fields of triple contingency where we learn the significance of a third point of view going beyond the exclusivity and dualism of first and the second, self and other, fighter and the enemy.[7]

But social movements are not only cognitive agents in a narrow way, they are also spaces of emotional intersubjectivity. Spaces of togetherness from the dawn of humanity till the most recent are not only cognitive spaces but also emotional spaces of mutual nurturance and nurturance of flames of aspiration through music, art, poetry and other expressive creativity. It is not true that we find such expressive dimension only in the so-called new social movements in the last three decades or so. The workers movements more than hundred years ago in Europe also had a vibrant musical and literary engagement as do many political movements now such as the Zapatista movement in contemporary Mexico. Social movements as fields of knowing together are multi-dimensional spaces of cognition and emotional nurturance, knowledge and art of life.

These social movements are also fields of critiques and reconstructions. They are fields of socio-cognitive critique critiquing existing knowledge of self and society. They are also spaces of what Strydom calls *endeetic critique* which challenges existing ends of life.[8] It is in such *endeetic* critiques that social movements touch a deeper dimension of human existence and embrace spiritual questioning of

self and society. They ask questions about ends of life and the meaning of life.

Gift of Knowledge and the Challenge of Transformation

Life is not a property, life is a gift. Knowledge is not a property, it is a gift. We partake in this gift of life, we stand upon the great heritage of knowledge and life and the only way we can pay back our debt to this heritage is by giving unconditionally the knowledge and life we have received. But not only today but down the ages knowledge has been bounded in various ways ("Prometheus Bound") and used for domination rather than for liberation and unfoldment of potential. In the past as it is still in the present knowledge was and is being denied to vast sections of societies—slaves, women, untouchables, low-caste, poor and the gentiles. These structures of exclusion have been challenged in some ways but yet much still remains to be done thus calling for the need to take part in varieties of movements of transformation.

Now we are confronted with an unprecedented challenge of commercialization and commodification of knowledge which starts from the kindergarten and follows all the way to portals of higher education. Even to teach one's children on the part of a daily wage earner one has to spend Rs 200 per month in a remote Indian village. What kind of society is this?

Today commodification of knowledge is reaching a level of obscenity and sacrilege which is an assault on the essential divine dimension of knowledge. It is an assault on both Sophia and Saraswati. With new weapons such as intellectual property rights producers of knowledge are becoming slaves in the valorization of capital losing their dignity and responsibility. Even spaces of knowledge sharing are becoming spaces of capital. One day I was passing through Bristol, England and got to meet the professor who was organizing an interesting international conference the very next day. I naturally felt attracted and was prepared to sleep in the cold streets of the city just to listen to these words of wisdom, but the professor told me that without paying a registration fee which ran up to hundreds of pounds I could not attend the seminar. I asked him: "You are organizing the seminar any way. I am a passerby. Is your seminar going to suffer any loss if I do not pay? But by denying me participation are you fulfilling your sacred task as a practitioner of knowledge? Are you not making it a money-making machine?"

Making knowledge a gift is a continued challenge for us and it calls for multi-dimensional transformation—self as well as structural. Those of us who are in paths of learning have to confront the contemporary

structures of commodification of knowledge by not only giving and opening up our spaces of knowledge to all souls but also by ourselves becoming gifts of knowledge and life . We have to embody compassion and confrontation in our lives and varieties of spaces of togetherness where we belong. Here we can draw inspiration from movements such as copy left movements which are fighting against copy right exclusion by creating knowledge in the open source. We can also draw inspiration from an emerging vibrant independent media movement across the world called Indy Media which are creating spaces of knowledge beyond the corporate domination of our contemporary media. We can draw inspiration from such movements in the present as well as in the past and continue to embody compassion and confrontation in our practices and processes of knowing together.

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Book Reviews

"India Against Corruption" Movement: An Online Version of a Non-Violent Mass Movement

Juby John Eipe
Tittoo Varghese
Santhosh Mathew Veranani

Introduction

NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES—especially social media via the Internet— have become important resources for the mobilization of collective action and the subsequent creation, organization, and implementation of social movements around the world. The development of social media created opportunities for Web-fuelled social movements, or cyber-activism, to change the landscape of collective action. Cyber-activism is a growing field of scholarly inquiry, though it is not yet well understood, and it is largely lacking a clear, cohesive direction.

Langman argues that computer-savvy activists use the Internet to initiate and organize a broad spectrum of dissention activities, including consumer boycotts and public protests and demonstrations.[1] Numerous scholars, in fact, have pointed to new communication technologies—particularly social media like short messaging services (SMS), social-networking sites, and blogs—as being, collectively, an important new resource for the successful organization and implementation of social movements.[2] Social media technologies have been used especially in organizing and implementing collective activities, promoting a sense of community and collective identity among marginalized group members, creating less-confined political spaces, establishing connections with other social movements, and publicizing causes to gain support from the global community.

Prominent cyber-activism movements include anti-war, anti-globalization, and global justice movements. In the Iraqi anti-war movement, activists' use of the Internet to communicate, coordinate, and create awareness among decentralized networks resulted in global

protests that brought together about 10 million activists who demonstrated in hundreds of cities worldwide on February 15, 2003.[3] The 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) protest in Seattle marked the beginning of the global justice cyber movement and new communication technologies became the vehicle that brought together the tens of thousands of protesters who confronted the WTO delegates. [4] The Internet also has enabled the creation of diverse democratic groups and movements, such as the World Social Forum, which mobilized global justice movements of more than 100,000 diverse activists in Brazil in 2003, and in Mumbai in 2004.[5]

In addition to supporting political and social movements in more conventional ways—by providing opportunities for political expression, symbolic identification for collective actors, and information exchange— new communication technologies may serve a novel instrumental function. In their examination of the anti-G8 protest in Genoa in 2001 and the European Social Forum in Florence in 2002, Della Porta and Mosca found that Internet-based communication technologies provide an important additional resource for social movements implemented by "resource poor" actors, offering a means for mass communication that may have previously been restricted by financial, temporal, or spatial constraints.

Other examples of social media use among "resource poor" actors include HIV/AIDS activism and the activities of some Muslim feminists. HIV/AIDS media activism, which grew significantly between the late 1980s and early 1990s, was initiated mostly by collectives of people with HIV/AIDS who aimed to publicize AIDS health and treatment options, as well as cultural and political activities of people with HIV/AIDS. While these groups lacked the power and resources to efficiently spread their messages to a mass audience through traditional means, the Internet has now enabled mobilization of people with HIV/AIDS in developing countries as well as AIDS dissidents.[6] The Muslim feminist activists in the Middle East have used the Internet to foster communication between women in Diaspora and their sisters in Muslim countries, promote women's initiatives, and support each others' struggles.[7] The Egyptians used the social media effectively in the Egyptian revolution to oust the dictator Hosni Mubarak from power.[8]

Scholars from disciplines including communication, sociology, and political science have studied uses of social media in a range of social and political movements, but what seems to be missing is a theoretical framework that could integrate and contrast findings and conclusions from different studies, as well as advance a shared pursuit toward understanding the role of these technologies for collective action.

While there appears to be general agreement among scholars that social media may be used as an effective and enduring resource for political and social change, its distinctive and sustaining features are not well understood.

Using the 2011 India Against Corruption movement as a case for analysis, this article explores the possible utility of resource mobilization theory to enhance this understanding and take a step toward generating a theoretical framework capable of guiding related studies. Resource mobilization theory seems to be a reasonable starting point for explaining the usefulness and impact of social media technologies in social movements because of its emphasis on the social, historical, and political contexts of collective action, as well as on the utility and interplay of available resources. In general, this article explores the potential usefulness of resource mobilization theory in understanding contemporary social movements. In pursuit of this goal, our analysis specifically seeks answers to the following research question:

> In what ways were social media technologies employed as a resource to support the India Against Corruption Movement?

Theoretical Framework

Resource mobilization theory largely developed from studies of collective action during the 1960s, gaining increasing prominence throughout the 1970s and 1980s, though its popularity has waned. The theory has been criticized for its assumption of the constancy of discontent and collective interests over time, its overemphasis of the significance of outside resources, and its inability to adequately address social movements that begin with fairly substantial resources or those instigated by some minority groups.[9] Despite these claims and the changing landscape of social movements since the theory's heyday, resource mobilization should not be discounted, as it still has much to offer. Some scholars have suggested modifications of the theory and the increasing use of social media technologies in social movements presents an opportunity to re-examine the utility of resource mobilization in a contemporary context.[10]

The theory is based on the notion that resources—such as time, money, organizational skills, and certain social or political opportunities—are critical to the success of social movements. At its inception, resource mobilization theory was unlike earlier theories of collective action in its treatment of social movements as normal, rational, institutionally rooted activities that are structured and

patterned, thus allowing for analysis in terms of organizational dynamics.[11] Although types of resources vary among social movements, the availability of applicable resources, and of actors' abilities to use them effectively, are critical. In contrast to psychological variables considered by other social movement theories, resource mobilization theory was the first to recognize the importance of influences outside the social movement under study.[12] A thorough explanation of the history and development of resource mobilization theory is beyond the scope of this paper, but it can be found in the works of a number of scholars.[13]

Methodology

The researchers undertook a qualitative content analysis of the sample text collated from the social networking site Facebook. Facebook and twitter were widely used by "Team Anna" – the organizers of the India Against Corruption Campaign – to promote themselves and their ideas. The researchers purposively selected thirteen discussion threads posted across thirteen days (August 16 to 28, 2011) during which Anna Hazare went on a fast at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi demanding the implementation of his version of the Lokpal Bill called the Jan Lokpal Bill.

The threads were selected based on the number of "likes" received by the initiating posts made by the administrators of the India Against Corruption 'page' on Facebook. Only the posts made in English were selected for the analysis. These thirteen units differ from each other in terms of the number of comments made and the number of "likes" received apart from the differences in the discussion topics themselves.

The analysis of the thirteen threads reveals the various ways by which minority views are isolated by the majority opinion holders.

Given the enormous volume of data available, we could not access every news report and social media message produced. The qualitative researcher often must use her or his judgment, based on a set of criteria, to decide how much and how long a case should be studied to aid in understanding.[14] Based on our prior knowledge and research, therefore, we collected a convenience sample from as large a variety of sources as possible until we had reached a point of saturation and had a good sense of the case.

Analysis and Findings

The Social Networking Media played a crucial role in gathering like-minded people against the problem of corruption. Even those who were unaware about the profile of Anna Hazare joined the campaign. The

idea of being able to do something against corruption is what led to this. Another factor which helped in popularizing the movement was the way in which the public relations group of 'Team Anna' propagated their messages. Team Anna's main target groups were the youth who are heavy users of the new media and the Indian middle class. When one team focused on the campaign through the traditional media, another team spread the message through the new media including the social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook, Orkut etc. The campaigners understood the power of peer pressure on teenagers and youth and acted in such a way that there were only "YES" responses for the event's invitation which appeared in the Facebook pages of the youth. All these efforts helped in successfully mobilising thousands of youth across the country and even abroad. The result was that even a month after the thirteen days long fast of Anna Hazare, the Jan Lokpal Bill remained the headline in leading national dailies. The Facebook page titled "India Against Corruption" and the twitter account "@janlokpal" played very significant roles in keeping followers updated and motivated.

The number of people involved in the movement qualifies it to be called a mass movement. The social media conversations which archive this mass movement reveal a public sphere heavily tilted towards the side of the majority's opinion often crushing lone minority voices. It is quite interesting to note the themes by which people are organised and motivated to participate in the mass movement.

1. The spirit of nationalism/patriotism is often invoked to garner more support for the movement. Every small event is either posted by the administrators of the page and local events are posted as comments to threads by people.

We come from all walks of life and converge at deshbhakti! Proud of being an Indian.

2. Creating a class based struggle seems to be one of the tactics where it is posted:

it's a movement of the middle class or the lower middle class against the rich

This class consciousness is a recurrent image in many more posts and it spills over to the streets in the form of marches and gatherings marking protest.

3. Creating a sort of peer influence by narrating how different small movements are coming up in different parts of India and abroad in support of Anna Hazare.

Delhi Auto Union, Delhi lawyers, lawyers of Moradabad, IT employees wearing black bands and ribbons, march @ india gate, Lucknow (16/09/2011)

July–December 2012

and INDIA BANDH" On Thursday 18th Aug 2011 (17/09/2011) and questions like Y no marches held in kerala? , south Africa, Cambridge,UK, Tokyo, Myanmar , Columbus, Ohio (18/09/2011), PUNE protest rally , rallies at delhi Rams Paradise, Khalpara , march from INDIA GATE to RAMLILA (20/09/2011), Chandigarh, Trivandrum, Bangalore, Dharna in front of Manish Tewari's residence in Ludhiana (21/09/2011), silent candle march at India Gate ... Amar Jawan Jyoti till Rashtrapati Bhawan ....(24/09/2011), pune (26/09/ 2011).

4. Peer pressure and attempts to vilify those who do not support the movement are seen in plenty. The ones who are not with the movement are often called "traitors" and "Pakistanis". The case where Ms. Arundhati Roy is criticized vehemently and often vulgarly is one example that really stands out.

if u [do] not support it u r not Indian

those who do not participate in the fast of Anna is losing their precious moments of life

5. Equating the movement to a "Second Freedom struggle". A sense of validity and importance is created by the people and at times by the organizers themselves.

6. Emotional content is posted quite frequently and the highly emotional narrative is powerful enough to charge and mobilize many a 'doubting Thomas'. Some examples are the ones like the story of the mother in search for her son who left the house to join Anna movement and the posts like:

a 74 year old man is fasting for you for the last 10 days

7. Efforts to create an all inclusive movement are seen frequently in the posts. Deliberate efforts are made to reach out to the rich and the poor and people from all states and religions to participate in the movement.

Even the criminals in Tihar Jail were invited, old & young, rich & poor, people from all states….

Muslims who have largely stayed away from Anna Hazare's movement so far, are now likely to take part in it following the celebrated Islamic seminary, Darul Uloom, Deoband, coming out in its support and Imarat Shariah, a highly respected religious body of Bihar, also supporting the issues raised by the Gandhian leader.

8. Generating anti establishment, apolitical and anti rich feelings is another tactic that has worked in favour of the movement. The feelings like "all politicians are corrupt" are amplified in these forums. The middle classes' hatred and apathy towards the powerful politicians and policy makers are seen throughout the discussions. A very strong **anti-congress** sentiment is seen in many of the posts and the congress party and its leaders are equated to corruption.

This feeling was seen being transformed to the streets as well and in the later calls by Hazare himself to boycott the party's candidate in a by-election.

9. Religious feelings are seen to be invoked to attract more people to the movement. Anna is described as the incarnation of "Dharma" and participating in the movement is described as a 'Life-time' experience like taking a dip in the Ganges.

sikh family coming with food when delhi police didn't give: God will provide support to the righteous in one way or the other

10. Equating Anna Hazare to Mahatma Gandhi, the propagandists aim to create an aura around the movement and to establish it as a legitimate and **peaceful** one. Anna and Arvind Kejriwal are projected as role models for the country as against the "corrupt politicians" of the country.

We have shown to the whole world how we won this battle peacefully in a democratic way !! So Gandhigiri (and now Annagiri) is still relevant in today's world !!

Our generation is lucky to witness another gandhian revolution, and a second Gandhiji!

11. Examples of and calls for small and big sacrifices give more appeal to the movement.

Now, I would also start AC of my car... only after Anna ji would break his fast ... I kept my AC closed as a small way of showing my concern for health of Anna ji since 16th Aug 2011 :) a small way !

12. Direct calls for more participation as a way of asking people to participate in the movement are also seen as on-ground participation starts declining after the initial days of Anna's fast.

13. Disseminating information regarding how to be part of the campaign/movement is one of the key features of the use of the Facebook page – India Against Corruption. People are asked to participate in small ways - by carrying the Indian flag on their vehicles, by sending registered posts supporting the movement to the Prime Minister's office and so on.

Conclusion

There is little doubt that social media played a significant role in the revolutions and protest movements that have struck the Arab world, the US, Europe and India. In the case of India, activists had been actively engaged in online discussions and debates on socio-political conditions, which eventually developed into a full-force protest movement. What these activists were doing—in terms of debating, organizing, and planning—is not new in itself, but the means employed to communicate with each other and execute the

revolution represents an important new resource for collective action. Social media introduced a novel resource that provided swiftness in receiving and disseminating information; helped to build and strengthen ties among activists; and increased interaction among protesters and between protesters and the rest of the world. Information about the events that led to the protests was spread largely through social media technologies, and the encouragement and sympathy offered via social media channels inspired and boosted the protesters, who were linked to each other and the outside world.

The India Against Corruption movement, therefore, demonstrates the opportunities offered by social media for large-scale mobilization and the organization and implementation of social movements. Additionally, the use of social media helped to draw local and international attention to important activities that otherwise might have been shielded from public view, thereby isolating the participants. Social media introduced speed and interactivity that were not possible through the reliance on traditional mobilization resources such as brochures, faxes, and telephones. As one Tunisian protester advised, the use of media to extend a movement's reach can be a powerful way to gain outside validation and countermovement pressure.

Resource mobilization theory can aid in understanding the India Against Corruption movement—as well as other political and social movements—in terms of the influential contexts and resources. Primarily because of their ubiquity and potential for communicating messages to massive, global audiences, social media technologies may be seen as an important, instrumental resource for collective action and social change.

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Burmese Gandhi: Aung San Suu Kyi

Anupma Kaushik

Introduction: Her Life and Family

AUNG SAN SUU KYI was born on 19 June 1945 in Rangoon. She derives her name from three relatives- Aung San from her father, Suu from her paternal grandmother and Kyi from her mother Khin Kyi. She is frequently called Daw Suu by the Burmese or Amay Suu, *i.e.* Mother Suu by some followers (Gandhi was called Bapu by his followers). Suu Kyi is the third child and only daughter of Aung San considered to be the father of modern-day Burma. Her father founded the modern Burmese army and negotiated Burma's independence from the British Empire in 1947, but was assassinated by his rival in the same year. She grew up with her mother, Khin Kyi and two brothers, Aung San Lin and Aung San Oo, in Rangoon. Aung San Lin died at age eight, when he drowned in an ornamental lake on the grounds of the house. Her elder brother immigrated to San Diego, California, becoming a United States citizen. After Aung San Lin's death, the family moved to a house by Inya Lake where Suu Kyi met people of very different backgrounds, political views and religions. She was educated in Methodist English High School for much of her childhood in Burma, where she was noted as having a talent for learning languages.[1]

Suu Kyi's mother gained prominence as a political figure in the newly formed Burmese government. She was appointed Burmese ambassador to India in 1960, and Aung San Suu Kyi followed her there, she studied in the Convent of Jesus and Mary School, New Delhi and graduated from Lady Shri Ram college in New Delhi with a degree in politics in 1964. Suu Kyi continued her education at St Hugh's college, Oxford obtaining a B.A. degree. After graduating, she lived in New York City and worked at the United Nations primarily on budget matters for three years. In late 1971, Aung San Suu Kyi married Michael Aris, a scholar of Tibetan culture living in Bhutan. The following year she gave birth to their first son, Alexander Aris in London; their second son, Kim, was born in 1977. Subsequently, she earned a PhD at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London in 1985. She was elected as an Honorary Fellow in 1990. For two years she was a Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies (IIAS) in Shimla,

India. She also worked for the government of the Union of Burma.[2]

In 1988 Suu Kyi returned to Burma, at first to tend for her ailing mother but later had to lead the pro-democracy movement. Aris' visit in Christmas 1995 turned out to be the last time that he and Suu Kyi met, as Suu Kyi remained in Burma and the Burmese dictatorship denied him any further entry visas. Aris was diagnosed with cancer in 1997 which was later found to be terminal. Despite appeals from prominent figures and organizations, including the United States, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Pope John Paul II, the Burmese government would not grant Aris a visa saying that they did not have the facilities to care for him, and instead urged Aung San Suu Kyi to leave the country to visit him. She was at that time temporarily free from house arrest but was unwilling to depart, fearing that she would be refused re-entry if she left, as she did not trust the military junta's assurance that she could return. Aris died on his 53rd birthday on 27 March 1999. Since 1989, when Aung San Suu Kyi was first placed under house arrest, she had seen her husband only five times, the last of which was for Christmas in 1995. She was also separated from her children, who live in the United Kingdom, but starting in 2011, they have visited her in Burma.[3]

Political Life, Vision and Influences

Coincident with Aung San Suu Kyi's return to Burma in 1988, the long-time military leader of Burma and head of the ruling party General Ne Win, stepped down. Mass demonstrations for democracy followed that event on 8 August 1988 (8–8–88, a day seen as auspicious), which were violently suppressed in what came to be known as the 8888 Uprising. On 26 August 1988, she addressed half a million people at a mass rally in front of the Shwedagon Pagoda in the capital, calling for a democratic government. However, in September, a new military junta took power.[4]

Aung San Suu Kyi founded her party, National League for Democracy (NLD) on 27 September 1988.[5] She serves as its General Secretary. In the 1990 general elections, the NLD won 59% of the national votes and 81% (392 of 485) of the seats in Parliament, although she herself was not allowed to stand as a candidate in the elections and was detained under house arrest before the elections. Some claim that Aung San Suu Kyi would have assumed the office of Prime Minister; however, the results were nullified and the military refused to hand over power, resulting in an international outcry.[6]

She was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1991 for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human right. She used the Nobel Peace Prize's $1.3 million to establish a health and education trust for the Burmese people. Around this time, Suu Kyi chose non-violence as an

expedient political tactic. To quote her: "I do not hold to non-violence for moral reasons, but for political and practical reasons". However, non-violent action as well as civil resistance in lieu of armed conflict is also a political tactic in keeping with the overall philosophy of her Theravada Buddhist religion. She is influenced by both Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and also by Buddhist concepts. Her aim in politics is to work for democratization of Burmese political system.[7] She believes that democratic institutions and practices are necessary for the guarantee of human rights and for a free, secure and just society where Burmese people are able to realize their full potential.[8]

One of her most famous speeches are "Freedom from Fear", which began: "It is not power that corrupts, but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it." She also believes fear spurs many world leaders to lose sight of their purpose. She once said, "Government leaders are amazing, so often it seems they are the last to know what the people want."[9]

Her party advocates a non-violent movement towards multi-party democracy in Burma, which has been under military rule from 1962. Her party also supports human rights (including broad-based freedom of speech), the rule of law, and national reconciliation. In a speech on 13 March 2012, Suu Kyi demanded, in addition to the above, independence of the judiciary, full freedom for the media, and increasing social benefits including legal aid. She also demanded amendments to the constitution of 2008, drafted with the input of the armed forces. She stated that its mandatory granting of 25 per cent of seats in parliament to appointed military representatives is undemocratic.[10] She also favors safeguarding the rights of ethnic minorities in a real democratic union based on equality, mutual respect and trust.[11]

In 2001, the Burmese government permitted NLD office branches to re-open throughout Burma and freed some imprisoned members. In May 2002, NLD's General Secretary, Aung San Suu Kyi was again released from house arrest. She and other NLD members made numerous trips throughout the country and received support from the public. However, on their trip to Depayin township in May 2003, dozens of NLD members were shot and killed in a government sponsored massacre. It's General Secretary, Aung San Suu Kyi and her deputy, U Tin Oo were again arrested. From 2004, the government prohibited the activities of the party. In 2006, many members resigned from NLD, citing harassment and pressure from the Armed Forces. The NLD boycotted the general elections held in November 2010 because many of its most prominent members including Suu Kyi were barred from standing. The laws were written in such a way that the party would have had to

expel these members in order to be allowed to run. This decision, taken in May, led to the party being officially banned. The election was won in a landslide by the military-backed Union Solidarity and development Association (USDP) and was described by US President Barrack Obama as "stolen".[12]

Discussions were held between Suu Kyi and the Burmese government during 2011, which led to a number of official gestures to meet her demands. In October, around a tenth of Burma's political prisoners were freed in an amnesty and trade unions were legalized. On 18 November 2011, following a meeting of its leaders, the NLD announced its intention to re-register as a political party in order to contest 48 by-elections necessitated by the promotion of parliamentarians to ministerial rank.[13] In April 2012 she was elected to the Pyithu Hluttaw, the lower house of the Burmese parliament, representing the constituency of Kawhmu. Her party also won 43 of the 45 vacant seats in the lower house and she became the leader of the opposition in the lower house.[14]

Fearless Non-violence against Violence

Aung San Suu Kyi had to face an opposition which was much stronger in comparison to her in brute force, as it consisted of the might of the government of Burma. They tried to scare her and her supporters in all possible ways. On 9 November 1996, the motorcade that she was traveling in with other leaders of her party National League for Democracy like Tin Oo and U Kyi Maung, was attacked in Yangon. About 200 men swooped down on the motorcade, wielding metal chains, metal batons, stones and other weapons. The car that Aung San Suu Kyi was in had its rear window smashed, and the car with Tin Oo and U Kyi Maung had its rear window and two backdoor windows shattered. It is believed the offenders were members of the USDA who were allegedly paid 500 kyats (@ USD $0.5) each to participate. The NLD lodged an official complaint with the police, and according to reports the government launched an investigation, but no action was taken. On 30 May 2003 in an incident similar to the 1996 attack on her, a government-sponsored mob attacked her caravan in the northern village of Depayin, murdering and wounding many of her supporters. Aung San Suu Kyi fled the scene with the help of her driver, Ko Kyaw Soe Lin, but was arrested upon reaching Ye-U. The government imprisoned her at Insein prison in Rangoon. After she underwent a hysterectomy in September 2003, the government again placed her under house arrest in Rangoon.[15]

Aung San Suu Kyi has been placed under house arrest for 15 of the past 21 years, on different occasions, since she began her political career,

during which time she was prevented from meeting her party supporters and international visitors. The Burmese government detained and kept Suu Kyi imprisoned because it viewed her as someone "likely to undermine the community peace and stability" of the country, and used both Article 10(a) and 10(b) of the 1975 State Protection Act (granting the government the power to imprison people for up to five years without a trial), and Section 22 of the "Law to Safeguard the State Against the Dangers of Those Desiring to Cause Subversive Acts" as legal tools against her. She continuously appealed her detention, and many nations and figures continued to call for her release and that of 2100 other political prisoners in the country. Suu Kyi was also accused of tax evasion for spending her Nobel Prize money outside of the country. In an interview, Suu Kyi said that while under house arrest she spent her time reading philosophy, politics and biographies that her husband had sent her. The media were also prevented from visiting Suu Kyi, as occurred in 1998 when journalist Maurizio Giuliano, after photographing her, was stopped by customs officials who then confiscated all his films, tapes and some notes. In contrast, Suu Kyi did have visits from government representatives and foreign dignitaries and her physician. She had periods of poor health and as a result was hospitalized. On second May 2008, after cyclone Nargis hit Burma, Suu Kyi lost the roof of her house and lived in virtual darkness after losing electricity in her dilapidated lakeside residence. She used candles at night as she was not provided any generator set.[16]

On third May 2009, an American man, identified as John Yettaw, swam across Inya lake to her house uninvited and was arrested when he made his return trip three days later. On thirteenth May, Suu Kyi was arrested for violating the terms of her house arrest because the swimmer, who pleaded exhaustion, was allowed to stay in her house for two days before he attempted the swim back. Suu Kyi was later taken to Insein prison, where she could have faced up to five years confinement for the intrusion. The trial of Suu Kyi and her two maids began. During the ongoing defense case, Suu Kyi said she was innocent. The defense was allowed to call only one witness (out of four), while the prosecution was permitted to call fourteen witnesses. The court rejected two character witnesses, NLD members Tin Oo and Win Tin, and permitted the defense to call only a legal expert.[17]

Despite all of the horrors she has been through, she is neither bitter nor an angry person. She acknowledges that the teachings of Buddhism do affect the way she thinks and clarifies that when she started out in politics, in the movement for democracy, she started out with the idea that this should be a process that would bring greater happiness, greater harmony and greater peace to her nation. And this cannot be done if

she was going to be bound by anger and by desire for revenge. So she never thought that the way to go forward was through anger and bitterness, but through understanding, trying to understand the other side, and through the ability to negotiate with people who think quite differently from you and to agree to disagree if necessary and to somehow bring harmony out of different ways of thinking.[18]

National and International Support

Suu Kyi's and her party's massive victories in all the elections have shown how popular she is in her multi ethnic country. One remarkable feature of her political campaign has been the appeal she had for the country's various ethnic groups, traditionally at odds with each other.[19]

Suu Kyi received immense support from international community. She was given the Rafto Prize by Norway; the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought by European parliament; the Nobel Peace Prize; the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding by India; the International Simon Bolivar Prize by Venezuela; Honorary Citizenship by Canada; and the Wallenberg Medal by University of Michigan.[20]

The United Nations (UN) has attempted to facilitate dialogue between the government and Suu Kyi. However, the results from the UN facilitation have been mixed. Razali Ismail, UN special envoy to Burma, met with Aung San Suu Kyi, but resigned from his post the following year, partly because he was denied re-entry to Burma on several occasions.[21]

The UN has called upon the Burmese government to release Suu Kyi many a times along with other world leaders, nations and organizations. United Nations Working Group for Arbitrary Detention published an opinion that Aung San Suu Kyi's deprivation of liberty was arbitrary and in contravention of Article 9 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights 1948, and requested that the authorities in Burma set her free, but the authorities ignored the request.[22]

There have been demonstrations in support of her in various places in the world and she has received vocal support from the European Union, USA, Australia, India, Israel, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. Nobel laureates like Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama, Shirin Ebadi, Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Mairead Corrigan, Rigobert Menchu, Elie Wiesel, Barrack Obama, Betty Williams, Jody Williams, and Jimmy Carter have supported her.[23]

The Burmese government could resist the pressure of the international community due to the support from China. To illustrate, the US-sponsored United Nations Security Council resolution condemning Burma as a threat to international security, was defeated

because of strong opposition from China, which has strong ties with the military junta. China later voted against the resolution, along with Russia and South Africa.[24]

Burma's relaxing stance, in recent times, such as releasing political prisoners, was influenced in the wake of successful recent diplomatic visits by the US and other democratic governments, urging or encouraging the Burmese towards democratic reform. The Japanese government spent 2.82 billion yen in 2008 and has promised more Japanese foreign aid to encourage Burma to release Aung San Suu Kyi in time for the elections. The New York Times suggested that the military government might have released Suu Kyi because it felt it was in a confident position to control her supporters after the election.[25]

Suu Kyi and Gandhi

Suu Kyi has herself clearly indicated the sources of her inspiration: principally Mahatma Gandhi but also her father and her religion. Her father too was an admirer of Gandhi. She was not always uncritical of Gandhi.[26] There are striking similarities between Suu Kyi and Gandhi. Both loved their country and countrymen so much that they dedicated their lives to the cause of their respective nations. Both had to sacrifice their family and professional lives for the same cause. Both were imprisoned for long periods by their detractors. Their detractors in both cases were/are militarily much stronger but morally much weaker. However, in both cases, the opposition had respect for the two individuals. Both were educated in India and UK and could communicate well in English. Both are revered by their countrymen and respected by the international community. However they are much more similar in their thinking as both share belief in positive energy of courage, peace and non violence by overcoming negative energies such as fear and anger. Both inspire a sense of confidence and hope in the fight for peace and justice. Both symbolize what humankind is seeking and mobilize the best in their followers. They unite deep commitment and tenacity with a vision in which the end and the means form a single unit. It's most important elements are: democracy, respect for human rights, reconciliation between groups, non-violence, and personal and collective discipline. Both believe in human dignity and went a long way towards showing how such a doctrine can be translated into practical politics. Both practiced what they preached: fearlessness. There are many examples of fearlessness shown by Gandhi and Suu Kyi. Gandhi had said that a satyagrahi bids goodbye to fear and practised it all his life.[27] One such occasion, where Suu Kyi, showed remarkable fearlessness was in 1988, when despite opposition by the government, Aung San Suu Kyi went on a speechmaking tour throughout the country.

She was walking with her associates along a street, when soldiers lined up in front of the group, threatening to shoot if they did not halt. Suu Kyi asked her supporters to step aside, and she walked on. At the last moment the major in command ordered the soldiers not to fire. Both also stand for a positive hope and give humanity confidence and faith in the power of good.[28] Gandhi has inspired Suu Kyi and many others all over the world[29] and Suu Kyi is doing the same- inspiring many all over the world.

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Contra Anderson

Antony Copley

THERE HAS TO be a response to Perry Anderson's three highly critical, hugely judgemental articles in the *London Review of Books* on modern India, Gandhi Centre Stage in Volume 34,No 13, 5 July, Why Partition?, No 14,19 July and After Nehru No 15, 2 August. Has he written on India before? The impression is of a Johnny - come - lately who, unencumbered by any prolonged engagement with India, and on the basis of a selective reading list, has felt empowered to make some extraordinarily tough interpretations. Has he any experience of visiting India? One has no sense of any long term concern for India's two extraordinary experiments, a developing economy and a mass democracy. There is a lack in these essays of any sentiment, of any attachment to the sub-continent. Many historians, development economists, political scientists felt a genuine concern for these struggles. Yet his dispassionate, analytical critique unnervingly reflects how many admirers of India are beginning to feel at the course India is now taking. These essays force us to reflect on whether the causes of this moral decline lie in a more distant past. Was, indeed, the Indian independence movement itself inherently flawed?

All one can do is take up the main ingredients of a critique of modern India even more damaging than that earlier highly controversial one by V S Naipaul. Anderson's is an underlying distaste for Hinduism and caste together with total scepticism at the myths of any unity in ancient India. His focus is on recent Indian history, with paradoxically a rather favourable assessment of the Raj, an almost instinctive dislike for both Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, together with a matching antipathy for the Congress party, blamed above all for the

Partition and exposed thereafter as a tyrannical regime in imposing territorial control, a story incorporating long accounts of the recent history of Kashmir, and the North East. There is less comment on the current embattled relationship with the Indian tribal peoples from Jharkhand down into Andhra Pradesh. Almost no one comes out well from this story, though EV Ramaswamy Naicker, Ambedkar and Nirad Chaudhuri are exceptions, and the Indian intelligentsia, whom he respects, though they are damned with faint praise. It is indicative of Anderson writing as an outsider that these three favoured writers were all in their way themselves outsiders to mainstream India.

Underpinning Anderson's mordant analysis is 'the idea of India', an Indian ideology. In terms of the present this is seen as comprised of democracy, secularity, and unity. It is rooted in the ancient majority religion of the subcontinent, Hinduism, and its caste system. If Anderson pays lip service to the achievement of high culture in Hinduism, clearly his sympathies lie with the mockery of that religion by the Tamil iconoclast, Ramaswamy Naicker. There is none of that fascination with Hinduism that comes from visiting Indian temples and witnessing the folk culture of its festivals, the experience of any visitor to India. He has little patience with defendants of the inherent tolerance in Hinduism and via Amartya Sen's claims for its pluralism seems to have stumbled on the idea of Wilhelm Halbfass (*India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding*) that its claims for tolerance may be a hidden form of intolerance. If anything goes, how can the assertions of other religions pose any kind of a challenge to Hinduism?

His is a genuine revulsion at the caste system, seen, to quote Ambedkar's paraphrase, as 'one of the purest negations of any notion of liberty and equality, let alone fraternity, imaginable.' Yet Anderson's understanding of caste as a highly hierarchical and inflexible system echoes that of the early administrators of the East India Company who saw in their over static version of the caste system the only way of making sense of the enormous complexities of Indian society. Only latterly does Anderson see that caste hierarchy as cracking and then but partially. He has no sense that over time there were substantial shifts in the power structure of the *varnas,* with the decline in status of the *kshatriyas,* and that there is considerable fluidity in the *jati* system, with all kinds of upwardly mobilising castes. One wonders also if he would be quite so well disposed towards Naicker if he knew how crude a kind of anti-Brahmin communalism he incited from the 1930's onwards. He may not know that Naicker started out as a Gandhian.

The other platform of an Indian ideology is the myth of unity in ancient India. No earlier imperial system, be it the Gupta, the Maurya or the Moghul, ever incorporated the whole of the subcontinent. This

is but stated as an aside. Yet one feels Anderson's dismissal of these myths is but tilting at windmills. The whole point of myths is their irrational hold over the imagination and the concepts of both an ancient unity and of Mother India were hugely compelling. In a way Anderson is all the time struggling to find some explanation as to why so grossly unequal a society has not gone the way of revolutionary Russia and China and elsewhere. How to explain this stability? In a telling insight, though one little followed up in the articles, Anderson reflects that it is hegemonic religion that explains the marginalisation of the left.

The essays are only marginally about British rule. Just a little oddly, though, the raj comes out rather well from the analysis. Any claim to the territorial integration of the sub-continent lay with British rule. Admittedly he sees it as a garrison state dependent on the Army. He almost downplays its most notorious abuse of martial rule, seeing General Dyer's 1919 massacre at Amritsar as eclipsed by the massacre of some 27 to 40 thousand Muslims in the military takeover of Hyderabad in 1948. Continuity rather than hiatus characterised the transfer of power, independent India simply taking over the steel frame of the ICS and all the repressive legislation that lay behind the assertion of imperial rule. However, Anderson is rightly tough on Attlee and Mountbatten and the accelerated pace of the transfer of power and partition, 'a good claim to be the most contemptible single act in the annals of empire.' But no mitigation is seen in Attlee having to a make a choice between the cost of holding onto Empire and setting up the welfare state. Anderson also overlooks that Mountbatten wanted to get home quickly to realise his primary ambition, to succeed where his father had failed, and become Admiral of the Fleet. One wonders if Anderson, if not quite a bedfellow of Niall Ferguson, given his contempt for political sentimentality, has a covert admiration for the *real politik* and tough -mindedness of the raj?

Gandhi is seen as the source of India's current malaise. Running as a *leit –motiv* through all three articles is Gandhi's role in shaping Congress policy. This is an odd emphasis given the widespread recognition that Gandhi has become but a figure head in India today, though Anderson is aware of this. Arguably Indian policy has been diametrically opposed to all that he stood for. All he grants to Gandhi is 'a rare constellation of abilities as a political leader', and demonstrates his skill in fashioning a more broad based all India party. He does so in the rather schematic way of Judith Brown, of the party extending its reach to ever more grass roots levels, an interpretative approach that bypasses the view that it was rather Gandhi's exceptional charisma that reached out to the sheer multifariousness of India. The thrust of Anderson's critique of Gandhi is his Hinduization of Indian politics:

'Gandhi's doctrines were consigned to the museum but his saturation of politics with Hindu pathos lived on.' He seems to think that Kathryn Tidrick's account of Gandhi's rather oddball initial version of Hinduism (*Gandhi: A Political and Spiritual Life*) is new. In fact, his indebtedness to western spiritualities is old hat. Anderson is clearly quite unaware of the way Gandhi subsequently re-articulated the Hindu value system in a highly innovatory way and came to see in *artha* or politics the means of salvation or *moksha* (See Anthony J Parel *Gandhi's Philosophy and the Quest for Harmony).* Even so, Anderson has a point that in bridging the gap between religion and politics Gandhi crossed that fatal rubicon in Indian political life, though Aurobindo and Tilak were his predecessors. Whether we should go along with his view of Gandhi as utterly solipsistic and believing that whatever he believed at the time was right or, alternatively, see him as a man often racked with doubt and subjecting every decision to endless scrutiny is another matter. He sees Gandhi as above all the conservative: 'revolution was a greater danger than the Raj.' He would, for example, Anderson claims, do anything to forestall an alliance between Muslims and Dalits in the 1930's. But even Joseph Lelyveld in his controversial biography (*Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and his Struggle with India)* equally sympathetic to Ambedkar, concedes there was something heroic about Gandhi's nation -wide campaign in 1934 against untouchability. And nothing here does justice to Gandhi's exceptional commitment in his ashrams to social equality. There is no recognition that his seemingly perverse attitudes to sexuality and his celibacy might have been a symbolic way of challenging India's burgeoning population growth. He has no explanation for why Gandhi is so widely respected outside India. However corrosive the attempt, Anderson fails to demystify Gandhi, that strange mix of the all too human and the saintly.

If Anderson has some respect for Gandhi, for Jawaharlal Nehru he has nothing but contempt. He is the supreme example of those subject to the myths of ancient India: 'no one was more responsible for the fantasies of sempiternal India, stretching back millenia across every yard of land claimed by the Raj than Nehru himself.' He sees a Barbara Cartland saccharine streak in Nehru's affection for Kashmir, the source of his utterly ruthless absorption of the state within the Union and the later highly repressive policies in its control. 'What he never acquired,' in Anderson's opinion,' however was a modicum of literary taste and mental discipline.' He has a talent for alighting on damning judgments and quotes Sarvepalli Gopal's verdict that Nehru's was 'a commonplace mind.' Was he really so intellectually vacuous? Can this really be the same Nehru, seen as the most glamorous figure in the non-aligned movement? Anderson

has no truck with those who fell under Nehru's spell as a visionary for Indian development, his seeing in a strong state the means to steer through a programme of industrial development. Admittedly, if for rather different reasons, one now recognises the ambiguities of this policy and the way that many got caught up in a development project to their detriment, above all the tribal peoples. Anderson concedes that Nehru passed on a democratic system. Surrounded though by a sycophantic court and with no opposition to speak off, he had had no cause to turn dictatorial. There is no awareness here of how it was out of a profound loneliness that Nehru sought out the admiration of the masses. Anderson reserves his supreme contempt for Nehru's allowing the rise of a political dynasty, 'its name as fake as the knock off of a prestige brand'. Yet here he shares in Tariq Ali's rather puerile attack on the Nehru dynasty, colluding with that silliness of Indian celebrity politics. Such invective, though, does rub off some of the shine on Nehru's reputation.

With the exception once again of Ambedkar and possibly of Subhas Chandra Bose, but he was dead by the time, no one emerges unscathed from Anderson's account of partition. The Raj is exonerated from the usual nationalist argument that it all stemmed from its strategy of divide and rule. He plausibly argues that such a division was against its best interest of stability and its preference was for inter-communal alliances such as the Unionist party in the Punjab, a coalition of Muslim, Sikh and Hindu notables. But at the last the raj dropped its erstwhile ally, the Muslim League and saw in the Congress its best chance of preserving the territorial integrity of India, its leading claim to any favourable imperial legacy, and the best prospect for shoring up its continuing geo-political needs in Asia. The betrayals and opportunism this entailed has already been mentioned. But in Anderson's analysis the responsibility for partition lies with the Congress party. Once again it all goes back to Gandhi with his Hinduizing Congress. There are some pretty devastating quotations from Gandhi endorsing violence between the communities, if as the necessary means of guaranteeing unity, and his approving military intervention in Kashmir. Even so, Anderson leaves out that it was Gandhi's passionate plea that Pakistan receive its fair share of assets that led to his murder by a Hindu fanatic. Nehru's two serious errors of judgement, scorning the Muslim League's joining the Congress government in the United Provinces in 1937 and withdrawing support for the Cabinet Mission's federal plan in 1946 are well known. But surprisingly Anderson does not highlight why Nehru sought a strong state , if needs be at the expense of conceding Pakistan, but merely stresses his grab for territory. I

suspect it is just out of ignorance that he overlooks an endeavour by one Congress leader to anticipate partition in the ever active mind of Rajagopalachari, a plan that he tried to get Jinnah and Gandhi to work through together in 1944. (See his pamphlet *The Way Out*, OUP 1944.) Jinnah himself comes out better than the Congress leadership and Anderson is favourable to what he quite probably reads rightly as his real preference, Ayesha Jalal's theory, that he favoured all along a loose federal structure over separation. But his was too much the legal mind - set and he fatally misread the Kashmir situation, assuming that usual constitutional procedures should prevail. Anderson likewise sees his concept of two nations as mere myth. One can but share Anderson's sense of outrage at the holocaust brought on by partition and the need to find someone to blame. If partition has now the feel of the inevitable, its horrific outcome could surely have been mitigated.

Out of the ruthless drive by the Congress party, as Anderson sees it, to retain as much of the subcontinent as possible lay the seed for future punitive action. Almost more space is devoted to the way Nehru's government imposed control over Kashmir and the North East than any other matter. He also gives the lie, based on the report that Maulana Azad insisted on at the time, and later to be suppressed, to a peaceful takeover of Hyderabad in 1948. He highlights the 1958 Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 'the most sanguinary single piece of repressive legislation in the annals of liberal democracy,' licensing the murder of any political protest group of more than five in number, and granting complete immunity to members of the armed forces involved. In 1961 it became a legal offence even to question the territorial integrity of India, with the risk of three years in prison. Anderson favours self -determination for the Kashmiri people and the tribal populations of the North East. Yet it became all too apparent how rhetorical was India's claim to terrritorial integrity as laid down by the McMahon line when Nehru recklessly challenged China over its claim to Aksai Chin. The fundamental vanity of Nehru's court was exposed and here certainly Nehru's reputation was damaged. No doubt more needs to be said about the civil war currently being waged against the Maoist led rebellion of the tribal population in eastern and central India.

Maybe it is this brutal imposition of Indian rule that sours Anderson's description of two vital aspects of modern India, its secularism and its democracy. He struggles to make sense of that peculiar Indian version of secularism which stands for mutual respect between faiths. He sees instead the serious neglect of Muslim interests as exposed by the 2006 Sachar report. How can any

secularism be valid when Muslims are so underrepresented in administration, excluded from the Army and Security Services, and have become but second class citizens at the bottom of the pile in all indices on education, health and the like? 'In mechanics such as these,' Anderson asserts, 'Indian secularism is Hindu confessionalism by another name.' In the end he throws in the towel and falls back on that western version of secularism as *laicité:* 'there cannot be a genuinely secular party or state unless it is willing to confront religion, suspicion and bigotry rather than truckle to them.' Here he is at one with Ambedkar and Ramaswamy Naicker. But equally he is flying in the face of India realities.

Anderson is not impressed by claims to 'miraculism' in India's mass democracy. It is only unique in terms of its scale. He is sceptical about India's adoption of the Westminster model of first past the post. Here a new villain appears, the civil servant, Benegal Rau, who is seen as wilfully tilting the decision in its favour. It guaranteed Congress domination of the Lok Sabha till 1977, despite never receiving more than 45% of the vote. If this was less true at State level, it did not matter for Congress could always resort to President's rule. Anderson never quite clarifies what alternative he would recommend, be it proportional representation or a return to the raj's separate electorates. He has nothing but contempt for the record of the Congress party and believes the best thing it can do is to follow Gandhi's recommendation-a rare pat on the back for him-and go into liquidation: 'its exit from the scene would be the best single gift Indian democracy could give itself.' Rather oddly Anderson is more impressed by the Hindu nationalist party, the BJP, seen as a properly structured party and with a more transparent agenda .He refutes any interpretation of it as fascist. He sees its notorious campaign over the Ayodhya mosque that led to its demolition in 1992 as a brave recourse to mass mobilisation. Its rise to power as a response to economic liberalisation is well put: 'anomic modernisation unleashed a classic reaction of religious compensation.' Observations on the corrupt and criminal nature of Indian politics are valid. Again, just a little oddly, he praises the Supreme Court. Given the death of other political structures this 'self-recruiting court' has stepped in to deal with the political malaise, in the process becoming 'the most powerful judiciary in the world.'

But the enigma of India politics lies in the role of caste. As Anderson ruefully recognises, castes do no function like classes. It was only when powerful agrarian castes broke away from Congress after the Emergency regime that caste becomes a more dominant aspect of Indian politics. The breakthrough came with the Mandal

Commission –its recommendations became law in 1992-which hugely extended positive discrimination to OBCs (Other Backward Castes) and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (the Dalits and Adivasis) in the administration. So why did this not radicalise Indian political life? It is the predicament that Anderson above all faces and I suspect it is why in the end he turns his back on India in disgust. But his explanation is fascinating. One obvious reason is that the injection of caste into politics compounds the fragmentation of India already introduced by the introduction of the linguistic state, with some 500 competing *jatis* weakening the likelihood of mass protest. Castes are themselves inherently hierarchical and this adds another restraint on change. Caste organisations are seen as being bought off with merely symbolic concessions, a share in administrative posts, a drop in the ocean of employment. The one genuinely progressive measure was the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, NREGA, opening up the possibility of rural employment and to be heavily oversubscribed, popular with all castes. The Congress called it 'Gandhian' and tried to claim it as its own and no doubt this assisted its return to power in 2009.Anderson is led to a very surprising conclusion: 'castes are more than ever pediments of Indian democracy': 'no longer passive but vigilant, and yet more radically segmenting its vast electorate they are what most fundamentally stabilises it.' Divide and rule with a vengeance. One can just about forgive Anderson's pun that this was 'a caste-iron democracy.' But Anderson fails to point out that these makeshift opportunist caste -based electoral alliances have a strong track record of voting out State level governments on grounds of corruption and broken promises. The recent demise of Ms Mayawati in the UP is a good example.

Seemingly an exception to Anderson's generally negative response to modern India is his favourable appraisal of its intelligentsia: 'India possesses a range and quality of minds that perhaps no developing society in the world, and not in any developed ones, can match.' It has morphed into an oppositionist one. Yet Anderson then goes on to claim that it has failed to address the weaknesses of Indian secularism, partly out of a fear of discrediting Gandhi, the father of the nation. They have not adequately challenged the 'liberticide' in India's arsenal of repressive legislation. They cannot bring themselves to admit the injustices in Kashmir and rationalise the status quo of the Line of Control. They are not ready to follow Arundhati Roy in her stance against both the policy in Kashmir and towards the tribal peoples. Amartya Sen will have to respond to the charge that his interpretation of Indian

secularism is 'spavined' and I doubt if the cultural historian, Ashis Nandy, sees himself as neo-Nativist. But it will be for the Indian intellectuals to reply to these perverse, provocative and brilliant essays.

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Book Reviews

K T S Sarao, *The Decline of Buddhism in India*, **Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd, Delhi, 2011, 327 pages, Price Rs. 895.**

The Preface of the book itself provides an indication of the purpose of writing this book and the difficulties in delineating factors that caused the decline of Buddhism in India. This is because of (in the words of the author) the "dearth of archaeological material and the stunning silence of indigenous literature on the subject …"

In view of these difficulties K T S Sarao must be complimented for taking up this arduous exercise of bringing out a book that is well researched and lucidly written and answers a profound puzzle of Buddhist decline despite India being the birthplace of this great religion.

Sarao writes that the subject of this decline has remained largely neglected and there is only one full length book published (in English) in 1954 dealing with this question. New data and new approaches have given the subject a fresh perspective and impetus to Sarao to take up this task. He mentions at the very outset that Buddhism was never a state religion in India and India was never a Buddhist country. Even during the *Ashokan* period, which is considered the most glorious period for Buddhism, the majority of the population was not Buddhist.

The author refers to a few Chinese scholars who visited India: *Faxian* (CE 399-414) *Xuanzang* (CE 629- 644) and *Ou Kong* (751-790) who have given accounts of the status of Buddhism in different parts of the country. According to them Buddhism was in a state of decline even at that time and in some parts like *Samkasya* and *Vaisali* it was almost extinct. Sarao has included several tables in the book depicting the conditions of Buddhism in various *countries* (regions) of India. These tables depict the regions where Buddhism was strong, or where it was holding out and where it was clearly losing ground during *Xuanzang's* time. These tables have been drawn on the basis of number of monasteries, monks, Hindu temples etc. It is also stated that despite the fact that people esteemed and revered Buddhist learning, Buddhism was declining

in several regions during this period.

It is also stressed that Buddhism was never very powerful in India as a whole – it existed only in some parts and even in these regions it was significantly an urban phenomenon with hardly any presence in the rural areas. The reason is that Buddhism prospered due to its dependence on trade and commerce relations. This helped in creating a powerful class of merchants, bankers and privileged strata of society as evidenced by excavations, *Jataka* stories and other evidence. The author suggests that the decline of Buddhism in urban areas 'sapped some of the socially vital foundations of the Buddhist movement.'

Another factor, as indicated by the author, is the emergence of Islam in parts of India especially in Sind, Punjab and Northwest India. He states that Islam was most successful in those regions where Buddhism had been strongest.

Professor Sarao has highlighted the role of Sufism in India and how it has helped large scale conversion to Islam and the resultant decline of Buddhism especially in East Bengal (Bangladesh today). According to him there were three categories of conversion – individual conversion, group conversion, assimilation and acculturation. He writes that individuals including many Buddhists embraced Islam voluntarily due to personal conviction and expected benefits. According to Sarao, Sufism helped over time in the process of cultural compatibility with Islam.

Another development that took place was 'the growth of Mahayana and devotionalistic elements in Buddhism [that] completely transformed the original atheistic Buddhism into a powerful theological religion....' This helped Buddhism come near the *Bhakti* or devotional aspects of Hinduism resulting in the absorption of Buddhism into the broad cult of *Brahmanical Hinduism*. In fact, Buddha and his statues were to be seen in many Hindu temples by giving Buddha the status of a Hindu avatar and by offering gifts to Buddhist monks. Deification of Buddha and adoption of Sanskrit language in liturgical texts also led to Buddhist identity becoming nebulous, resulting in the emasculation of Buddhism.

A related factor with regard to Mahayana school was the increasing levels of indiscipline and corruption in this sect. According to the author this sect opened up the gates of the *sangha* to persons of dubious backgrounds and allowed some vulgar practices to take place. There are indications in certain Buddhist texts and *Jatakas* that some monks were 'cheats, frauds, false witnesses and unscrupulous…. Many undesirable characters put on the robes of a monk because they found living easier inside the sangha than on the outside…" There was also

a movement towards *tantrism* in this sect that led to the weakening and degeneration of Buddhism.

Another factor responsible for the decline according to Sarao was the withdrawal of royal patronage and alleged persecution of Buddhist monks and destruction of their monasteries by certain *Brahmanical* kings like *Pusyamitra Sunga* and *Sasank.* Some Buddhist texts accuse *Pusyamitra Sunga* of not only withdrawing royal patronage but also destroying stupas, monasteries and massacre of Bhikhus. However, according to the author, some well known historians like R C Mitra, Romila Thapar and others are skeptical about the veracity of this persecution presented in Buddhist texts although there is no doubt that some friction and animosity between the Brahmanical kings and Buddhists did exist and the latter were despised and sometimes ridiculed. Archaeological evidence suggests that the celebrated stupa at Sanchi was enlarged during the Sunga period. Sarao sums up the situation in the following words 'It may not be possible to deny the fact that Pusyamitra showed no favour to the Buddhists but it is not certain that he persecuted them'.

The Arab and Turkish invasions also led to destruction of Hindu and Buddhist temples and libraries as quoted by different authors and demonstrated by archaeological evidence. Sarao, however, points out that first of all the number of such demolitions is much smaller than what often appears from certain references and second, the causes for these were not simple religious acts of vandalism and barbarities against Hindus and Buddhists, but often due to political and militaristic factors. In fact there are instances of Muslim invaders killing people and vandalizing properties of Muslim rulers to consolidate their power and hegemony. The decline of Buddhism in South India due to this factor is hard to explain since there were fewer attacks by Arabs or Turkish armies in this region.

In conclusion Prof Sarao has sketched a model by including the above principal factors as the main contributors for the decline. However, he points out that Buddhism has remained in place in the adjoining regions of the Indian plains – the Himalayas, Myanmar, Tibet and above all Sri Lanka. The author argues that outside Brahmanical-Hindu territories, Buddhism did not remain just a sect of Hinduism but acquired the 'character of a full -fledged religion, its clergy began to perform life-cycle rituals; it built a support base among the masses…'

This book is insightful and lucidly written and is a welcome addition to the scholarship on the decline of Buddhism in the country.

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The author has referred to a very large number of sources, both primary and secondary, as indicated in the extensive bibliography. Its appeal could have been enhanced if the author had provided some visuals like photographs or drawings of the state of affairs of the monasteries, *stupas* or libraries. Despite this minor limitation, the book will be extremely useful both for scholars as well as lay persons interested in knowing more about this great religion.

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