LIBERAL STUDIES

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PDEU has been promoted by partnership of Government, industry and energy to create a world class University in energy education and research with special focus on the oil and gas sector. The university has further expanded its programs to address the need for trained human resource in the domains of engineering, management and humanities. It intends to broaden the opportunities for students and professionals to develop core subject knowledge which are duly complemented by leadership training interventions, thereby helping the students to make a mark in the global arena.

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PDEU has been established by Gujarat Energy Resource Management Institute (GERMI) as a private university through the State Act enacted on 4 April 2007.

School of Liberal Studies (SLS)

PDEU has launched School of Liberal Studies which currently offers degree programs in UG, PG and Ph.D. that equips a student to develop an array of intellectual skills, a variety of methodologies and ways of understanding our changing world, and a broad base of varied knowledge. In turn, such a Liberal Education establishes an invaluable foundation for more specialized study in one's major or in one of the professions, and for a life-long affinity for learning and continuing intellectual development.

The course imparts classical education in various fields like art, literature, languages, music, dramatics, philosophy, politics, history, law, mathematics, science, business, commerce, communication and general studies. It emphasizes on the need to seek knowledge for promoting intellectual growth, creative expression and rational thought.

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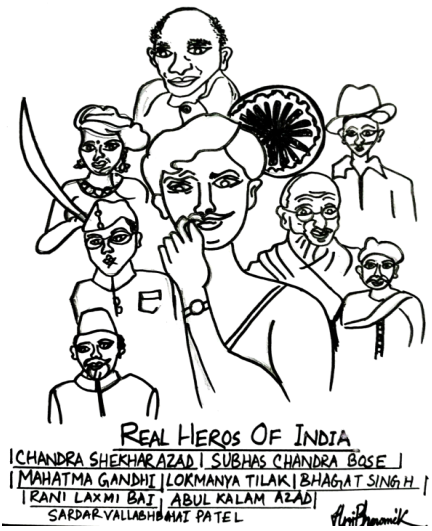
Concept Note

India is poised to become a leading global power and undoubtedly it is now "on the cusp of a major transformation" which will culminate in the emergence of a 'New India'. As India celebrates the 75th anniversary of its independence, it is imperative to take a stock of this long and arduous journey while introspecting on the future path and goal.



While the neighbourhood remains unstable, India marched ahead as a leading power in Asia with relative domestic political stability and unity. When the global economy plunged, the Indian economy remained relatively stable with ascending GDP growth and now aspires to be a 5-trillion economy. Over the last few years, many astounding changes have been in the offing: the economy is finally moving out of the negative legacies of the past and regained its position as the fastest-growing large economy in the world; when other powers are entangled with warfighting and rivalry, India's matured diplomacy helped to manoeuvre tricky geopolitical situations protecting its national interest best. If this trend continues, India will soon acquire its rightful place in the comity of nations. However, to meet the rising aspirations of the young population, India needs to achieve and sustain a high rate of GDP growth at least for the next three decades. The NITI Aayog has formulated a policy paper

on the 'Strategy for New India@75', released in 2018, emphasizing an essential aggressive strategy to transform the nation in the post-pandemic world.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while envisioning the 'New India', has advocated three core directives of policy formulation and implementation ecosystem: (1) development must become a mass movement, in which every Indian recognizes his/her role and also experiences the tangible benefits accruing to him/her in the form of better ease of living; (2) development strategy should help achieve broad-based economic growth to ensure balanced development across all regions and States and across sectors; and (3) the strategy when implemented will bridge the gap between public and private sector performance. All these have to be achieved by bringing innovation, technology, enterprise, and efficient management together.

The *Liberal Studies* journal in this issue invited the opinions of experts comprising senior intellectuals, young scholars, and strategists to ponder over various aspects of India's growth perspectives and aspirations. **Vidyut Joshi**, a well-known social activist opines that India has many achievements and laurels in the span of 75 years. The society and economy are opening up. We have and we are overcoming our traditional structural weaknesses. We have better infrastructure than what we had in 1947. If development means more options and more freedom, then that is gradually happening here. We have improved our position in almost all sectors. While keeping pace, we need to look into the development of sectors suitable to us: they could be, food technology, cow-based economy, sustainable and eco-farming, small industry, importance to local markets, redesign criteria of reservation, etc.

Dr. **Jeganaathan** provides a snapshot of India's incredible diplomatic journey during the last seven decades. He argues that for India to become a 'Vishwaguru' it has to make a concerted effort to reach its destiny. Becoming a 'Vishwaguru' cannot be a collective dream but it's a common destiny that every Indian should be aware of it. In the end, he suggests an action plan to achieve its destiny. On the other hand, Dr. **Divya Anand** and **Syed Mahmood Faiyaz Mehdi** argue for the need of shifting focus on the reduction of gender inequality in order to improve India's performance in overall human development.

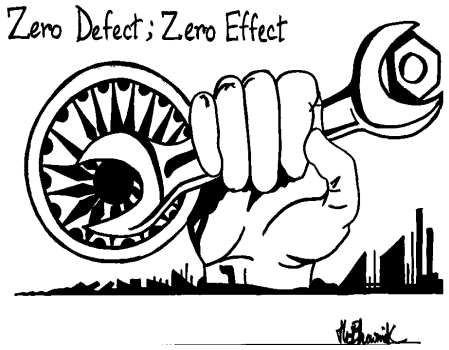
As India has taken the baton of G20 to promote and achieve a universal sense of 'Oneness', India needs to prioritise inclusive growth and development by promoting equality and women-led development. She further asserts that this is indeed a worthwhile objective to be achieved not only in India but also in other countries where gender inequality still looms large as an impediment to the development, growth, and progress of nation-states.

Towards Socio-Economic Transformation

Vidyut Joshi*

Introduction

India is celebrating 75 years of its Independence. A person becomes old, retired and incapable of worldly matters at this age. But in the case of a nation-society, 75 years is just the beginning of getting mature and take a stock of what has gone on in these 75 years. What have we achieved and what we could have achieved in this span? How and in what direction have the society, polity and economy been transformed? The approach adopted here is that of social sciences in general, that society and economy change from a traditional society to a modern society, from an agrarian economy to an industrial economy, from a closed society to an open society (in the Popperian sense of the term), from rural to urban, from joint family to nuclear family and from small primary community to a formal national and international community. Off course, Indian culture has its role in this change, but changes in culture, education and religion have not been described in this paper as part of the design.



When the British left India in 1947, they left behind a country that was riot-torn, poor, needy, less industrialized, rural-based, traditional, and unstable with 562 princely states, the British-dominated region and some tribal chiefdoms. Our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1947 was just Rs. 2.7 lakhs only. Our literacy rate was just 12 per cent in 1947. Our per capita annual income was just 249.6 rupees. Our population was 340 million (34 crores). At the dawn of

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Independence, India was not just a plural society, but it was a complex society, with more than 3000 main caste groups, more than 1600 language groups with 22 main languages, three land systems (Ryotwari, Zamindari and Community owned) resulting in three different patterns of land relations, various stages of economy existing simultaneously and many administrative patterns existing in this vast country.

This complexity was not to be found in any other country in the world. Even with all such plurality of pluralities, India, among all countries gaining independence after 1945, is the only country in the world that has maintained democracy consistently and that too keeping the fact in mind that India is the biggest democracy in the world. It should be noted that many countries of Asia have fallen prey to autocracy and /or dictatorship except India. Perhaps, it is the plurality of pluralities that has not allowed one group or a single ruler to dominate. No single ethnic group can become dominant here. There were many opinions and directions on any important issue. So, debating democratic India could become a reality, in Amartya Sen's parlance. Though we could not develop as fast as some other countries with monolithic structures could, off course, complexity and controversies did not make the journey smooth at many points in time. There were some violent movements, some coups, a few efforts to topple democracy and some battles with our neighbours. Hats off to the maturity of the Indian people and the statesmanship of our leaders that we could sustain as a democracy.

How to view this journey of 75 years? Well, we have adopted two approaches to explain this. One, a nation's or an institution's journey is never cumulative or incremental in sense of increment of years. As Jean Piaget mentions, an institution develops in stages. Thomas Kuhn also says that there is no cumulative development in science. There is always a paradigm shift. The change takes place through a change in basic pattern over a period of time. So, we have to divide India's journey into different stages. In this case, we have divided the journey into three different stages: (1) the nation-building phase (1947-1974); (2) the instability phase (1974-1999); and (3) the identity phase (1999 onwards). In fact, a generation changes every 25 years. Our second approach is about drivers of change. If we consider society as a wider system, then the first change occurs in economic and political systems. The changes in the politico-economic context provide the impetus for the transformation in other systems. This being so, whenever there was a change in the politico-economic context there was a transformation in Indian society. The journey has been divided into three phases considering changes in politico-economic contexts.

The Nation Building Phase (1947-1974)

The Contexts: The dominant contexts of this phase were: (A) the Constitution, (B) Land reforms (C) Political stability, and (D) Emergence of administrative patterns (central planning included). When we became independent, our leaders decided to have a democratic structure. The constitution assembly was formed, which gave us a lengthy constitution, assembling different features from different constitutions of the world. It is because of this that our constitution is open enough to incorporate different views and can be interpreted in different ways. This makes our democratic structure over a period of time and accommodates dissent. The basic features of our constitutions are: (1) Sovereignty, (2) Federal structure, (3) Democracy, (4) Republic, (5) parliamentary system, (6) Socialist, (7) Secular, (8) Welfare state, (9) Fundamental Rights and (10) Rule of law (Independent judiciary). The vision of the future Indian society that our leaders, who framed our constitution, had was that India will be a modern, advanced, free, open, democratic, egalitarian, secular and welfare-oriented society. Complex Indian society needed such an inclusive constitution. This constitution provided a future model for India. Still today, basic features have not been changed. Off course, the context world over has changed. There is no more emphasis on socialism and secularism in the wake of neo-liberalism and majoritarianism in recent times. However, the constitution has remained intact. Nation-building in this phase could become possible mainly because of this sort of constitution.

The political contexts in this phase provided stability. Indian National Congress (INC) had the legacy of the freedom movement. Most of the leaders who came to power had fought the freedom movement and were accepted by the people. INC had a strong legacy of working with people and had a strong organization. Not counting the twice interim prime- minister Gulzarilal Nanda, we saw three prime ministers and almost steady three cabinets in this phase. Jawaharlal Nehru, though not strictly believing in Gandhian thoughts, was a firm believer in socialism and secularism, and politically he was a charismatic leader acceptable to the masses. He became acceptable because of his pro-people stance. The stable political regime provided for the enactment of various laws, which were in line with our constitution. It also evolved a common administrative procedure that replaced multiple administrative practices of the pre-independence period.

Land reforms provided a great impetus for social transformation in this phase. Patidars in Saurashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh could become politically powerful because they became land owners after land reforms. Before

independence, we had three types of land systems: Ryotwari, Zamindari and Community ownership. This created three patterns of land relations in India. Ryotwari was a system where an individual farmer was the owner of the land and he was paying revenue to the state. The plain belt or the central belt of Gujarat had ryotwari. A farmer was relatively independent and was making his own development decisions. Another system was the Zamindari system. As referred to by R.R. Misra in his famous book *Effects of Land Reforms in Saurashtra* (1961), it had three further sub-types. The Girasdari, where a landlord was a small king and owner of the land of some villages.

Second was the Barkhalidari system, where mostly Brahmins and administrative caste groups were the owners of the land. They were not getting salaries in princely states but were given land. The produce of such land was not to be shared with the kings. In colloquial parlance, since they had not to give part of the product to the state and were exempted from bringing produce in the common pool (Khali), they became known as Barkhalidar.

Third was the Inamdari sub-system, where a religious institution or a saintly person was gifted (*inam*) land by the state to survive. All these three used to give land to the tenant for tilling and were charging one-half or one-third part of the produce. The areas under Zamindari became semi-feudal culture and society. In Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kachchh were mostly under the Zamindari system. It is because of this that Saurashtra has a different culture than the plain belt Gujarat. The third pattern was community ownership, where a group of people, mainly tribal villages were owners of the land of that area. The tribal or the village chief used to manage the land. In such cases, there was no particular owner. Such areas had remained more backward.

Land reforms were subjects of states and not that of the federal government. However, at the national level, we accepted the principle of 'land to thee tiller'. This was in line with Ryotwari. Various state governments carried out land reforms abolishing tenancy and providing ownership to the tiller. Land surveys were carried out in tribal areas and cultivator tribals were made owners. Now entire country had one system of land, ryotwari. This step was of great help in unifying India under one land law. It also abolished feuds and outlaws. It also provided the freedom to cultivators who got the freedom to take any crop that they want. This resulted in the prosperity of farmers. Patidars of Saurashtra and Kachchh became dominant in public affairs as a result of these land reforms.

There were debates about the direction of our economy also at the dawn of independence. The Bombay plan prepared by a group of industrialists wanted

to have a liberal economy. Jawaharlal Nehru wanted a socialist economy. The settlement was a mixed economy with basic industries under the public sector, the rest in the private sector with a preference for the cooperative sector. There was an emphasis on centralized planning. We had a planning commission for many years that used to make major economic decisions. In the first and second phases, the role of the planning commission was powerful.

Transformation: It was extremely difficult to abolish different policies and practices adopted by various princely states and the British. But the direction set by the constitution was clear. We were an old, ascriptive status-based, traditional, complex, rural, less literate, ill-equipped, society. The direction set by the constitution was more or less on the model of Europe with some sprinkling of welfarism. India was to have a free, democratic, egalitarian, harmonious, human rights-based open, liberal society and economy. However, political parties like INC and some leaders like Nehru, wanted India to be a socialist economy. Keeping some big and basic industries in the public sector, as a socialist gesture, the rest went to the private sector. There were only a few industrialists like Tata, Birla, Sarabhais, and Bajaj having their industries. At the dawn of independence. The rate of urbanization was just 10 per cent. There were no lights, no water taps and no phone connections in villages. No gutter connection except in major cities. No flush latrines even in big cities. Transportation was very weak. Major banks were only ten. There were no banks in villages. Agriculture was more or less traditional with a production-consumption economy. Irrigation facilities were to come up in 1970 AD.

At the dawn of independence, we had around 3000 main caste groups. Each one had some sub-caste groups. A Caste was more of a closed group, with ascribed status to its members. This being so, India was a close stratification system with a hierarchical caste system. Since this was more of a traditional society, people were getting their life chances based on birth. Your life chances were fixed the day you were born into a particular caste group. Even though there was a provision for government jobs, there were fewer claimants from so-called non-Savarna castes, as there was less education among such castes. In those days, government jobs were dominated by so-called 'Savarna' groups. Since the direction of change was from a closed society to an open society, it was expected that gradually caste would become weak and class would emerge. The reservation was given on a caste basis, as caste was more or less a homogenous and identifiable group. Initially, reservations were given for ten years. There was a provision for the review of reservations every ten years. After reviews, the caste-based reservations have been continued.

The family was joint. I.P. Desai's study of *Some Aspects of Family in Mahuva* (1956 fieldwork) indicates that even if you find parents and children staying separately in urban areas, the decision-making was joint. So, the jointness should be taken as functional jointness and not structural. So, there was a domination of the joint family system. When the decision-making is with elders, and not with one who is going to be affected by the decision, such a society is known as an authoritarian society. Even though we had formal democracy, the society and culture remained authoritarian in this phase. There was also a feudal hangover in some ex-feudal areas. Marriages were made in one's caste and that too in a preferred group by arrangement. As polity and education started opening up. Various groups which had remained away from them had started participating in political and educational processes. This was going to usher in new thoughts and processes in close and traditional society in the next phase.

The Instability Phase (1974-1999)

The Contexts: We had fought three wars in the earlier phase. We lost the first war against China in 1962, but we won the second (1965) and third (1971) wars against Pakistan. These wars had weakened us and the economy and polity had suffered. As such a poor country cannot afford war. The 1962 war shattered Nehru's dream of 'peaceful coexistence' and the policy of 'Panchsheel' and brought an end to the Nehru era after two years. The 1965 and 1971 wars were also going to bring a change in our foreign relations. The economy was going to suffer. The governance was going to be affected. The wars brought further animosity between India and Pakistan and between India and China. Our land routes pass through Pakistan and china. Our exports through land routes have suffered.

This phase is marred with political instability, emergency and movements. There were only three PMs in the first phase, whereas there were twelve Prime Ministers in this phase of 25 years. The instability and short spans of government also brought often changes in policies. Indira Gandhi's policy in the earlier phase (1971-1977) was a bit stable but was challenged by political opponents and movements. INC was getting weaker. After 1969, many regional parties started emerging in the country. Most such parties were the extension of the personality of a leader. They were least concerned with either party organization or party ideology. Their coming to power also brought a lack of consistency in policy.

One good thing that happened during this phase was the impact of the Panchayati Raj (PR) at the grassroots level. Off course, Panchayati Raj (PR)

law was enacted in 1963, but it became operational in many states in this phase. PR was more concerned with developmental activities like education, health and agriculture. At the grassroots level, these functions had an impact on socio-economic transformation One more context that must be mentioned is the construction of big dams in the earlier part of this phase.

Another notable political context in this phase was the appointment of the Mandal Commission to decide Other Backward Cast (OBC). The commission declared that castes in the lower hierarchy, as they form identifiable groups, are other backward classes. They also declared that the nature of their backwardness is social and educational backwardness. Hence such groups are known as Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC). This step also facilitated Mandal politics.

Transformation: With the help of developmental activities of PR, rural folk and especially lower sections started getting education and also jobs in the organized sector. This brought mobility and stratification in caste structures which were more or less homogeneous in the earlier phase. The dominance of certain caste groups in certain vocations was challenged. New occupations emerged, which did not belong to a particular caste group. Some people from so-called lower castes took education and got into non-traditional jobs that initiated occupational mobility among them. They became elites of the so-called 'backward castes'. This also brought the issue of identity. The backward elites became competitors of traditional elite groups. Almost every caste was getting stratified now in classes. Now Indian society was going to become a 'claste' (class + caste) society, in the next phase. We already had reservations for SCs and STs. Now various groups of OBC started demanding their quota and we had reservations for OBC. The Mandal Commission provided reservations to OBC on SEBC basis at central levels. Along with this, there were state OBC commissions in many states. Gujarat had its first OBC commission, known as the Baxi Commission and the caste that got OBC reservations, are known as Baxi commission castes. At the national level, we witnessed the Mandal movement and Mandal politics in this phase.

Three movements that took place in this phase must be mentioned. They were (1) the Bihar movement, (2) the Navnirman movement of Gujarat and (3) the Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) movement against emergency. The Dalit literature movement and some other movements emerged in this phase. All three main movements have been well-studied by scholars. (See Ghanshyam (ed): *Social Movements and the State*, 2002. Also see, Vidyut Joshi and Ruushiraj Upadhyay:

Social Movements, 2022). The movements show tensions in traditional polity and society and the emergence of new forms. Such movements brought qualitative changes in Indian polity and society.

We were more of an agrarian society and economy, in the first phase. We had a more or less production-consumption economy. We were facing a shortage of food grains and we had to import them from developed countries. This phase is marked by the Green Revolution; green revolution means irrigation, hybrid seed, fertilizer and pesticide. Farmers who benefitted from irrigation shifted more to cash crops, earned well and became part of the market economy. PR provided opportunities for people to participate in development decision-making. As a result, various groups developed leadership qualities and new leadership emerged. Most of such leaders were from so-called non-Savarna castes.

As some from the subaltern groups started emerging on the Indian scene, some sort of law-and-order problems started to emerge. This had two impacts. One, courts took a proactive role in human rights issues and started *suo moto* cases and Public Interest Litigations (PILs). Various labour laws like the Interstate Migrant workmen's Act and Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act were enacted in this phase. Famous Asiad case judgement was given in this phase. Trade unions and human rights activists took a position to save the constitution by supporting the rise of subaltern classes. There was a feeling that the structure of our constitution may not be saved by rising masses and many small-regional political parties. Though Naxalism was started in an earlier phase in 1969, it became powerful in this phase and spread its wings in eleven states. The second impact was the rise of many regional parties as part of sub-national interests. The rebirth of Jansangh in form of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has to be seen in this context. The organizing principle of the BJP was majoritarianism in form of Hinduism.

The dualism of agrarian and rural development is that when agriculture and villages develop, the farmers give up agriculture and shift to business and non-agricultural vocation. The villages that develop, ceases to be a village and starts becoming a town, increasing the process of urbanization. Thus, the green revolution facilitated the processes of industrialization and urbanization around 1980. Political instability and the rise in urbanization and industrialization were going to bring a new context to the Indian scene. We can say that from instability India shifts to political stability and identity.

When an educated man from a rural area gets a job in an urban area, he leaves his parents behind in villages and settles in an urban area with his wife

and children. Though structurally this is a nuclear family, functionally this is a joint family, as property in the village is still joint and important family decisions are taken by elders in villages.

The Identity Phase (1999-…)

The Contexts: The rise of regional parties with sectional aspirations on one side and the rise of a nationalist party (BJP) on another side provide the political context in this phase. This is a very crucial phase from the point of view of nation-building and the direction of the country. But kudos to the Indian democratic spirit that we see political stability in this phase, as we have seen only three prime ministers – AB Bajpayee, Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi – in this phase. Also, there were not many cabinet reshuffles in this phase. This provided consistency and stability in policy.

The rise of the BJP with majoritarianism in form of Hinduism was a natural response to the rise of sectional forces on the political front. As INC's organizing principle was national citizenship against colonialism, BJP's organizing principle was Hinduism. Now in the age of identity politics world over, the plank of Hinduism became relatively successful. There was an odd mixture of Hinduism and neo-liberalism in BJP's plank. Perhaps India, in this sense, is the best case of post-modernism.

On the economic front, India gives up its mixed economic policy in 1991 and willy-nilly accepts neo-liberalism. The results started becoming clear around 1999. On the world level there was an end of ideology and neo-liberalism became credo with liberalization, privatization and globalization. The role of government is now reduced in the economy and remained to the tune of providing infrastructure for development. 'Swadeshi' of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and earlier BJP was left in a lurch with the entry of multinational corporations (MNCs) and foreign direct investment (FDI). Various Public sector Undertakings (PSUs) were and are being privatized. So far as India is concerned, liberalization-privatization-globalization (LPG) provided for the rise in the growth rate. The 'Hindu' growth rate of 3-3.5 per cent of the first and second phases is now raised to 7-7.5 per cent.

With the acceptance of neo-liberalism on the economic front, the state gradually starts giving up its promises given in our constitution, viz. socialism, secularism and welfare. Now many welfare schemes are dropped. There are now fewer jobs in the governmental sector and more in the private sector. Sectors like education and health are also being privatized. Labour laws, enacted in the

first and second phases, are being changed to labour code, reducing the tripartite (employer, employees and government) structure of labour administration to almost a bipartite (employer and employees) one.

Transformation: In the wake of LPG, the results are clear on the economic front. First of all, PSUs are seen as white elephants and they are gradually being privatized. The history and cases are well known. It is for some researchers to evaluate the new model. In the same way, cooperative structures are also taking a back seat. Various coop banks are being closed down. Various producers' cooperatives (COOP) also become weak. Only Anand Milk Union Limited (AMUL) remains a successful cooperative with a brand value. Earlier there were cooperative leaders and trade union (TU) leaders. Now no political leader at the central or state level would identify him as TU or COOP leader. Majoritarianism and neo-liberalism have brought a qualitative change in the profiles of our leadership. They have been able to manage the dualism of majoritarianism and neo-liberalism.

The new development chances that take place are individual merit-based and not based on caste or religious basis as it used to happen before independence. As a result, every caste group is stratified on secular (income, education, occupation) lines. Now, caste structures are no more close structures than they used to be. Old features of the closed caste system- marriage within caste groups, caste-based occupations, caste customs, caste-based privileges – are waning away at least in cities. Around forty per cent of the Indian population now stays in cities. Average Indian citizens may not follow the old features of the old caste system. Still, the network of ascription-based caste groups survives in a new form. Now caste is a support system in my development process. My caste association will help me by giving me scholarships, tuition fees, books, Competitive exams training and even in getting political seats. I take advantage of my caste identity card in my developmental issues. I may not marry in caste, may not observe caste rules, may not even follow caste occupation. So, the caste groups are acquiring class features. That is why sociologists call such structures clast. It remains to be seen whether we become a casteless and class society in future.

In villages, it is still joint as land ownership in name of the elder. It is this jointness that keeps family structure intact in villages. But there also, some functions are taken over by market institutions. But we have a nuclear family, at least in cities. When migration from rural to urban takes place, the older generation remains in the village to take care of the property. But the younger

generation would come to the city and stay as a nuclear family. Now, in cities, the traditional functions of a joint family like joint residence, pre- and post-pregnancy care, medical care, care of toddlers, care of elders, food preparation and like no longer remain with the nuclear family. Such functions are taken care of by market institutions. We need a fresh study of structural and functional jointness in India.

With the change in caste structure and the emergence of 'claste' structures, some unrest is emerging in many states in India. This unrest is of three types. (1) Some Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and OBCs (SEBC) groups demand more reservation and non-implementation of creamy layer provision. (2) Some Savarna groups demand their inclusion in the reservation category as they also have poor people. (3) Then some groups demand rethinking on the issue of caste-based reservation as caste is no more a homogenous unit. Supreme court has recently given a judgement that reservations on economic criteria are satisfying constitutional provisions. This indicates that we are going to witness some unrest and some movements on the issues of reservation in future. Some from various caste groups have started such agitations also. Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Haryana have already witnessed such movements around 2017-2020.

The Issues: India has many achievements and laurels in the span of 75 years. The society and economy are opening up. We have and we are overcoming our traditional structural weaknesses. We have better infrastructure than what we had in 1947. If development means more options and more freedom, then that is gradually happening here. We have improved our position in almost all sectors. Politically we are stable. But, as Karl Popper has mentioned, an open society has its enemies. Some issues need the attention of our policymakers. We are on the path of modernization and development. But we have almost put ourselves in the hands of market forces. Joseph Stiglitz, who advised the US government for LPG in 1980 and got a Nobel Prize in economics for the same, had a change of thinking in 2003 and spoke about market failures. He said that the market can at the most solve production problems, but it cannot solve distribution problems.

We need to have an active role in the government and civil society to solve non-production problems. We have issues with our position in the human development index. Even in the happiness index, we do not fare well. Inequality is rising beyond proportion. (One may refer to Piketty and Oxfam's reports on inequality.) The same is the issue of environment and sustainable development.

From the days of the Club of Rome 1969 to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015, scientists are raising their voices against fuel consumption and the non-resource regenerating nature of development. The UN has asked member countries to have sustainable technology. But only lip service has been paid to this. Change in lifestyle in cities is a cause of concern, so far as health issues are concerned.

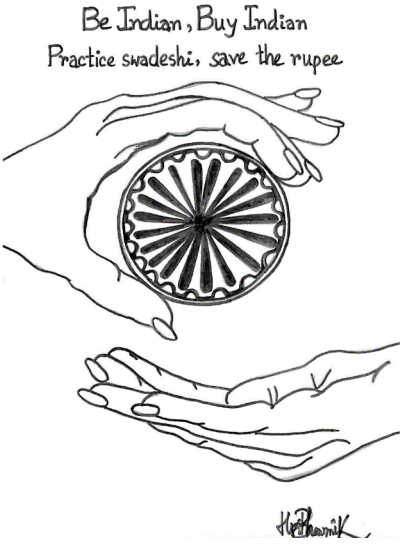
The problems of transformation of our country are qualitatively different from the problems of other countries. As mentioned earlier in this write-up, we are the most complex. Not only that, we inherit only 2.4 per cent of the land of this earth. As against this, we have 18 per cent of the world's population. We have one-third cattle population of the world. The fast-changing and market-dependent lifestyle and rise in lifestyle diseases also should sound an alarm. We have an ancient culture that is respected in the world. We need to look into the development of sectors suitable to us. They could be, food technology, cow-based economy, sustainable and eco-farming, small industry, importance to local markets, and redesign criteria of reservation.

Foreign Policy @75: An Incredible Journey from Colonial Yoke to Bureaucratic Insouciance to a Global Player

J. Jeganaathan*

I. Introduction

As India commemorates *Azadi Ki Amrut Mahatosov* – the 75th anniversary of India's Independence, there are multiple achievements and accomplishments in various fields. India's political and economic journey in the past seventy years is incredible. It ranked the fourth-largest economy in the world and is set to become the number two by end of this decade. As far as the political journey is concerned, India's tryst with destiny is a long and arduous sojourn of building strong institutions to meet the expectations and aspirations of the largest population in the world in terms of timely delivery of justice, independent media and vibrant legislative to live up to the constitutional mandate. It is the largest democracy in the world. India's democratic traditions are ancient and believed to be the mother of democracy.



India became Independent from the British at a time when the world was witnessing the destruction of nations and the devastation of humanity caused

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by World War II. Europe was busy recovering from the destruction and their priority was to rebuild their cities and towns and rehabilitate the people. India had drawn little attention from the international community. It was still perceived as a colonial remnant of the British Empire. India's rich cultural heritage and ancient wisdom were clouded with Western servitude and a state of complex inferiority. As a result, India was unable to carve out its niche in international politics after independence, which offered a historic opportunity to reinvent itself as a significant player in international politics.

India, as a nation-state that has come out of British colonial rule per se a modern western political construct based on certain politico-geography limitations. This political construct that defined India's role in the international arena defies its historic contribution to humanity in the field of polity, economy, warfare, diplomacy, statecraft, medicine, astronomy and physical sciences. India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 1 AD to the arrival of British East India and the Empire in the 17th century AD was around 35 per cent which was the highest ever in world history. The GDP was just 2 per cent at the time of India's independence. With these meagre resources and acute poverty, India looked dwarfed in international politics. India had twin objectives of rediscovering itself as a modern nation and reviving its ailing economy.

The evolution of India's foreign policy since its Independence has been intriguing. India's foreign policy has gone through structural changes in response to systemic influences in the past 75 years. It is erroneous to believe that India's engagement with the world through diplomatic activities began only after Independence. Rather it has the genesis rooted in diplomatic history that successfully built the Chola Empire's indomitable influence in East Asia and its ancient trade relationship with Europe and beyond. Nevertheless, the first structural foundation for modern diplomacy was laid by none other than the British East India Company in 1783 when they merged the Foreign and Political Department into the Indian Foreign Service Department through a resolution passed on 13 September 1783 in Calcutta. In 1843, the liberal Governor-General Ellenborough introduced a series of administrative reforms and the Foreign Service department was also restructured into two wings – the Political and Foreign departments led by two independent secretaries.

The Empire's relationship with all Asiatic kingdoms and princely states was dealt with by the 'political department' whereas British India's relationship with the European powers was dealt with by the 'Foreign Department'. Due to the systemic changes such as the looming World War II in Europe, the British

reformed the existing structure through the Government of India Act of 1935 wherein the twin departments were merged and rechristened as the External Affairs Department with multiple divisions to only look into the external affairs of the British Raj. Later, this department was changed to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) at the time of independence. Today, the structure remains intact but irrelevant to India's rise and growth in the international arena. As result, India is seen as a reluctant player in international politics and the bureaucratic insouciance to the systemic changes affects its inherent penchant to emerge as a global player.

The structural reform in Indian foreign policy is overdue since Independence. Although the BJP Election Manifesto 2014 promised to make the Indian foreign policy-making process more diverse thus getting out of the clutches of career diplomats by introducing the lateral-entry scheme, the bureaucratic lobby with an iron fist stalled that process by diluting the essence of such reforms. Moreover, the role of political leadership is crucial not only in shaping the broad contours of India's foreign policy but also in laying the foundation of foreign policy orientation and strategy. This article examines the role of the most influential political leader in shaping and redefining India's foreign policy in terms of responses and reactions to both external and internal factors that determined India's foreign policy in the past 75 years.

II. Colonial Yoke and the Nehruvian Era

The so-called Nehruvian era in Indian foreign policy has begun under the shadow of the British Colonial Yoke. India inherited the foreign policy structure from the British after its independence. The External Affairs department once served the British royal family and was structurally prepared to extend its cadre loyalty to Jawaharlal Nehru and his family. The fact that Pandit Nehru kept the foreign ministry portfolio to himself from the day after Independence till his death in 1964, almost 16 years reflects his utmost control over Independent India's engagement with the world. Nehru continued to remain the ideologue for India's foreign policy establishment during its formative years. His view of a world that is devoid of Imperialistic order and his advocacy for a socialist world order that champions the voices of the global south have had a strong influence on India's external engagement.

For Nehru, India's estranged neighbours including East and West Pakistan occupied the topmost priority in his foreign policy. It can be argued that Nehru has brought the Kashmir issue to the centre of India's Pakistan policy and Pakistan as the centre of India's foreign policy. This pattern continued even

after his death and his successors could not reverse or change it until P.V. Narashima Rao became the Prime Minister in the 1990s. He envisioned a distant but inevitable future' for India-Pakistan relations. He chose the Middle approach which is neither hostile nor friendly but straddles between the two. He hoped that the old conflicts and the policy of hatred and violence pursued by the old Muslim League that led to the partition of India would cease after the partition rather than the successive government, to his despair, in Pakistan continued the same policy.

Nehru wanted a 'no-war pact' from Pakistan while he was signing the famous 'Delhi Pact' with his counterpart, Liaqat Khan in the 1950s to protect the minorities affect during the partition. The successive government has dumped this pact. Nehru had adopted the policy of 'Strategic Restrain' towards hawkish Pakistan and deployed his diplomatic corps to defend his principled engagement with a rogue and violent neighbour. One of the reasons perhaps could have influenced Nehru's attitude to Pakistan is his charisma and popularity in Pakistan, especially among the elites. When Pakistan was exploiting the Cold War geopolitical dynamics in South Asia, Nehru was reluctant to believe that the cold war was happening. He was confident that his stature and charisma as a tall leader of Asia would find some resonance among the great powers and the US to build a normative world order.

Nehru's view of China was partly realistic and partly visionary. Nehru's China policy has also had a strong imprint on India's China policy. He again hoped that China under Mao was emerging as a progressive communist-socialist nation that would like to shake hands with socialist-secular India. He embraced Zhou Enlai's five principles that spelt China's foreign relations during the Tibetan trade talks in 1953. He endorsed the same as the famous 'Panchsheel Principles' of peaceful co-existence. He proclaimed that if "these principles were recognised then there will be hardly any conflicts and certainly no war" during the Asian Prime Minister Conference in Colombo. Instead of crafting a foreign policy strategy based on realistic assessment, Nehru engaged in exploring a normative or principled format for international relations that would earn him a legacy similar to that of his political mentor, Gandhi's idealistic world order. Nehru inducted a complex interactive pattern of liberalism, idealism and Gandhism in India's foreign policy orientation.

His naivety towards the global power polar politics dominated by the USA and USSR was reflected in his support of the 'Non-aligned Movement' in 1961. Just a year before his bandwagon of the Non-alignment Movement Nehru signed

a historical Treaty negotiated by the World Bank in 1960 with Pakistan on Indus Water sharing and governance. The Indus Water Treaty signed in Karachi by Prime Minister Nehru and Pakistan's Army General turned President Ayub Khan was dubbed as a historic development that cemented India-Pakistan relations on cooperation and benefits rather than conflict and war. This treaty was seen as a milestone in Independent India's foreign policy and projected Nehru as a harbinger of peace and prosperity through statecraft and diplomacy. The foreign policy decision-making policy under Nehru was only confined to elites in New Delhi who showed utmost loyalty to Nehru and his family. For instance, neither Panjab nor Jammu and Kashmir state's consent were taken into consideration while formulating the Indus Water sharing agreement. The Border States were often excluded in the process and as a result, their interests and expectation were hardly figured in the foreign policy formulation.

When the Chinese military invaded Tibet in 1950, Nehru was unconcerned and could not see the Chinese military threat reaching its eastern borders. Exactly a decade after it, China waged a military campaign that had dented Nehru's image as a statesman and tall Asian leader and brought his decade-long political career to an end. Nehru ended utopian romanticism in India's foreign policy. Nehru's sycophants once enjoyed plump posts in the Ministry of External Affairs for merely parroting Nehru's views and ideas withered away in the post-Sino-Indian war in 1962. Nehru had indeed perpetuated the style and function of British India's foreign policy and highly centralised the decision-making process. But his successors from his political lineage failed to reverse this pattern as it would dump the Nehruvian foreign policy imprints. As a result, the successors would carry the old baggage of his dented legacy to deal with foreign policy issues. India's foreign policy orientation during the Nehruvian era was based on a set of idealistic principles that ignored the hard-power Cold War dynamics. Moreover, the Non-aligned Movement as India's global strategy put India as a developing country in a disadvantageous position of not being able to receive the major technology required to accelerate its economy from the developed countries.

III. Indira Gandhi's Realpolitik: Bureaucratic Insouciance to a Reluctant Player

The post-Nehruvian period witnessed a series of changes in the structure and function of India's foreign policy. New Delhi learnt many lessons from the 1962 War with China. First, institutions should be given more importance over the individual while conducting foreign policy. Second, New Delhi realised

that both Pakistan and China would remain a threat to India's territorial integrity and sovereignty and India needs to blend its military strategy with diplomacy to address these twin challenges. Third, the need to have an independent intelligence agency that exclusively deals with foreign threats and challenges was felt. Last, a pragmatic approach towards foreign policy challenges with a realistic assessment of threats replaced utopian expectations and an altruistic approach. Indira Gandhi held external affairs portfolio briefly but later appointed a minister to handle it.

Indira Gandhi has infused a Realpolitik approach towards India's global engagement. Though she attempted to change the orientation of India's foreign policy by bringing wider diverse perspectives on external challenges, the Nehruvian loyalist in the foreign policy establishment continue to caution Madam Gandhi not to undo Nehru's legacy. Nevertheless, Indira Gandhi had evolved a new doctrine for India's foreign policy that had taken some elements of Nehruvian approaches. The famous 'Indira Doctrine' argues that "you cannot shake hands with the cinched fist". Unlike her father, Indira had limited ideological convictions and training on socialism and Gandhism rather she was exposed to political realism of uncertainty and mistrust in international relations. In a sharp departure from Nehru's neighbourhood policy of appeasement and assurance, she categorically emphasized that "India has no intention of intervening in the internal conflicts of a South Asian country and it strongly opposes intervention by any country in the internal affairs of any other" (Gupta, 1983). She gave the vision of protecting India's "strategic autonomy" in South Asia at any cost to preserve India's sphere of influence in the region and beyond the Indian Ocean region. She paid less attention to the 'Non-aligned movement' rather inclined to align with the great powers that would support India's strategic interest in the region.

The Friendship Treaty with USSR was seen as a strategic move to play an active role in Cold War politics to ensure India's strategic interests are protected. The Bangladesh military victory was credited to her successful conduct of foreign policy. When the world was divided into two politico-military blocks, she created a new sovereign country through a calculated war. However, the bureaucratic lobby especially the Nehruvian loyalist wielded strong influence even during the negotiation of the Shimla Agreement in 1972 between Indira Gandhi and Bhutto. P.N. Haksar, a bureaucrat and diplomat and Nehru's loyalist and D.P. Dhar, his fellow diplomat had ensured that the Kashmir issue figure in the Shimla Agreement despite India having the upper hand after the Bangladesh victory. Both the diplomats belong to the Kashmir Pandit community and were staunch

advocates of Nehruvian socialism in foreign policy as a Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Haksar persuade Gandhi on keeping the Kashmir issue central to India-Pakistan relations.

In a direct reference to Pakistan which received military support from the US, she said that "India will not tolerate external intervention in a conflict situation in any South Asian country; if the intervention has any implicit or explicit anti-Indian implication...no South Asian government must therefore ask for external military assistance with an anti-Indian bias from any country" (Gupta, 1983). This was seen as a direct message to the US for not indulging in any sort of divisive strategic play in South Asia to further their cold war agenda. India under Indira's leadership has indeed emerged as a regional power of South Asia willing to negotiate peace and stability with the fledgling neighbours. The Ministry of External Affairs also played a key role in neutralising the insurgency in north-eastern states, and militancy in Panjab and Jammu and Kashmir by monitoring and preventing their external aid and support. Her 'iron fist' approach to eliminate the Khalistani movement in Panjab and tacit support to the Tamil separatist movement by supporting the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka was the test case of her foreign policy achievements.

The Indira doctrine argues that "if a South Asian country genuinely needs external help to deal with a serious internal conflict situation, or with an intolerable threat to a government legitimately established, it should ask help from several neighbouring countries including India...the exclusion of India from such a contingency will be considered to be an anti-Indian move on the part of the government concerned" (Gupta, 1983). India's foreign policy has become more assertive and diplomacy aided by India's external intelligence agency has also become more coercive towards unruly neighbours. Nevertheless, her assassination was seen as a sort of bureaucratic insouciance to the Khalistani overseas threat that lingered on even after operation Blue Star. The bureaucratic lobby within the MEA and India's external intelligence agency once guided Indira during and after the Bangladesh war started to wield strong influence in the foreign policy decision-making process.

This trend continued even after her death and her successor Rajiv Gandhi could not overcome this strong lobby that was entrenched so deep into the foreign policy-making process. For instance, J.N. Dixit, the Foreign Secretary at that time dictated India's Sri Lanka policy to Rajiv Gandhi and he completely relied on a few groups of serving and retired bureaucrats on foreign policy. Dixit was often referred to as the "Viceroy" by the Sri Lankan media because

he directly dealt with the President and was even asked to address the Sri Lankan Cabinet. V. Suryanarayan argued that "The Rajiv Gandhi-Romesh Bhandari team had different priorities and their policies further contributed to the worsening of the overall situation" (*Frontline*, 21 March 1998). The assassination of Rajiv Gandhi during his peak election campaign by the LTTE can be construed as the failure of Rajiv's foreign policy due to a lack of clear understanding of the ground reality and over-reliance on the bureaucratic circles especially the foreign secretaries. The Indira-Rajiv period witnessed bureaucratic domination or structural influence in the foreign policy decision-making process by a complex cocktail of Nehruvian loyalists and close aides of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

It was P.V. Narashima Rao who was then briefly held the External Affairs Minister portfolio made a cautionary note on the issue of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord but his comments were seemingly ignored. In the 1990s, Prime Minister Narshima Rao, who initiated a series of economic reforms by liberalising the Indian economy also attach more significance to the role of Indian foreign policy in ushering India into a new era of economic growth and prosperity. The MEA is also tasked to focus more on business and trade besides scouting for new high-end technology. For the first time, he gave a market-oriented vision to India's foreign policy orientation. India's 'Look East Policy' is credited to his foreign policy vision of integrating the Southeast Asian market with India by enhancing trade and connectivity to the region. He was sensitive to the growing Chinese economic and trade influence in East Asia and wanted to tap the opportunities for India. At the same time, he wanted to divert Indian foreign policy obsession with the Western countries for political and economic reasons. The biggest change happened when he visited China for the signing of a treaty to maintain peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in 1993 which was set to normalise the frozen India-China relations. He also ensured India gained prominence in the global multilateral forums by active participation and articulation of India's policy objectives.

In the post-reform era, India's foreign policy establishment had gone through both structural and functional changes such as a limited role for the bureaucrats and the external intelligence in the overall foreign policy decision-making process and more political vision and direction were injected into the process. This trend was further strengthened during the Vajpayee-led NDA regime. India's stature started to grow on the international stage. It has registered many success stories that had turned global attention to India. The nuclear test in 1998, the Indo-US nuclear deal in 2005 and its active participation in the global campaign

on climate change by advocating the voices of the global south. India is seen as a leader of the global south. However, the bureaucratic influence continued for at least from 2005 to 2013 when the MEA's role was hijacked by the National Security Advisor (NSA) on key issues related to China, Pakistan and superpowers.

As a result, India was perceived as a 'reluctant player' in international politics. Pakistan's policy of dilly-dallying on its support to cross-border terrorism in J&K and India's meek response to the Mumbai attack and docile attitude to balance China in South Asia are all attributed to the lack of 'political will' and vision. Domestic political factors tend to dictate the political vision of New Delhi's foreign policy conduct. For instance, the separatist in Kashmir and the pro-Tamil political parties in Tamilnadu wielded strong political influence in New Delhi's Sri Lanka and Pakistan policy. The retired diplomats and secretaries who are loyal to the Gandhi family had strong say in Indian foreign policy under Manmohan Singh's leadership. India's relationship with small states in South Asia soured due to incoherent and farsighted foreign policy. The then NSA Shivshankar Menon and M.K. Narayanan were pulling the shots on foreign policy matters.

IV. Modi's Foreign Policy Dynamism and India as a Global Strategic Player

The Modi era that began in 2014 has raised many expectations, especially among India's neighbours and western powers in terms of how a majoritarian government perhaps after a gap of three decades. The Modi era is being considered a watershed moment in India's history due to the display of robust leadership and dynamism by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in matters related to foreign and security policy. The fact that all the heads of state from India's neighbourhood were invited to Modi's swearing-in ceremony in 2014 is seen as a paradigm shift in India's regional policy. The Indian people's perception of how they see India in the world has changed under Modi's leadership. A survey conducted by Pew Research has highlighted this trend and attributed this change to Modi's dynamic leadership in conducting foreign policy. Modi is seen as the most dynamic leader who gave significant attention to foreign policy through his whirlwind official foreign tour despite his punishing schedule. According to an official estimate he has made 69 official foreign trips since 2014.

The first blueprint of Modi's foreign policy was etched in the BJP Election Manifesto 2014. Many political observers argued that one of the main electoral

planks placed against the then-ruling UPA is "policy paralysis" in India's foreign policy. Modi used this effectively during his electoral campaign across the country. The Election Manifesto 2014 of BJP categorically reiterated that,

> "...a resurgent India must get its rightful place in the comity of nations and international institutions. The vision is to fundamentally reboot and reorient the foreign policy goals, content and process, in a manner that locates India's global strategic engagement in a new paradigm and on a wider canvas, that is not just limited to political diplomacy, but also includes our economic, scientific, cultural, political and security interests, both regional and global, on the principles of equality and mutuality, so that it leads to an economically stronger India, and its voice is heard in the international fora."

It is evident that India's foreign policy has witnessed a fundamental change or one can call it a paradigm shift in India's foreign policy orientation during the first tenure of Modi as Prime Minister. Modi had shown a keen interest in international affairs with an acute sense of understanding the nuances of the role of political diplomacy in international politics. Until 2014, the international community especially the major powers viewed India as a 'reluctant player' in international politics and India's foreign policy was largely driven by neighbourhood factors, particularly its relationship with Pakistan. Unlike his predecessors, Prime Minister Modi had limited experience and exposure in managing foreign policy, therefore, his critics argued that he may take some time to understand how foreign policy works. Many expected that he would heavily depend on a coterie of retired ambassadors and foreign policy experts. But he proved them wrong and brazenly displayed his grip on foreign policy through his decisive actions and responses to foreign policy issues and challenges.

The 2014 manifesto has also proposed that India's foreign policy will be guided by 'enlightened national interest' and that India will work closely with the international community to build a global consensus on issues like terrorism and global warming. One of the major shifts that happened in India's foreign policy under Modi's leadership is the attempt to play a proactive role to strengthen the global multilateral forums like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), G20 (Group of Twenty), IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) and Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). As far as neighbourhood policy is concerned, the 2014 manifesto asserts that India would pursue friendly relationships with its neighbours but if required it will not hesitate from taking strong stands and steps.

The 2019 election manifesto has had more explicit foreign policy objectives and goals. It has indeed outlined India's perspective on global order based on its core value system of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', which means that the 'World is one family'. Some of the key foreign policy objectives highlighted in the 2019 manifesto are combating terrorism, permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), global coordination on knowledge and technology and strengthening multilateral cooperation. As compared to the 2014 manifesto, the 2019 manifesto has the vision of projecting India as a 'Vishwaguru' – the world teacher. The Pulwama terrorist attack in early February 2019 and the subsequent Indian Air Force retaliatory strike on Balakot, a terrorist camp inside Pakistan-Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoJK), displayed India's foreign policy resolve to fight terrorism with a pre-emptive strategy. India's Pakistan policy has been firm and consistent since 2014 that terror and talk cannot go together. There is no way to normalise the relationship with Pakistan to appease the U.S. It is argued that "India has usually adopted a 'non-aligned' foreign policy, but since Prime Minister Modi came to power in 2014, New Delhi has shown more assertiveness in international relations, particularly in its dealing with Pakistan" (Gopalakrishnan and Jha, *DW*, 05 June 2019).

India's G20 presidency is crucial for India's global strategy. Prime Minister Modi has already hinted that India would seize this opportunity to maximise its role to reform the existing multilateral forums including the UNSC. The Prime Minister has clearly articulated that India's presidency of G20 will be more inclusive, ambitious and decisive, and action-oriented. It shows that the G20 format is different from the past, and for that goal, the preparations are made in diplomatic circles with the other stakeholders. He also hinted that the first and foremost task for India is to change the mindset within the G20 which differentiates developing countries from developed countries, even while facing common issues like climate change, global supply chains, and financial stability. So far, the G20 format is very much confined to three-four broad areas – Global Financial Sustainability, Global Trade, Climate Change, and Sustainable Development Goals. India's presidency will bring more activism, and it will also try to bring a consensus on issues such as climate change, carbon emissions, and the technology denied by the developed countries to the developing countries to meet the climate emission targets. These are the issues that are going to be the priorities of India.

India has the solution for every global problem and issue based on its ancient wisdom and civilisational heritage. India's foreign policy under Modi has laid the foundation for India's next 25 years to become a 'Vishwaguru' to lead and

guide the world from conflict, poverty and pandemics. India can leverage its potential to lead and it is a golden opportunity for India to prove its global leadership. Have seen during the pandemic; despite having a huge population to vaccinate, India started the 'Vaccine Maitri' project, which was received very well in the least-developed and under-developed countries, leading to appreciation from the UN. From a humanitarian point of view, India of Mantra of "one earth, one family, one future", will break the monopolization of public goods.

The next year will be tightly packed for India's diplomatic group as well as the mini-groups that have been created. The next year is challenging given the early signs of recessions in European countries. But with its capabilities and experience, its decisiveness, India will steer through these turbulent times, and its rich cultural heritage will bring the confidence that we can evolve a consensus within the G20 to identify and address the common problems. With Modi, the Indian foreign policy establishment has a political vision and also the right direction to reinvent India's past glory as a 'Vishwaguru'. The relative decline of US global supremacy and Europe's failing economy and demography will end the 400 years of Western domination in world politics. It is believed that the twenty-first century will be the Asian Century. But, given the socio-political issues and ageing population, China seems to be losing the race to lead the world. As the world's largest democracy and youngest population, India has the right chance to emerge as a global leader and this century will be India's century. And, India would achieve its rightful place in the international arena when it celebrates the golden jubilee of its independence in 2047.

V. Conclusion

For India to become a world leader or 'Vishwaguru' it has to make a concerted effort to reach its destiny. Becoming a 'Vishwaguru' cannot be a collective dream but it's a common destiny that every Indian should be aware of. To achieve its destiny the following action plan is suggested:

1. India is the fifth-largest economy in the world with a gross domestic GDP of $3.5 trillion. By 20247, India needs to grow with a gross domestic GDP of at least $20 trillion. The agriculture sector should be given top priority as the future belongs to the one who produces food and agro products.
2. India should build its human resource potential to meet the challenges posed by AI, Blockchain, Cryptocurrency, and Data Mining technologies.

3. South Asia remains poorly connected and due to this, intra-regional trade could not take place. India should integrate the South Asian economy with its market through investment in mega connectivity projects. By 2040, all the capitals of South Asian countries should be connected to Indian cities with seamless transportation facilities.
4. India has been proactively engaging with multilateral forums to strengthen the rule-based international order. However, it needs to augment its role by expanding the scope of such institutions to be more inclusive and diverse. Instead of UNSC reform, India should strengthen the existing mechanism to be more inclusive.
5. On the domestic front, the structural reforms to revamp the MEA as promised in the electoral manifesto of the BJP has to be done in a time-bound manner. MEA should be opened for experts; the lateral entry scheme has to be extended to include more professionals than career diplomats.

Gender Inequality Still Looms Large

Divya Anand*
Syed Mahmood Faiyaz Mehdi

Introduction

India's celebration of 75 years of independence underpins a quest for revisiting the principle of gender equality as enshrined in the Indian constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties, and Directive Principles. As per the constitutional and legal provisions, women enjoy equal status with men in all walks of life. But the question frequently asked is to what extent women feel empowered in India, having traversed 75 years of independence. India, the largest democracy has emerged as the fifth-largest economy in the world which requires it to pay more attention to overall Human Development including gender equality, equity, and women empowerment. As per Human Development Index (HDI) 2021 rankings, India bagged the 132nd position among 191 countries.[1] In spite of the reported gap reduction in male HDI between India and the world by 41 per cent in the last three decades and the female HDI by 30 per cent, there exists a mismatch in India's rank in female HDI (131) in comparison to male HDI (119).[2]

This brings to attention the need for shifting focus on the reduction of gender inequality in order to improve India's performance in overall human development. As a matter of fact, India, a rising global power standing at the crossroads of

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the changing world order along with newer security challenges, has been bestowed the baton of G20 to promote and achieve a universal sense of 'Oneness' underlying its main theme of 'One Earth, One Family and One Future'. After assuming the Presidency of G20, India started to prioritise inclusive growth and development by promoting equality and women-led development. The Minister for Women and Child Development and Minority Affairs, Smt. Smriti Irani at G20 Summit in Agra categorically stated that "if you want to get your future right, if you want to be future-ready, make sure that women are the centre of the discourse and that women are at the centre of your decisions".[3] This is indeed a worthwhile objective to be achieved not only in India but also in other countries where gender inequality still looms large as an impediment to the development, growth, and progress of nation-states.

A Quest for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

There is an established interconnection between gender equality and women empowerment. They are two sides of the same coin i.e., a step towards gender equality mandates women empowerment and vice versa. In common parlance, gender means a social construction assigning roles, responsibilities, rights, and obligations differently to different sexes. Resultantly, inequalities based on gender are a common and predominant feature in most societies, particularly patriarchal ones like India. Gender disparity is manifested at different levels and layers of the societal structure, wherein there is a crisscrossing of a gender question with different components of social structure like status, roles, class, groups, institutions, and culture. Notably, the access of women belonging to the weaker sections of society such as Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes/ Other backward Classes/ Minorities/ rural people to the state's resources, benefits, and rewards is inadequate. Therefore, they are further marginalised, discriminated, socially excluded, and poverty-stricken.

In general, gender-related discrimination is not a new phenomenon in any nation-state, though its nature and form vary depending on the prevailing societal structure. In the Indian context, despite having made some progress in reducing the gap in gender inequality, the menace still remains. The most common indicator of gender inequality is reflected in the continuous drop in the gender ratio over the years. Gender inequality is not only reflected at the institutional level but also at the societal level in the form of visible discriminatory practices such as child marriage, sexual abuse, domestic violence, honour killings, unequal pay, unrecognised and undervalued women's work at home, women trafficking, etc. Yet the sustained efforts by the Indian government have resulted in promoting

gender equality, as given by the Economic Survey 2022-23, placing India a value of 0.490 on the Gender Inequality Index (GII), which is close to the world average of 0.465.[4] The survey highlighted the role of government initiatives, policies, and investments "to promote more inclusive growth, social protection, and gendered responsive development policies".[5]

It is to mention that 'women empowerment'[6] has become a lexicon in contemporary India to achieve gender equality cum equity. There also exists extensive literature on women empowerment. In general, women empowerment means the enhancement of women capabilities and capacities to fully participate in all aspects of society and to promote enabling social, economic, cultural, and political conditions that can help them take control of their own development and future. Many scholars specify four main factors in promoting women empowerment such as socio-economic development, rising gender-egalitarian attitudes that transform economic development into a cultural process of human development, historical legacies stemming from society's cultural and political traditions, and institutional design factors.[7] However, there is a need to modify societal structural narratives and attitudes, which begin with the family being the basic unit that contributes to the understanding of gender parity/disparity behaviour.

Gender Equality and State Initiatives: An Overview

One can trace suitable examples of gender equality in ancient Indian culture, where there existed no form of gender discrimination. In Hindu scriptures, women are personified as Goddesses or Devi and are held in high esteem. It is important to mention, "Hinduism, as a religion has attributed the words for the strength and power to feminine. "Shakti" means "power" and "strength"…all male power comes from the feminine…the Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva) are all-powerless without their female counterparts".[8] By tracing gender equality in ancient India (till the early Vedic period), it is observed that women performed equal competitive roles like that with men in different spheres of society – political, administrative, economic, and socio-cultural.[9] There existed harmony in society as equality between both genders was a reality and the dignity of women and men was preserved. With the passage of time (later Vedic period and thereafter), with foreign invasions and intrusions, the decline in the status of women started, resulting in the erosion of gender equality ideals upheld by the Ancient Indian society.

To reinvigorate the gender equality ideal of the ancient Indian culture, the Indian State in the modern period, within the democratic polity framework, has

passed many laws, made amendments, framed developmental policies, schemes and programmes, and ratified international conventions related to gender equality. It aims to make women empowerment part and parcel of inclusive development and growth. The Indian Constitution contains several provisions that aim to promote and protect the rights of women in India. To mention a few – Article 14: Right to Equality before the law and equal protection of the law without discrimination based on gender; Article 15: Prohibition of Discrimination on grounds of sex. This article prohibits any discrimination against women in access to educational institutions, public places, or any other area; Article 21: Right to Life and Personal Liberty provides protection of women's right to life and liberty.

Further, the principles followed by the Indian state while framing laws and policies related to achieving gender equality in the form of Directive Principles of state policy are as follows: Article 39(a): The state shall direct its policy towards securing that the citizens, men, and women, equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood. This article aims to ponder over the economic empowerment of women refereeing to Article 42 of the Indian Constitution which ensures provisions for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief. This Article mandates that the state shall make provisions for securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief for women along with Article 51A(e) which directs every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. These constitutional provisions and directives/guidelines to the state have played a significant role in promoting gender equality in India and have provided a strong foundation for legal protection to promote and protect women's rights.

The Government of India has also ratified international conventions to end gender discrimination. India signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as a global human rights convention in 1979.[10] It is regarded as a historic agreement in the progress of women's rights and is frequently referred to as the "International Bill of Rights for Women".[11] It categorically states that "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."[12] It has played a crucial role in advancing women's rights and gender equality throughout the world and has resulted in notable advancements for women in areas including education, employment, and political representation.

At the national level, the National Commission for Women (NCW), a statutory body was established in 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act (1990) to safeguard and promote the rights of women.[13] The commission serves as a watchdog for women's rights in the country. It works towards creating a gender-sensitive society free from discrimination and violence against women. The main functions of the NCW include investigating and examining complaints of discrimination and violence against women, reviewing the existing laws and policies affecting women, recommending measures for their effective implementation, and promoting women's empowerment and gender equality.[14] Over the years, the NCW has played a significant role in advocating for women's rights and bringing attention to issues such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, and gender discrimination in the workplace. The commission has also been involved in various policy initiatives aimed at improving the status of women in India.

Other landmarks are the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments[15] which are significant in terms of empowering women at the grassroots level. These amendments were passed in 1992 and introduced the concept of local self-government in rural and urban areas of India. The 73rd Amendment pertains to the rural areas and mandates the reservation of one-third of the seats in all elected offices at the village, block, and district levels for women. This has led to a significant increase in the representation of women in local governance structures. The amendment also provides for the creation of a three-tier system of Panchayats or local self-governance bodies in rural areas. The 74th Amendment applies to urban areas and provides for the creation of Nagar Palikas or Municipal Councils. It also mandates the reservation of one-third of the seats for women in these councils. Additionally, the amendment provides for the creation of a two-tier system of municipal governance in urban areas. Together, these amendments have brought about significant changes in the political representation of women at the grassroots level in India. They have enabled women to participate actively in the decision-making process, especially those affecting their lives and families.

The government has also initiated and implemented numerous programs and policies since the country's independence with the goal of achieving 'advancement and empowerment of women' and to elevate the status of women in society by concentrating on issues including education, health, economic development, and political engagement. The following are a few such schemes in this regard:

- **Mahila Samriddhi Yojana:** A savings program created exclusively for Indian women living in rural regions is called the Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY). In order to encourage women to save money and give them financial security, the Indian government introduced it in 1993.[16] Women are required to make payments into their MSY accounts as part of this program, and the government contributes a matching amount. The government sets the interest rate on the account, which is typically higher than what private banks give. The program also provides a number of other advantages, such as easy loan availability, insurance protection, and instruction in financial literacy. The Ministry of Rural Development report claims that the program has been effective in encouraging financial inclusion among rural women in India. Resultantly, it will help in uplifting the economic condition of the beneficiary, building the self-esteem of women, and empower them.
- **National Policy for the Empowerment of Women:** With the goal of empowering women and achieving gender equality, the Government of India introduced the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (NPEW) in 2001.[17] The policy emphasizes several facets of women's empowerment, including political involvement, work, health, and legal rights. The policy asks for the abolition of gender-based violence and discrimination and acknowledges the significance of women's participation in decision-making at all levels. Affirmative action and specific measures are also emphasized to ensure the participation of underprivileged and vulnerable women, including those from rural and tribal communities. The policy has also led to the enactment of several laws aimed at protecting women's rights and ensuring their safety, such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.
- **Ujjwala Yojana** is a social welfare scheme launched by the Government of India in 2016 with the aim of providing LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) connections to women from below-poverty-line households. The scheme aims to promote clean cooking fuel, reduce indoor air pollution, and empower women by reducing their dependence on traditional fuels such as firewood, coal, and dung. Several studies have also highlighted the social and economic benefits of the scheme. For instance, a study by the University of Chicago found that the scheme had a positive impact on women's health, by reducing exposure to indoor air pollution.[18]

The study also found that the scheme had led to increased participation of women in the labour force, as it reduced the time and effort required for cooking.[19]

- **The One-Stop Center Scheme (OSC)** is a flagship initiative of the Indian Government aimed at providing assistance and support to women affected by violence. The scheme was launched in 2015 under the Nirbhaya Fund and is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.[20] Under the scheme, One-Stop Centers (OSCs) are established in various districts across the country to provide integrated support services to women affected by violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, and trafficking. The centers provide a range of services, including medical assistance, legal aid, counselling, and rehabilitation. The scheme has been successful in providing support to women affected by violence and has been instrumental in addressing the issue of violence against women in the country. According to a report by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, around 699 operational OSCs have offered support to around 3.05 lakh women.[21] The scheme has also been instrumental in increasing awareness about the issue of violence against women and in building capacity among stakeholders, including police, healthcare professionals, and counsellors. The scheme has also led to the development of standardized protocols for providing support services to women affected by violence.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)** A maternity benefit scheme launched by the Government of India in 2017. The scheme aims to provide financial assistance to pregnant and lactating women for their first live birth, enabling them to have a healthy pregnancy and safe delivery. Under the scheme, eligible women receive a cash benefit of Rs. 5,000 in three instalments.[22] The scheme is available to all pregnant and lactating women, except for those who are already receiving similar benefits under other government schemes. The scheme aims to reach out to 51 lakh women annually. The scheme has been successful in providing financial assistance to pregnant and lactating women and has helped in improving maternal and child health outcomes. According to the Ministry of Women and Child Development, as of June 2021, a total of 1.8 crore women have been enrolled in the scheme, and benefits worth Rs. 8,804.11 crores have been disbursed.[23]

Many scholars are of the opinion that empowering women economically[24] can lead to poverty reduction, as women are more likely to invest their income in their families and communities. According to a study by the McKinsey Global Institute, India could add $770 billion to its GDP by 2025 if women participate in the economy on an equal footing with men.[25] In recent years, the Indian government has taken various measures to promote the economic empowerment of women. The government has launched several schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, which provides loans to women entrepreneurs, and the Stand-Up India Scheme, which facilitates loans to women and SC/ST entrepreneurs.

In addition, the government has introduced various measures to encourage women's participation in the formal workforce, such as the introduction of mandatory maternity leave and the provision of crèche facilities in the workplace. There are also various non-governmental organizations and private sector initiatives working towards women's economic empowerment. For instance, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) provides training, credit, and other services to women in the informal sector, while the Women's World Banking (WWB) is a global network of microfinance institutions that provides financial services to women.

Notable Indian Women's Achievements

Indian women have made notable contributions in various fields at the global, national, and local levels, in different fields like economics, politics, diplomacy, sports, education, business, culture, science and technology. Here are a few examples:

- **Kamala Harris**: The current Vice President of the United States of America and the first woman, the first black, and the first Indian-American person to hold the position. Prior to her vice presidency, Harris served as a U.S. Senator from California.
- **Indra Nooyi**: She is a business executive who served as the CEO of PepsiCo from 2006 to 2018. During her tenure, she led the company's transformation into a more environmentally and socially responsible organization.
- **Kalpana Chawla**: She is an astronaut and the first Indian-American astronaut to go to space. She flew on two space shuttle missions before but tragically lost her life in the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster in 2003.

- **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw**: She is a biotechnology entrepreneur and the founder of Biocon, a biopharmaceutical company based in India. She has been recognized for her contributions to the field of biotechnology and for her philanthropic work.
- **Mithali Raj**: She is a cricketer who has represented the Indian women's cricket team in international matches. She is widely regarded as one of the greatest female cricketers of all time and has been recognized for her contributions to the sport.
- **PV Sindhu:** She won a silver medal in Badminton at the 2016 Rio Olympics and became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic silver medal in badminton.
- **Mary Kom:** She is a six-time world champion boxer and the first Indian woman boxer to win an Olympic bronze medal at the 2012 London Olympics.
- **Mithali Raj:** She is the highest run-scorer in women's international cricket and led the Indian cricket team to the final of the 2017 Women's Cricket World Cup.
- **Nandita Das:** She is an actor and filmmaker who has won several awards, including the French government's Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.
- **Tabu**: an actor who has won two National Film Awards and six Filmfare Awards.
- **Gauri Shinde:** She is a filmmaker who directed the critically acclaimed films "English Vinglish" and "Dear Zindagi."
- **Indira Gandhi**: She is the first woman Prime Minister of India and served as Prime Minister from 1966 to 1977 and then again from 1980 until her assassination in 1984.
- **Sushma Swaraj:** She was the Minister of External Affairs of India from 2014 to 2019 and the second woman to hold this position after Indira Gandhi.
- **Mamata Banerjee:** She is currently the Chief Minister of West Bengal and the first woman to hold this position.
- **Droupadi Murmu**: She is the 15th President of India elected on 25th July 2022. She is the first person representing the tribal community and the second female President of India after Pratibha Devi Singh Patil.

- **Kiran Bedi**: She is the first woman IPS officer in India who received the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1994.
- **Arundhati Roy:** She is a writer who received the Booker Prize for her novel "The God of Small Things" in 1997.
- **Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni:** She is an author who received the American Book Award in 1995 for her novel "Arranged Marriage."

The notable works of Indian women globally serve as inspiration for numerous young girls and women in India and around the world. It also highlights the importance of gender diversity and women's empowerment in various fields.

Women Empowerment and India's G20 Presidency

Currently, India is heading the G20 Presidency, which aims at inclusive growth and development, with a primary emphasis on women empowerment and representation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the G20 summit in Bali, Indonesia, categorically stated that "Global development is not possible without women's participation. India will give importance to Women-led development in its G20 agenda."[26] Many scholars are of the opinion that there is an established correlation between economic empowerment and gender equality. In the Indian context, there is no denying that the present age of the internet and the increase in the use of digital technology has resulted in a marked increase in female entrepreneurship.[27] It is an estimation that India has more women-owned enterprises (around 13.5 million-15.7 million), in comparison to many other countries.[28] There is also no denying that the gender equality gap can be reduced by increasing women workforce participation. In fact, previous G20 summits have also focussed on achieving gender equality by promoting women economic empowerment, ending gender-based discrimination in land ownership rights, access to quality education and vocational training, and the labour market with decent working conditions and increased role in the organised sector.[29]

Indeed, India has reiterated its commitment to bring transformation, sustainable development, and growth by focusing on women-led development and the overall well-being of women. To achieve this aim, it focuses on continuous and sustained efforts including increasing financial inclusion, investments in health and education, equal pay, pension, and rewards for equivalent work, more investment in infrastructure and public services, an equal share of paid work and unpaid care and domestic work, equitable representation of women in decision-making positions and access to basic amenities. Hence, India's efforts aim at achieving holistic, inclusive development, equality, and

equity. It is very clearly highlighted in its three interlinked focus and target areas, i.e., "Women's Entrepreneurship: A win-win for Equity and Economy", "Partnership for promoting women's leadership at all levels including at grassroots" and "Education, the key to women's empowerment and equal workforce participation".[30]

To further facilitate the process of gendering equality and inclusive development, India under the aegis of G20 is leading Women 20 (W20), an official engagement group with the aim and mission to build an equitable and equal society where every woman can live with dignity.[31] The group will concentrate on removing all obstacles to women-led growth and establishing a supportive environment and ecosystem that will enable women to flourish, advance, and alter both their own lives and those of others. The W20 under India's leadership has highlighted key priority areas for women empowerment: Women's entrepreneurship, grassroots women leadership, bridging the gendered digital divide, education, skill development, and climate change. It underlines a decentralised approach, where W20 can be an effective instrument in aligning the views, perspectives and the actual condition of women that exists at different levels of society with the broader G20 goals to achieve inclusive growth and gender equality.

Thus, India's G20 presidency is going to play a vital role in bringing substantial changes on the issue of gender equality and women empowerment. However, there is a need to recognise that compartmentalisation of empowerment in the strict economic or political sense will not serve the purpose. One should cater to the broader and holistic understanding of gender empowerment, i.e., its interconnected and inseparable dimensions – social, political, economic, psychological, legal, and cultural. Also, there is an urgent need to bring change in the gender narratives and attitudes and to reform the social structure to achieve real gender equality and equity.

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Articles

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India and Indo-Pacific: Challenges and Opportunities

Abstract

India is a key member and major player in the Indo-Pacific. In the post-cold war era, the aggressive policies of China have disturbed this region which is a big travel route for traffic and energy supplies. Recent claims by China and her hostile attitude towards the IOR States have caused tensions and talks among stakeholders. Indo-Pacific is geographically explained by India to be a region from the eastern coast of Africa to the western coast of America. Australia, Japan and USA with India have formed QUAD. Indian Navy has played a significant role in smooth commercial traffic. India's Prime Minister's Shangri-La Dialogue is an important pointer to having a strategic vision for India

Key Words: *Indo-Pacific, QUAD, AUKUS, Shangri-La Dialogue, India and ASEAN, Indian Navy Ocean Domain Awareness*

Introduction

During the second phase of the cold war when both the super-powers with their upgraded nuclear stockpiles were inclining towards exhibiting their armoury and strategic superiority, rightly someone observed that if the third global war will be held it would be Asia-centric and would be related to competition and conflict in international waters. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the cold war was over and a new world order emerged along with peculiarities and complexities. Researchers name the three decades from 1991 as the 'Post-Cold War' phase. During these three decades, the world has experienced the decline of the Soviet Union, the rise of China, the emergence of new economic powers and most importantly the geo-strategic importance of the vast expanse of international waters covering the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Throughout history, the maritime domain has been a crucial space in establishing new and emerging powers, shaping regional dynamics and the larger

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security architecture. (Baruah 2020) The search for new trade routes led to the discovery of new land mass and the possibility of getting mineral resources which helped the era of the Industrial Revolution and the establishment of colonies. During that phase, the concept of maritime control, fighting against the pirates and international law regimes or territorial sea and open sea emerged. The naval supremacy of Great Britain encouraged other countries to have a navy for self-defence in Europe. Both world wars explained the power of a few countries that can wage war in seas and control trade routes as well. The Vienna Convention on Law of the Sea (1961) was a seminal contribution to regulating the conduct of the States in naval matters. The first fifty years after World War II experienced both conflict and peace in the Atlantic. Slowly, the concept of international waters emerged

International law has not defined the concept of international waters. It is learnt that to varying degrees, depending on location, all ocean waters are international. A Territorial Sea is an extension of the land area of a State to adjacent sea waters in which all ships of other countries enjoy the right of innocent passage. The open sea is beyond the territorial claim of any State. "Freedom of the Seas" is a fundamental principle of international law. It is important because it affects everything from trade to travel to national security. Since time immemorial, oceans are known for sustenance, commerce, exploration and discovery. Over time, a system of international maritime law grew out of a need to balance various interests in these areas including security, commerce and resources. Initially, the territorial sea was limited to twelve nautical miles and later a new maritime zone of 200 nautical miles was provided to the coastal nation, known as the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for facilitating fisheries and producing energy from water and wind with rising nature of international trade conflicts about trade routes and confrontation with pirates became important so far as 'Freedom of Navigation' is concerned. In recent years, one significant oceanic zone has become a sensitive area and has turned into a zone of confrontation among major powers.

The acceptance of the Indo-Pacific as a single strategic construct linking the contiguous waters of the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean has gained currency in the last few years with the shift in the geo-political centre of gravity to the region (Siddiqui 2019). In reality, oceans are no more viewed from the angle of security alone. The focus has entered into the realm of economy, politics, culture and environment. There is a shift from the landmass of continents into the waters of oceans. Thus, the oceans have turned into theatres of competition and power politics. Amongst various maritime theatres of competition, the

Indo-Pacific region has emerged as the key area of interest, attention, cooperation and contestation.

Siddiqui (2019) argued that globalization, trade, dependence, the seamless connectivity of the maritime domain and the changing nature of the maritime, threat becoming more transnational in nature, have blurred physical boundaries and raised awareness of the importance of ensuring secure seas for the unhindered movement of trade and energy

Challenges

The Indo-Pacific has recently presented itself as a hotbed of conflict and competition. It is now dominated by a combination of geo-strategic and geo-economic interests. It has coincided with the remarkable rise of China which has become both ambitious and aggressive in the posture of making territorial claims in the South-China Sea and turning the East China Sea into a monopoly zone of naval control. Further, it has made rapid advances into the Indian Ocean with strategic and economic initiatives. This has come as a challenge to the established international rule-based system.

Indo-Pacific means different areas for countries. For the US, it is from her Western Coast to the West Coast of India. For India, the Indo-Pacific area means the entire Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific. It was highlighted by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018 at the Shangri-La Dialogue. It covers the area from Africa to the Americas covering both the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean in tandem with that of Japan. At the dialogue, the Indian Prime Minister emphasised on few major aspects which reflected India's policy perspective on the Indo-Pacific that includes 'Inclusiveness', 'Openness', 'ASEAN Centrality', and the concept was not directed against any country

The US Government does not consider China as a part of the Indo-Pacific whereas India sees it as an inclusive construct. Again, other shareholder powers having different views include Japan, Australia, South Korea and ASEAN Nations.

Amit Dev (2022) observed that Indo-Pacific is home to sixty-five per cent of the world's population which accounts for sixty-three per cent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and more than sixty per cent of the world's maritime trade flows through the region. The economic interests and future growth of many nations in the region and beyond are intricately linked to the freedom of navigation and free flow of trade through the Indo-Pacific.

The collapse of the USSR brought an end to Cold War. During the post-Cold War era, there was a phenomenal 'rise of China'. Its rise in the field of

economy, military and technology has stood it as a competition with the US as a global leader. This has caused a tectonic shift in the power balance. It has become a new headache for the US in particular and Chinese adversaries in general. China's growing interest in the East China Sea and South China Sea has a direct bearing on the Indo-Pacific. China's disregard for established maritime law and the creation of artificial islands have raised eyebrows among the neighbouring littoral States. The safety, security and stability of the region have become a new issue. This aggressive posture of China has led to the revival of the Quadrilateral Dialogue which had remained at a concept stage. It is comprised of the US, Australia, Japan and India, having the objective of peaceful maritime governance in Indo-Pacific for smooth navigation of traffic and trade.

Later, Australia, UK and US formed a trilateral security pact which irritated China. Today, India, Japan and Australia are major stakeholders as well as power balancers in the Indo-Pacific. In this background, the Russo-Ukrainian war has brought Russia and China closer and the latter has initiated its mischievous 'One China Theory' by which Taiwan is expecting military action and hoping for assistance from the mentor United States. The Indo-Pacific is one of the peaceful trade zones for the majority of the countries but their trade is experiencing the 'Challenge from the Dragon' which has threatened global peace and the anxious moments for a possible global war.

Amit Dev (2022) observes that China is a dominant military power and the numerical and technological asymmetry concerning countries in the Indo-Pacific is growing.

Besides disputes between China and several countries in the region, the irritants are the unilateral action of China in the region, the creation of artificial islands and airfields, building of military bases in the Paracel and Spratly islands. The above activities increase the EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) of China. The major sufferers of China's South China Sea policy are the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei and Malaysia. The Sino-Indian relations are worsening every month after the Galwan incident and the close friendship between China and Pakistan as well as China's so-called financial help to many countries in the Indian Ocean Region are viewed as a possible debt trap after seeing the situation in Sri Lanka

China is the manufacturing hub and its import of oil is huge. It needs energy security for the sustenance of its growth, particularly after the COVID-19 holocaust. It eyes for control over Malacca Straits for smooth import of crude

oil from Gulf Countries. For this, the use of military force in the region cannot be ruled out.

Thus, the Indo-Pacific region is vital to the maintenance of world peace, the economic stability of the stakeholders, and overall security through observance of maritime law and conduct of trade through positive ocean governance.

India and Indo-Pacific

It is pertinent here to reiterate that contemporary issues involved in the Indo-Pacific region are of vital significance for India. Because the developments in Indo-Pacific are a combination of geo-strategic and geo-economic concerns. They are related to Ocean governance in the security, economic development, environment, resource resilience and ecological domains.

India is a major stakeholder in Indo-Pacific and recent developments in this region have had a visible impact on Indian Foreign Policy making and implementation. This can be seen as a shift in New Delhi's strategic environment. Its vision has gone beyond its continental borders to a new maritime space. Further, Australia, Japan, and the USA have shown interest in supporting and promoting a stronger Indian role in the Indo-Pacific.

One researcher has identified three specific elements of India's Indo-Pacific approach. First, it underlines the Indo-Pacific as an opportunity to expand India's footprints across the region while facing significant capacity and capital constraints. Second, India places partnerships at the core of India's Indo-Pacific interests while collaborating with bigger powers such as Australia, France, Japan and the US, which have provided a greater platform to New Delhi to expand its diplomatic footprint, its relationship with island nations will shape India's role in the Indo-Pacific. Due to the geographic proximity of the island States – both Maldives and Sri Lanka and, to a greater extent, Mauritius and Seychelles – to India, their foreign policy choices will have a direct impact on New Delhi's great power ambitions, priorities, and investments will in the Indian Ocean (Baruah 2020).

Ever since NDA came to power in 2014, the Indian Prime Minister has taken a careful study and cautious action relating to Indo-Pacific. It was neither interested to be a part of containment politics nor to irritate China for obvious reasons. The option was to maintain a 'right balance'.

Seeing Beijing's aggressive and expansionist approach, New Delhi could realise a need to balance a rising China and also play a leading role in the

region. It is to be noted that New Delhi's priority always was the immediate India Ocean Region. South East Asia is always a visible part of India's strategic mapping. The aggressive attitude of China in the South China Sea had an impact on South East Asia. This provoked India to convert the 'Look East Policy' of the Rao Government to the 'Act East Policy' of the Modi Government. India and ASEAN relationship got a new diplomatic and commercial push.

By 2018, India has observed both international and regional concerns over China's disregard for established norms and dilution of the concept of rule-based governance. In the Shangri-La Dialogue (2018) Modi outlined New Delhi's strong commitment to the rule-based international order and her desire to build a better relationship with China; he made the Indo-Pacific a special focus of India' Foreign Policy.

Modi's Shangri-La Dialogue provided a framework for India's Indo-Pacific priorities as well as its concerns and challenges. New Delhi believed in Indo-Pacific as the area from the shores of Africa to that of the Americas. This provided a broad physical boundary to make easier the adoption of New Delhi's initiatives. Prime Minister Modi emphasized 'Four Key Elements': the importance of partnerships and the benefits of collaboration, which hints at a shift from isolation to engagement. Second, to be a partner but not a group or 'alliances of containment'. Third, New Delhi's acknowledgement of the emergence of new security architecture and groupings as one of the pillars of the new order. It is easy to understand Modi through the 'Four Ds' – Democracy, Defence, Diaspora and Dosti towards the Indo-Pacific region and all the stakeholders. Partnerships have been the central pillar of India's Indo-Pacific strategy.

It will be a travesty of truth if we do not examine the available opportunities and India's initiatives in that regard.

The first initiative was confined to infrastructure collaborations with Japan. It intended to counter the Chinese initiatives in the region which was based on the use-and-throw approach.

The Europe-India relationship was trade-related and visualize strategic importance; barring a couple of bilateral defence ties with France and the UK, India got a convincing supporting strategic partnership hand among the EU nations.

The African littoral States of the Indian Ocean had links with India but it was weak and traditional. The growing presence of Beijing could change India's Africa-approach. Through capacity building and humanitarian assistance steps, India could recognize her naval presence in the Eastern Indian Ocean. Official

visits and the opening of diplomatic missions in this belt have promoted India's image and developed trust in India's positive cooperation.

The long-ignored island nations in the Indian Ocean who fell victim to big power politics are now conscious of their maritime security and have initiated new collaborations where India has become a major participant.

Further, India increased the frequency of collaborations with its key partners like Australia, Japan, USA, and France. New Delhi is coordinating with its friends and partners to identify new initiatives and challenges across the Indo-Pacific. India is the key proposer of the creation of 'Disaster Resilient Infrastructure' for which instant support came from Australia, Japan and the USA.

Conclusion

The post-Cold War diplomatic and security environment has changed. Though India has got enthusiastic collaborations with many countries and meaningful participation in the settlement of international disputes, her primary area of concern remains in the Indian Ocean. Fundamental and structural changes in the region threaten all aspects of India's security as well as its vision and initiatives. The changing security environment in the Indian Ocean expects a change in New Delhi's military and security responses. The role played by the Indian Navy in the protection of the interests of friendly nations in the region who are apprehensive of the military designs of Beijing is praiseworthy. The creation of maritime domain awareness among affected nations and the enhanced presence of the Indian Navy are two such instances.

Thus, India got an opportunity to act and make its presence felt in the Indo-Pacific where it has played both the role of counsellor and service provider. India stands for Strong Democratic Values, the Rule of Law and other shared interests. Two takeaways at this stage are, China in the post-COVID era is on the back foot relating to the broader Indian Ocean Region and is confined to East China and the South China Sea, and India has tried to build a new profile in the Indo-Pacific and a visible proactive role globally.

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Ayushman Bharat–Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana: Implications for the Future of Public Health in India

Abstract

India's public sector healthcare scheme namely Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (PMJAY) is a comprehensive programme designed for the healthcare benefits of poor people. Despite problems in primary healthcare services and rural health infrastructure, the Indian government has concentrated on adhering to a short-term demand-driven health insurance protection model. Such coverage could become a milestone if adequate basic healthcare provisioning could be provided simultaneously with a properly designed health insurance programme. The Indian government has resorted primarily to the extension of private healthcare to make it accessible for the poor. Some potential consequences can be, increased privatization of healthcare services, and a potential rise in health premium costs and benefits accruing mainly to the private healthcare players. In view of the onslaught of the pandemic in recent times and the Covid-like outbreak of diseases in the future neglected basic healthcare services for the poor can't be afforded, especially in rural areas. This paper analyses the achievements of the Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY Scheme to highlight its implications for the future of public health in India.

Key Words: *Public Health; Ayushman Bharat; Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana; Health Insurance; Public Health Infrastructure; Covid-19 Pandemic.*

Introduction

The *Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana* under *the Ayushman Bharat* programme (AB-PMJAY), of the government of India, otherwise known as the

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National Health Protection Scheme, was launched in Union Budget 2018-19. It provides 5 lakh rupees of annual health cover each for ten crore families for secondary and tertiary healthcare. It is a comprehensive health insurance programme designed for the healthcare protection of the poor, as it provides treatment for a total of 1669 procedures from 26 specialties that include chronic illnesses like cancer, heart ailments etc. It includes non-communicable diseases and special treatments as well like renal transplants. As the 'world's largest public sector funded health cover scheme' many hail this programme as a one-stop solution for the health problems of the poor and BPL families. The Budget initially did not disclose the expenditure requirement and sources of funds for the programme, thus leaving the fiscal strategy to meet this expenditure uncertain.

Despite substantial problems in primary healthcare in India and the necessity for creating better rural health infrastructure, the Government of India has primarily focused on providing short-term solutions of a demand-driven health insurance protection model. What could have been better choices for the government, to fulfil its basic health care provisioning along with other public health services- necessitates debate and closer examination of the issues involved. India is at crossroads now, as the future of the country's public health depends largely from now onwards when the PMJAY programme is repositioned with increased health expenses necessitated due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the beginning, the Indian government initiated the process of consultation with the states for working out the modalities of financing the *Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana*. Preliminary discussion with the health care actuaries has resulted in an initial estimation of total expenditure on premium per family at Rs. 1082. The centre was likely to bear a premium share of Rs. 649 per family and all states together Rs. 433 per family. That turns out, for ten crore families, Rs. 10,820 crores of allocation by the centre and states together – out of which the Centre's burden was estimated to be around Rs. 6,490 crores and States' share was pegged at Rs. 4,330 crores (*Indian Express*, 09 February 2018). These figures were arrived at with the assumption that the average family size is four persons and with all ten crore households are likely to be covered entirely in a single phase. Moreover, PMJAY had assumed a utilization range of 1.8% to 2.3% (*Indian Express*, 09 February 2018).

India has about 22 per cent of its population as poor as per World Bank 2012 data- that counts at 270 million or 27 crore people (World Bank country data). Assuming the same ratio of poor people today, this number must have increased up to 290 million for a total population of about 134 crores. Going by

the announcement, the Indian government targeted to cover about 400 million people from 100 million families (taking an average of 4 family size) for its health insurance coverage. That's an extra 110 million people more than the likely poor number. But given the unusually lower level at which India's poverty line is fixed, this seems reasonable and justifiable. Taking into account only the abject poor, it would have excluded a vast majority of the people in the lower-income strata from health coverage.

Public Health Model in India: Inconsistency Affordable?

India's health statistics are a stark reality of its grim healthcare negligence which is worsened by poor basic health services. In 2015, India had the world's highest number of women dying while giving childbirth; the world's highest under-5 child mortality; its public health system ranked 112 among 190 countries; only 1 doctor for every 1,700 people and 21 per cent of the global burden of disease (*Economic Times*, 31 October 2015).

India has been following a mixed approach to the Public Health model – the public health infrastructure model and health insurance coverage model. In the process, India has abandoned the first one i.e., increasingly neglecting the basic health infrastructure at the primary level. India's overall health expenditure comes to one of the lowest levels of 1.2 per cent of GDP globally, compared to 3 per cent in China, and 8.3 per cent in the US, whereas the global average was 5.4 per cent in 2015 (World Health Statistics, WHO). Over the years, the Indian government has cut down public spending on health care and health infrastructure specifically in real terms. The government had already cut about 20 per cent of its healthcare budget in 2014-15 out of fiscal constraints. That is more than Rs. 6,000 crores or US$ 948 million, which was cut from the budgetary allocation of about US$ 5 billion for 2014-15. Thus, over the years, India has been progressively neglecting the supply-side public health infrastructure model to create long-term health facilities in the country, rather it has focused on creating a short-term demand-driven insurance-based health care service delivery model.

This has further potential to neglect the already dilapidated basic health infrastructure in the country, especially in rural areas. The PMJAY Scheme is a step forward towards catering to the seemingly easy healthcare solution via the insurance coverage route and postponing the creation of basic health infrastructure in the future. Can this inconsistency be affordable now when the country has faced two years of the Covid-19 pandemic? Definitely, the Indian government is aware of this fact in the post-pandemic scenario that it needs to create more and better public health infrastructure, especially in rural areas.

This awareness and steps towards the fulfilment of the supply-side loopholes in public health bear significant implications for the future of the public health care system in India.

Public Health Insurance Schemes in India

India has one of the world's most inefficient ways of private health expenditure patterns. In India, more than two-thirds of household spending on health comes from own Out-of-Pocket Spending (OOPS). Hence it is the most inefficient and least accountable mode of health expenditure. Initially, the government of India intervened in the supply-side financing for health systems – mostly on basic health infrastructure creation and building health professionals and support health workers. This, however, over the years has taken a back seat due to the progressive deregulation of the healthcare sector after overall reforms in the economy since the early 1990s. This process thus became unsuccessful in reducing Out-of-Pocket health spending substantially. Instead of increasing the basic supply of physical and human health infrastructure, the government took steps to test the demand side health financing approach. With this policy in mind, the government of India introduced *Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana* (RSBY) for provisioning healthcare coverage for poor families below the poverty line. The basic objective was to reduce the OOP health expenditure of poorer families and increase their affordability and access to health care services. Moreover, with an intention to create a strong foundation for provisioning a universal healthcare system in the country, the central government provides health insurance coverage to poor families through at least two programmes: the *RSBY* and *Universal Health Insurance Scheme.*

Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana was started in early 2008 and intended only for the poor (BPL) households, but later expanded to include unorganised workers like: construction workers, railway porters; domestic and sanitation workers and so on. The premium burden under RSBY is shared by the Centre and the States with a 75:25 ratio respectively. The program had targeted to cover 7 crore families by 2012-17, by the culmination of the 12th Five Year Plan (RSBY, GoI).

The main service delivery model of RSBY remains demand-side financed, with freedom of choice of treatment in the accredited government and private hospitals, and cashless service reimbursable to the service provider. The reimbursable sum was a pre-determined package of Rs. 30,000 sum coverage on a family floater basis. The funding Pattern of RSBY remains as follows: contribution by Centre – 75 per cent of an annual premium of Rs.750, with a

cap of Rs.565 per family annually. Contribution by each State – 25 per cent of the annual premium, and any extra premium. The beneficiary details are digitized through a smart card which is also borne by the Central Government. To cover the registration/renewal expenditure, a nominal sum of Rs.30 per annum is paid by the respective beneficiary. The additional administrative and implementing costs of the scheme are borne by the states themselves (National Health Portal, GoI).

RSBY had two-fold objectives: one, financial protection from disastrous healthcare costs by decreasing out-of-pocket expenses on hospitalization and critical care treatment. Two, to improve access and affordability towards quality healthcare for BPL households and other vulnerable groups of the unorganized sector. The Rs. 30,000 health insurance covers a maximum of 5 members of a family. Moreover, an extra transport expense of Rs 100 per hospitalisation is also available to the beneficiary subject to an annual cap of Rs. 1000 per household. As on 31 March 2017, under RBSY the number of active Smart Cards was 3,63,32,475 and the total hospitalization cases were 1,40,84,587. Till March 2013, under the scheme, there were 34,285,737 smart cards along with 5,097,128 cases of hospitalization (RSBY Spotlight, GoI).

The Universal Health Insurance Scheme is another insurance-based demand-driven health protection scheme, meant for improving healthcare access to BPL families. It is implemented through the network of 4 public sector general insurance companies. Like the RSBY, under this scheme also reimbursement of hospitalization expenses up to Rs. 30,000 is available for one entire family along with an accidental death cover of Rs. 25,000 for the earning head of the family. Moreover, compensation to the earning member @ Rs. 50 per day up to a maximum of 15 days is also available under the scheme. The premium subsidy is fixed at Rs. 200 for each individual, Rs. 300 and Rs. 400 for each 5-person and 7-person family respectively (National Health Portal, GoI).

Besides the central government schemes, some state governments have their own popular state-level health insurance schemes. For example:

1. *Aarogyasri*, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana
2. *Mukhyamantari Amrutam* (MA), Gujarat
3. *Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme*, Tamil Nadu
4. *Biju Krushak Kalyan Yojana (BKKY)*, Odisha
5. *Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya Yojana,* Maharashtra

Aarogyasri is a Community Health Insurance Scheme implemented in undivided Andhra Pradesh since 2007. The scheme renders financial protection to BPL families of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana up to Rs. 2 lakhs annually for treatment of grave illnesses. A total of 938 treatments, surgery and therapies are covered under the scheme. In 2019 Andhra government renamed the scheme as *Dr YSR Aarogyasri*.

The *Mukhyamantari Amrutam (MA)*, Gujarat scheme provides access to poor families to quality healthcare involving hospitalization and therapies through empanelled hospitals. It covers cardiovascular & neuro-surgeries, cancer, renal and newborn diseases (Sahoo, Sriram et al, 2017).

Since the year 2013, the Odisha government is providing health insurance coverage to 60 lakh farmers and their families, under a scheme named *Biju Krushak Kalyan Yojana*. Odisha government is providing 100 per cent funding for the BKKY which provides Rs. 1 lakh coverage per family included under the BKKY. It provides health insurance coverage to up to five family members. The Rs. One lakh coverage includes surgery, maternity and treatment cost up to Rs. 30 thousand plus ICU care expenses up to Rs.70 thousand. Moreover, the Odisha government launched Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) in 2018 to render universal health coverage for all the people of the state, especially economically vulnerable families. BSKY comes with two components: One, it covers the full cost of all health services for all of its people (disregarding income, status or residence) getting treated in all public hospitals. And two, it provides healthcare insurance of up to Rs. 5 lakh to every family per year through treatment in empanelled private hospitals and an additional Rs. 5 lakhs for women members after exhaustion of the first limit. It aims to cover 96.5 lakh economically vulnerable families of Odisha through the BSKY scheme. (http://www.bsky.odisha.gov.in/)

The *Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme* is another popular healthcare scheme run by the government of Tamil Nadu so as to provide free treatment, hospitalization and surgical care to poor families with annual family income below Rs. 72,000. The scheme provides cashless hospitalization facilities in government and private hospitals for specified ailments/treatment with coverage up to Rs. 1 lakh annually per household on a floater basis. For certain critical care, the overall limit is higher: up to Rs.1.5 lakhs. The scheme also provides follow-up treatment cover and additional benefits of diagnostics.

The *Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya Yojana* is a universal health care programme of the government of Maharashtra. It was first launched in July

2012 and covered the entire state in November 2015. It provides free medical care costing up to Rs. 1.5 lakh annually per family (Rs. 2.5 lahks for the renal transplant) to low-income people of the state in public and empanelled hospitals for 971 diseases and therapies.

As can be seen, the two central government schemes were partially covering the health needs of the people- mostly the smaller hospitalization needs, i.e., the secondary treatments which are less costly and were not meant for critical diseases needing costly treatments. RSBY could have been a critical intervention at the secondary healthcare level, had it been catering more expenditure than the paltry sum of Rs. 30,000 with larger coverage – one lakh coverage for 10 crore people and mostly for secondary healthcare. This could have been much more effective and realistic for implementation without much exorbitant burden on public finances. Anyway, RSBY was subsumed with PMJAY altogether with Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme.

As discussed above, Rs. 1 lakh or more coverage is available with health insurance programmes of some state governments which are immensely popular, realistically covers the health costs for secondary care and are more effectively utilized than the RSBY or other programme. One approach implies that with about one-third cost of the present PMJAY scheme more realistic health protection could have been provided. That is at an affordable Rs. 3,600 crores could have been enough for effective treatment for the genuinely deserving 10 crore poor masses. In that case, more public funds could have been available for the basic health infrastructure at the primary level – which would have genuinely balanced the supply side and the demand side of the healthcare system in the country.

Feasibility and Sustainability of PMJAY

With full-fledged discussions with NITI Aayog, the Finance Ministry, the Health & Family Welfare Ministry, Economic Advisory Council and state governments, the Government of India rolled out the Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY programme. The discussion focused on the feasibility of the programme from the expenditure side. The preliminary expenditure was estimated at Rs.10,820 crore (*Indian Express*, 09 February 2018). The Union Budget 2018-19 didn't provide data on likely expenditures and sources of revenue for it. Thus, the question arises of what can be the likely burden on the government's revenue and fiscal deficit. Also on the funding pattern for the programme.

I. Sources of Revenue and Sharing the Revenue Burden

The sources of revenue for AB-PMJAY do not come from extra-budgetary sources as for subsidized social welfare programmes, due to no takers for purchasing welfare bonds or sovereign bonds in lieu of that. So a part of the programme's expenditure is financed from public borrowing and a part of the burden is shifted to the states. As health is a state subject, the central government facilitates and supports states' shortages of their health budget by partly funding it from its own sources. But in Centrally funded schemes, the entire part of the expenditure or a majority part of it can be supported by the Centre. Finally, the modalities worked out that, the majority part of the programme's burden was to be borne by the centre with some components of expenditure to be borne by the states. Initial estimates had pegged that, for ten crore families, the cost of Rs. 10,820 crores was to be borne by the centre and states together – out of which the Centre's burden was estimated to be around Rs. 6,490 crores and States' share was pegged at Rs. 4,330 crores. That's a ratio of 60:40 shared by Centre and States respectively, comparatively lesser than the 75:25 ratio of RSBY. It is to be noted that the premium contribution shared by Centre & States is at a 60:40 ratio in all implementing states, except the North Eastern and Himalayan states, in which the ratio is 90:10 (Implementation of National Health Protection Scheme, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, PIB Delhi, 09 July 2019).

As the majority part of the Burden falls on the Centre, it has significant implications for the finances of the central government. The 40 per cent share burden on the states is also quite large, seeing their state of finances arising out of revenue loss from VAT due to the GST implementation. The states are getting compensated over a period of 5 years for the revenue loss from GST implementation [under The Goods and Services Tax (Compensation to States) Act, 2017]. Hence, as of now, they are not yet been fully compensated. The first chunk of revenue compensation of Rs 8,698 crores was released to states on October 28, 2017 (for the first 2 months July-August 2017) after GST implementation. This was not in full amount but 58 per cent of the total cess collection – Rs. 15,060 crores for these two months. The total estimated revenue loss for the states during July-October 2017 was Rs. 24,500 cr. The full amount got finally released to the states by end of December 2017 (*Times of India*, 29 December 2017). To raise the revenue for this compensation the Central Government is imposing a cess on the luxury and demerit goods, over and above the 28 per cent GST rate on these items.

The cess route to finance the public welfare expenditure is quite a policy in the funding structure of the central government – which was visible in quite a

few Union Budgets. For meeting the education expenses and healthcare costs of BPL and rural poor families, the Central government in the 2018-19 Budget proposal, had raised the *Health and Education Cess* on income tax and corporation tax from 3 to 4 per cent. The government expected to collect an amount of Rs.11,000 crore from this cess in 2019 (Sahoo and Panda, 2018). A major part of this goes to funding *Sarv Siksha Abhiyan* and the *Mid-Day-Meal* programmes of the central government. The balance sum goes to funding the central government's Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and other public health programmes. Whether the government expects to get some funds from this source, has not been made it clear. But it's certain that this fund is not going to adequately finance PMJAY and the government will rely on public borrowings. Then it has to bear the likely consequences of its budget deficit.

II. Expenditure Pattern and Fund Sufficiency

The Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY scheme covers 10.74 crore households i.e., 50 crore individual beneficiaries from the SECC-2011 database (AB-PMJAY, PIB, 23 July 2021, Government of India). By July 2021 it got further expanded to cover 13.44 crore families or 65 crore individuals, and a total of 16.14 crore smart cards were distributed to the beneficiaries. Likewise, 1.96 crore hospital admissions in total worth Rs. 24,315 crores are already authorized through the 23 thousand empanelled hospitals by the same time. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its induced difficulties and fears, a noticeable impact was found on availing the benefits of the scheme. However, during the first year of covid, i.e., for the period 01 March 2020 to 19 July 2021, 1.05 crore hospitalizations costing about Rs. 11,862 crores were authorized under the scheme (AB-PMJAY, PIB, 23 July 2021).

The funds allocated for PMJAY in FY2021-22 stood at Rs. 6400 crores. But it was reduced to Rs. 3200 crores in the union budget (RE). Likewise in 2020-21, the total allocation to states for PMJAY was Rs. 2,544 crores which was lower than the 2019-20 allocation of Rs. 2993 crore (Lok Sabha statement tabled in August 2021, reported by IndiaSpend). These figures show that there is a lack of sufficient fund allocation for the PMJAY programme compared to the initial requirements estimated. How do we view this – lesser demand for fund utilization or failure of awareness among masses for full utilization of the scheme? These issues must be looked into by the government. Moreover, various budget estimates show that there is a critical shortage of healthcare funds in the states, with healthcare expenditure at 4 to 6 per cent of their GSDP. Estimates from state government budgets show their overall budgetary allocations on

healthcare stand at a paltry sum of 1.25 per cent of their GSDP – in that about 0.25 per cent is contributed by the central government. This trend is going to be a major issue in coming years as health expenditure requirements increase drastically due to Covid-19 induced burdens. This can result in twin burdens – insufficient funds for central healthcare schemes and shortages of centre's contribution to states' basic healthcare needs. The must government will be required to look for additional resources for maintaining balance.

III. Borrowing Requirement and Fiscal Implication

The borrowing requirement of the central government to fund its welfare programmes is a crucial part of the deficit financing strategy of any developing country. But the governments of developing countries have to sync their development goals with their budget deficit management strategy. The Indian government has to take care of its financial commitment in order to fulfil parliament imposed Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management mandate. The structural reforms process imposed by the IMF-World Bank has created a system of fiscal management in India whereby a specifically targeted level of fiscal deficit is to be achieved by a certain date so as to ensure that the borrowings burden and overall outstanding public debt remains sustainable in the medium to long term.

This strategy of managing public borrowings has forced successive governments to control fiscal deficits within 3.5 per cent to 3 per cent of GDP in many years. The year FY19 being a national election year had seen the announcement of many new welfare programmes including PMJAY. In lieu of that, the Fiscal Deficit for 2017-18, supposed to be 3.2 per cent of GDP, got raised to 3.5 per cent of GDP (Union Budget Document: 2018-19). Likewise, the Covid-19 pandemic distorted the fiscal situation of the economy putting a heavy burden on the health budget and a severe impact on the fiscal and revenue deficits. The fiscal deficit of the central government overshoot to 9.2 per cent of GDP in FY20-21, 6.9 per cent in FY21-22 and is forecasted to be 6.4 per cent in FY22-23. The revenue deficits are also higher at 7.3 per cent of GDP in FY20-21, 4.7 per cent in FY21-22 and 3.8 per cent in FY22-23 (Union Budget Documents, GoI).

The above figures reveal that in recent years the central government is already grappling with a greater shortfall in revenue sources and dealing with higher budgetary deficits, which are going to be much more burdensome in the coming financial years due to the potential global oil price spike imposed by latest geo-political events like the Russia-Ukraine War. In this scenario, the twin burden

of the Covid-19 pandemic and the global oil price spike will put a further burden on the government's coffer. Whether the government can meet its target level of deficits in the coming year and raise sufficient finances for public health expenses including sustainably financing the PMJAY programme will depend upon its careful economic strategies.

IV. State Health Schemes and Conflict of Interests

As discussed above, some of the state governments like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu had their popular regional health insurance schemes. So far as sharing the expenditure burden with the states was concerned, the 40 per cent share on states was an added burden, as some state governments had their own health-cover programmes, fully funded by themselves. Moreover, these regional health insurance programmes were immensely popular-compared to RSBY in terms of much higher insurance coverage sum and higher coverage of population beyond poor/BPL families.

Thus, the central government offered to bundle up the state-level insurance programs with PMJAY for effective allocation of resources and avoidance of multiplicity of programmes. This common understanding between the Centre and states for effective sharing of the burden and co-implementation of the scheme led to the adoption of the PMJAY scheme in all States and Union Territories (UTs) of India except 3 states- West Bengal, Odisha and Delhi. Further, the States are given the liberty of implementing the scheme as per their suitable operational model. Thus, PMJAY is getting implemented across 33 States/UTs in 3 modes: Insurance mode, Mixed mode and Trust mode. While most of the issues of conflict with the state governments on the abolition of their state-specific schemes were sorted out, some elements of popularity and symbols of regional parties' identities associated with their programmes still persist.

Implications for the Future of Public Health in India

As India is following a mixed approach in Public Health Model- the Public Health Infrastructure Model and Health Insurance Coverage Model – neglecting the basic health infrastructure at the primary level cannot be affordable today in view of additional disease burdens imposed by the pandemic and climate change events. The future implication for public health cannot further be left skewed towards the bottom of the population:

Larger Private Health Market vs. Deteriorating Public Health Infrastructure*:* Adopting an overwhelming insurance coverage model cannot be a

panacea in lieu of the development of basic health infrastructure. Comprehensive health insurance coverage will lead to good health care promotion in the private sector, as private hospitals are roped into the service. Abandonment of basic health provisions will lead to a greater number of services from the purview of public health, and thus they will be part of private health services. This process in health care provision seems easier for the government as it does not have to create infrastructure – which takes longer time duration than the quick-fix insurance solution. This creates a larger private healthcare market in a shorter time but deteriorates the public health infrastructure in long run without much government support. In view of uncertainties induced by pandemics, ever more expansion of basic public health infrastructure is needed.

Moral Hazard and Escalation of Health Care Costs: Gradual neglect of public health infrastructure at the primary and secondary levels, can lead to the potential increase in the cost of health care for the common masses. As the private healthcare market grows, the cost of treatment also increases due to the tendency of escalating the treatment costs in hospitals due to insurance coverage available from the government. There seems to be a tacit understanding among the different parties in the healthcare business – doctors, hospitals, insurance providers etc. Due to inflationary costs at every level, the costs of health insurance finally go up – leading to a further cycle of pressure on the government to hike health insurance premiums. This leads to the creation of moral hazard in the sense that an increased number of treatments come under insurance coverage and those not under coverage tend to get costlier as a small number of service providers are available for them – potentially making overall escalation in the health care costs.

Increased Privatization of Health Care: Enlargement of the private health care market, due to greater space given through the Health Protection Scheme has the potential to increase the privatization of health care in the country. When people get easy health facilities at better private hospitals for secondary and tertiary services, their tendency to visit worse public hospitals for primary care becomes less and less. Easiness of availing of better but costly services in the private sector provides a tendency for people not to demand better services at public hospitals, but rather skip them and visit private hospitals. This can lead to a further boost to the private healthcare market at the cost of increased deterioration of basic healthcare services.

Lesser Affordability of Health Care: Escalation of general health care costs in the economy, due to public sector insurance dependence, can make general

health care less affordable for the common masses. This in fact, is the case in the US, where despite comprehensive insurance coverage, the health care costs are one of the highest in the world and common masses face difficulty in affording the insurance premium for basic health care notwithstanding the public subsidy available.

Increased Corporatization of Health Care: Not only increased privatization, India is witnessing increased corporatization in health care services. India's health policies have been such that bigger corporate hospitals are tying up with insurance providers to get empanelled with the government's public health programmes. Bigger hospitals are better placed in maintaining higher mandated standards as per government norms and can maintain better services. This makes their services costlier, but now these secondary and tertiary services will be affordable to a greater number of people who were outside the purview. Many smaller hospitals will not be able to provide higher standards of services and are thus likely to be de-empanelled. Thus, in the end, a highly costly, increasingly private sector dominated, largely corporatized health care market will be created in the country, whose health care costs will be driven by the pressure of insurance premium push from costly settlement system due to tacit collusion among the health care providers.

Irrelevance of Small Hospitals & Individual Services Providers: Gradual and increased corporatization in health care services, due to greater insurance-based health services system has the potential to make small hospitals and individual health providers irrelevant, as they will not be part of the insurance protection system. As large masses running millions will depend on bigger hospitals, it is these hospitals that will be making enormous profits. They will thus spread their network in tier-II, and III cities and small towns, which were earlier catered to by smaller hospitals. Individual doctors and health services providers of tier-III cities and small towns will find it difficult to survive in the insurance-driven market, as they won't have insurance incentives and no longer they will attract even the lower segment of the population. Closure of business of small hospitals and individual health providers further consolidate the healthcare business in the hands of corporate hospitals and is likely to further enhance the costs of healthcare in the country.

Rural vs. Urban Health Care: Already health services in the country are concentrated in urban centres, with dilapidated health infrastructure in the rural areas. With greater institutionalization of insurance-driven healthcare models with neglect and state withdrawal from basic healthcare infrastructure, rural

healthcare facilities will further deteriorate. The country's vital social health statistics like the rates of infant mortality (IMR), child mortality (CMR) and maternal mortality (MMR) critically depend on these rural health institutions and their services. When higher investment goes towards insurance provisioning of secondary and tertiary services concentrated in the urban centres - the government will be left with a lower share of funds for rural health services. In the end, this will see colossal neglect and privatization at every level of services with a higher worsening impact on rural masses.

By July 2021, about 23,000 empanelled hospitals were engaged under the PMJAY scheme by different State or UT governments (AB-PMJAY, PIB, 23 July 2021). Can the Indian government enforce an empanelment contract criterion for providing mandatory low-cost rural health care services by the empanelled corporate hospitals? This will increase rural healthcare intensity in the country and increase health infrastructure as well. Under the Ayushman Bharat programme, moreover, the Indian government has targeted to create 1.5 lakhs Health and Wellness Centres (HWC) through the upgradation of Sub-Health Centres and Primary Health Centres across rural and urban areas. By July 2021, there were 77,406 HWCs operating throughout the country (AB-PMJAY, PIB, 23 July 2021). Dedicated funding towards it and states' thinking towards such upgradation efforts can bring health care improvements among the community.

Conclusion

The future of public health in India depends on what type of healthcare solutions the country designs. The short-term solutions which are demand-driven neglect the supply-side investment in public health infrastructure creation. Such an insurance-based demand-driven healthcare model does not create sufficient public health assets in the long run. Rather it promotes the private sector- both the corporate healthcare sector and private insurance businesses. In the process, however, the basic health care services for the poor get affected in the rural areas on whom poor masses critically depend for their primary health care needs.

The *Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana* is ambitious with its goals but it also needs sufficient allocation of funds. The present economic condition of the country- impacted due to the Covid-19 pandemic and potential upcoming global oil price spike – is such that it has every chance that the cost of funding the program may increase. This will further put a strain on the already delicate fiscal situation at present. Hence, a more pragmatic approach would be a realistic secondary and tertiary insurance coverage along

with a simultaneous balancing of basic health care needs of the country. The Indian government should recalibrate its national healthcare policy so as to make it further pro-poor and realistically achievable.

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Women Trafficking and Human Rights: Policy Interventions, Trends and Challenges in India

Abstract

Trafficking has been considered one of the serious problems in the contemporary period. It is an illegal and inhumane act toward human lives. Social and economic inequalities in society led the movement of the people within and across the countries possible. India became a hub of human trafficking in South Asian countries and this crime is considered the source, transit, and destination point in India. Lack of literacy rate, violence, gender biases, and misogynistic perception placed women and girls in a highly vulnerable situation and become a contributing factor to the problem of sex trafficking in India. Sex trafficking is a complex issue that always required a multidimensional approach to combat it. Trafficking in women is a violation of women's human rights. Therefore, analysing the socio-economic factors which are responsible for trafficking and its impacts on women is crucial in this regard. Given this backdrop, the paper is an attempt to analyse the socio-economic factors responsible for trafficking and its impact on women. Despite this, it further focuses on the preventive measures, policy interventions and their impact on trafficked women.

***Key Words**: Women trafficking, exploitation, gender discrimination, slavery, human rights, policies.*

Introduction

The twenty-first century is overturning a time of hatred when humans are being forced into the slave trade by other human beings. Despite modernity and development, still, the traditional forms of violence against women exist in either one form or another (visible as well as invisible) as women were not

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allowed to have the right to their bodies in the present times. Women as a member of human society have the same virtue as men but their dignity, freedom, and rights are always remained suppressed. Universal Declaration of Human Rights in its Article 1 says, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights (*UDHR*, 2015: 4)." When it says 'all human beings' it means it equivalently treated both men and women under one umbrella. Women also have an equal opportunity to access all the rights that a person should have by virtue. The same spirit can also be seen in the Constitution of India which guaranteed rights for women. Quintessentially, human rights are those rights that an individual must hold from birth in society. However, the human rights of women are negligible everywhere including in India in the present era. Their rights become a question mark that is visible and evident in present times.

Trafficking of human beings is a multi-billionaire business and India turned into a source, transit, and destination for traffickers. As Indian society is steeped in patriarchal practices, trafficking of women and children set off as an easy job for traffickers. Perhaps, it is unsuccessful for the international bodies, respective states and other institutions who are unable to stop the commodification and commercialisation of the lives of women. In this regard, it is a prerequisite to analyse the traditional form of slavery which existed in Indian society.

Debating Trafficking, Women and Human Rights

Trafficking of women is broadly a human rights problem. The constitution of India is in harmony with the UDHR which attempts to give importance to human dignity. The Indian constitution has also guaranteed that the principal value of the preamble is to protect the dignity of individuals (Roy & Chaman, 2017: 163). Thus, the universalistic nature of human rights treated every people equally all over the world without any differences or discrimination based on nationality, race, sex, religion, class, ethnicity, language, etc. It is also inalienable by nature in such a way that it belongs to every person by their birth. All human rights were indeed linked to one another and as a result, these rights are closely interrelated and equal to all whether it is civil or political or economic or cultural rights. Therefore, it is indivisible too (Pearson 2000: 8). He further argued:

> We specifically mention women's rights because, although all persons, regardless of gender, are entitled to enjoy all basic human rights, women are often denied these rights simply because they are women. In the context of trafficking, many basic rights of women are violated e.g., the right to be free from all forms of discrimination. Due to the unequal nature of gender

relations, women and girl-children form the majority of those who are trafficked (Pearson 2000: 8-9).

While quoting women's rights as human rights does not demand an extraordinary right for women, rather it claims that women are entitled as men. Countless women are deprived to attain their basic rights because of the misogynist appearance of the society that held women as inferior to men. This conception deprived them of to access justice, political participation, and their ability to make personal decisions for themselves (ibid). Poverty has also an immense role in women's lives. Nevertheless, it restricts them from the enjoyment of their human rights. It pushes many people to migrate from their state of origin to their destination for the sake of better livelihood and opportunities. Significantly, it deprives people of the attainment of rights that includes the right to food, work, housing, education, and right to adequate health, etc. They are not only deprived of these rights but their right to life, liberty, and security has also become a dream for them (Obokata, 2006: 122-123).

As defined by UN Palermo Protocol that "it is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, and receipt of people whose main objective is the exploitation of human beings" (Renzikowski, 2018: 14). Survivor of women trafficking is mostly prone to human rights violation. Thus, the UN document to prevent, suppress, and trafficking in person, especially women and children guarantees not to treat victims as criminals but rather to treat them as victims (*Human Trafficking*, 2018).

It can be said that it is the failure of the state in combating the trafficking of women and girls. Again, the vulnerability of women increases when they have already been excluded from their educational and constitutional rights and are not even given the right to control their lives. Most importantly the perception that promotes women are unable to support themselves as they are unskilled or unemployed and incapable, this statement highly exposed them to human trafficking (*Human Trafficking*, 2018: 9). Hence, the time requires that the government and civil society together protect women's human rights and consider equal and similar protection to both men and women.

Global Scenario of Human Trafficking

The average percentage of sexual exploitation of women in trafficking is massively high in comparison to other kinds of exploitation. While analysing the trends and share of different forms of exploitation in trafficking (from 2006 to 2018) at a global level, it is found that trafficking for sexual exploitation is

consistently mounting in these years when women were prone to it. Along with this, it is also seen that the figures for trafficking for forced labour and other forms of exploitation were dropping in contrast to the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation (*United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2020: 16). The recent pandemic has facilitated traffickers to operate at the underground level. The chances of re-trafficking had exacerbated victims' lives as many shelter homes had been forced to be closed and they leave unprotected. Again, the counselling and legitimate support provided by the shelters were reduced. This feasibility forms a precarious condition in victims' lives (*United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2021: 24). According to OSCE (Office of Security and Cooperation in Europe), Office for Democratic Institute and human rights (ODIHR), and UN Women, 70 per cent of survivors from 35countries had allegedly reported the financial distress in their well-being due to covid pandemic (Trafficking in Person Report, 2021). According to the global report of UNODC 2020, it estimated that during 2018, beyond ten trafficked victims five were founded as adult women and two were girls. The UNODC and ILO further state that globally seventy per cent of victims of trafficking are females (Mishra, 2021). The socio-economic vulnerability produced by the pandemic makes the job easy for traffickers to operate in a hidden manner. The investigation of the crime however becomes more challenging because of the invisibility of trafficked victims.

Neo-liberal Era and Sex Trafficking

Classical liberalism has been re-introduced and revived in the era of globalisation which is called neo-liberalism. It came into existence when the world is turned into a global village where the advancement of technology, connectivity, and transportation connects every nation. It is a twentieth-century phenomenon. The rapid increase in global capitalism and the competitive mode of neoliberal markets has boosted the flow of migrant workers alongside worsened labour exploitation that contributed to neoliberal slavery in the contemporary period (Banerjee, 2020: 416; Liu, 2022:100). The economic benefits of neoliberal policies largely disturbed human security on the grounds of economic equality and rights. The migrated women from rural areas suffered in the cities like Mumbai as wage labourers and there is a high possibility that later largely involved in commercial sexual activity.

The neoliberal doctrine has been criticised for its failure to reduce poverty. Neoliberalism is based on competitiveness, for a country, it is very difficult to offer effective protection for a diverse set of rights (Peksen, Blanton and Blanton,

2017: 1). The contemporary form of trafficking for sexual exploitation is an unpleasant representation of global capitalism that produces inequality imposed by the system of economic globalisation (Lahdo, 2020: 1). The capitalist mode of production in the neo-liberal era makes people unfree workers in the free market. This situation moreover enslaves people and increases their vulnerability to trafficking.

Uncomfortable Silence: Rethinking Contemporary Slavery

Human trafficking is an uncomfortable element that is normalized in human society. It needs to be traced in customs and traditions and understand how slavery has been deliberately normalised in society. Strangely, the deprivation of one becomes a privilege for another and perhaps, this gap leads to extremely unequal treatment in society. Again, inequality has given the power to the slave owner[1] for the continuous exploitation of the deprived sections. Women who have always been considered second-sex[2] and treated as a deprived and marginalised class, have been exploited for centuries. To enhance the fundamental understanding of its connection and roots, it is indispensable to have inclusive knowledge about how slave practices have been carried out in our Indian society for centuries.

Slavery is not a recent trend but it has been practised for centuries and is considered an age-old institution. In India slavery has been practised in many forms. In the ancient period, *Devadasi Pratha*[3] was highly exercised in states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, etc. It is a custom where women and children were forcefully married to a man-made deity and continuously exploited in the name of culture and divinity (Babar, 2015, para. 1). In the present day, slavery is highly different from ancient practices. It represents itself more awfully. Slavery however is more likely for monetary purposes. Trafficking for bonded labour, forced marriage, commercialisation of the human body, and drug trafficking are the advanced forms of present-day slavery that have taken immensely a looming shape. It can also be understood as an economic as well as social relationship where an individual is detained against their will through violence or threats with no pay majorly for commercial exploitation (Fitzpatrick, 2012: 16).

Bales and Soodalter (2009) argued that there are three important criteria to know a person is a slave. Firstly, when one person is completely dominated by another through physical and psychological abuse. Secondly, hazardous work with no wage, and the third point is economic exploitation which is defined as the production of profit for slaveholders. They gave importance to these three

conditions of slaves who lose their free will to live (p. 13). After many years, the League of Nations officially defined slavery as "the status or condition of a person over whom any or all the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised" (Patterson, 2018: 21). When it says ownership, it means the human body is coerced, controlled, and owned by the masters, where a person is deprived of his/her freedom and liberty. In a recent study of 2016, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) report highlighted that 40.3 million victims were forced into the current form of slavery and 99 per cent of women and girls were for forced labour, particularly in the commercialisation of the sex market (Banarjee, 2020: 415; *Global estimates of modern slavery: forced labour and forced marriage*, 2017: 9-10).

The contemporary form of slavery differs in many ways in comparison to the traditional form. The following sections will intend to explain how in the era of modern times slavery has taken its uttermost form which covers half of its population. The plight of women and children and the process of victimization, recruitment, and exploitation in the unstoppable slave trading in the neo-liberal period becomes a matter of concern.

Understanding Trafficking in Human Beings

Human trafficking is a dreadful crime against women and children. Over the last decades, it has grown dramatically and now it has become an academic debate. Trafficking is a contemporary form of human slavery. It is a process that always started with luring a person in the name of a better livelihood and ended with exploitation. Roy and Chaman (2017) mentioned the UN Palermo Protocol was the first international treaty that shapes numerous domestic explanations and took human trafficking more extensively. Thus, the protocol of the 'UN Conventions Against Transnational Organized Crime, to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons,' particularly Women and Children of 2000, defined trafficking in human beings as:

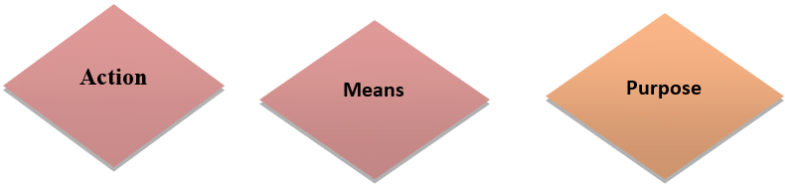
> The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons using the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation (Roy and Chaman 2017: 163).

In the above definition, offences such as; kidnapping, abduction, forced prostitution, and slavery were taken into account within its parameter.

Consequently, sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery, enslavement, and organ trading shall all be considered forms of exploitation (Mishra, 2013: 02). This treaty largely focuses on three key elements. Firstly, rather than emphasising the trafficking of women and girl children, it gives importance to the trafficking of humans as a whole. Secondly, it is driven for various purposes including sexual exploitation, labour, and in other domains. Thirdly, it majorly focuses on three core aspects that is force, fraud, and coercion which are the major forms of exploitation in the discourse of trafficking (Roy and Chaman, 2017: 163). The importance of this protocol is that it intends to define clearly and distinctively force, fraud, and coercion to identify trafficking. Researchers like Hathaway (2008: 2) and Mishra (2013: 3) argued that though the treaty provides solutions to tackle the global issue, it is criticised for giving maximum efforts to criminal inspection and prosecution.

It can be said that the assumption of exploitation, suppression, and control of other human beings is central to the inhumane dealing of trafficking. It has a strong network that has been operated in a very hidden manner and perhaps is the most organised criminal network. It reached a dreadful form of human rights violation that is beyond imagination (Roy and Chaman, 2017: 163). For instance, it becomes difficult to disclose who is engaged in this network of unlawful dealing of human beings. Sometimes their family members, neighbours, or close relatives are the agents through whom the initial phase of trafficking takes place. There should be a multi-dimensional mechanism that works for combating this crime. Along with criminalising trafficking, border security and control need to be followed strictly to address the cross-border trafficking and regular investigation of illegal immigration and exchange of information between nations should be strengthened.

According to the UN protocol the process of trafficking passes through three stages (Mishra, 2013: 3)



Source: *Figure 1.1* Three constituents of HT. Adapted from '*Human Trafficking: The Stakeholders' perspective',* by V. Mishra, 2013, 'Introduction: Perspective, Cause, and Effect of Human Trafficking,' p. 3.

This figure explains three constituents of HT. they are as follows: Action, means, and purpose. These together form illicit crimes against human lives. Actions are the process through which the illegal trade of human beings took place, these are: 'recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receiving of person.' Means include threat or force or any kind of imposition, fraud, abuse of power, and vulnerability by which a person is recruited. And lastly, all these rackets of illegal trading end in exploitation which is the core purpose of trafficking human beings (Mishra, 2013: 3).

Human Trafficking: A Quagmire for Women

Women are largely considered a vulnerable section of society. The vulnerability pushes them toward the cruel world which always operates behind the closed door of society. Sex trafficking is a global problem. Women are exploited within and across international borders for commercial sex work in brothels and other illegal causes.

According to ILO, the moment women and girls are forced to involve in commercial sex work and suppressed to act against their will, the illegal trade of trafficking takes place. Trafficking in person is a movement of people who are recruited, transported, harboured, or received by force and coercion. It includes extreme forms of threats, violence, or abuse of power to exploit women and girls and force them into prostitution and sex tourism (Garg and Zafar, 2022: 59). Today the strategies of slave recruiters have shifted dramatically. Their tactics are not limited to kidnapping the victims rather the victims have entered through the door of a new opportunity opened by traffickers. The recruiters appear globally with a very friendly attitude with updated news of a good job with high pay. Thus, this will help the victims to move outside of their homes and easily trapped in the pipeline which will further transport them into the slave market (Bales and Soodalter, 2009: 13-14). Trafficking is a quagmire for women and girls and it is very threatening to resist the situation in which they are living.

There are two components of sex trafficking i.e., illegal trading of slaves and slavery. Illegal slave trading provides the supply side of sex trafficking whereas slavery denotes the demand side (Kara, 2017: 6). Kara argued that acquisition, mobility, and exploitation are inherently carried out by these two components. The structural overview of sex trafficking is important to find out the disease that infected human civilisation and to understand its basic structure. Thus, fundamental understanding helps to enhance the knowledge of how the whole structure of trafficking operates in the global society and what are the

contributing factors that are responsible for their vulnerability. Therefore, it is significant to understand the acquisition, movement, and exploitation of the criminal business to reveal the demand force. In sex trafficking acquisition occurs in five different ways, i.e., deceit, dealing by their family members, abducted, seduced, or recruited by previous slaves (Kara, 2017: 5-6).

Trafficking as Deceit always involves false proposals and promises of jobs, better income opportunities and fake marriage proposals to acquire slaves. Lack of better economic opportunities dislocate caused by war-like situations, and bias towards participation in the workplace make them prone to trafficking. At the same time, rejection of a stable and high pay job in a wealthy country becomes impossible, and their consent to a particular offer makes trading easy. It can be said that in refugee camps deception is plausibly the most successful approach to procuring slaves/victims. By 2017 globally, 32.9 million people were disturbed because of genocide, civil war, environmental crisis, and other disasters. It is found that of 9.9 million individuals, 72 per cent of women and children were located in the refugee camps (Kara, 2017: 7). Despite displacement, economic distress and other factors family plays a pivotal role in victims' life. Due to poverty and depressed by poor condition, they are compelled to sell their daughters into slavery. The slave owners utilise the pitiful payments to convince more families to sell their children. These agents later seduced them and migrate to other nations with false documents with the hope of good life. After their arrival, their lives were confined to and ended in brothels. Though it sounds disturbing, it is the fact that victims are also acquired by former sex slaves (Kara, 2017: 9).

Trafficking and Movement: Trafficking is always a movement of illegal migration. Generally, the victims of trafficking move from origin to transit and then into destination countries. In domestic trafficking, the country is operated like an origin, transit, and destination place. During the movement, false passports and bribes have been given to border security for the smooth transportation of individuals wherever they want. Most importantly the victims have been given drugs and beaten to destroy their self-esteem and enforced into forceful submission to the traffickers in the process of transportation. In South Asia mostly women and girls transit from the rural area in Bangladesh, Nepal, and India and land in urban cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai. They are also re-trafficked to many countries in West Asia and Western European countries (Kara, 2017: 10-11).

Trafficking and Exploitation: The movement of trafficking always ended in exploitation. Sexual exploitation of the victim is the prime motive of sex

trafficking. In the commercial trade of human beings, the market value of the victims will increase when it comes to the phase of exploitation (*Global Report on Trafficking* been *in Persons,* 2020: 14-16). The term exploitation implies a forceful imposition as well as coercion of unpaid sex work. During the process of transportation, the victims are often raped, humiliated, tortured, drugged, abused, beaten, and leave to starve only to make them submissive during their auction. The process continued till the slaves are sold (Kara, 2017: 11-12). Notably, the Palermo Protocol represents the issue of exploitation at the international, national as well as in regional levels to define trafficking but it has not given importance to the exploitative practices. It fails to offer the insight meaning and nature of the exploitation and particularly where it takes place (Marija, 2020: 5-6). The convention was enacted in 1949 for the 'suppression of the traffic in persons and of exploitation of the prostitution of others' layout who should be penalised or punished. However, it does not characterise the abuses that victims have faces. In addition, the protocol in Article 3 includes exploitation of the prostitution of others as a type of oppression without clearly characterising it (*The Work in Freedom Handbook*, 2021: 24).

Sex Trafficking in India: Trends and Factors

People are trafficked repetitively in India for commercial sexual exploitation as the urbanisation and industrialisation model makes them landless, and homeless and deprived them of their basic rights. To fulfil the basic requirements of their family and livelihood they forcefully migrated to urban cities and were easily lured by the fake offer of the traffickers. The objective of the traffickers is to abduct and recruit the victims in various brothel areas and especially in rich societies for domestic work, where the initial phase of exploitation takes place. The whole gamut of sex trafficking is interestingly represented by Siddharth Kara in his anatomy of sex trafficking. How slave trading and slavery lead to exploitation and altogether form the illicit crime is very much crucial to look over. There is always a form of forceful imposition behind it which is perhaps invisible. Similarly, the invisibility of any kind of exploitation could not give recognition to any form of exploitative and pitiful crime. Therefore, the recruitment of victims in prostitution is always followed by trafficking.

Indian states like; West Bengal, Maharashtra, Odisha, Delhi, Nagpur, etc. are known for the brothel areas, namely; Sonagachi in West Bengal and Kamathipura in Mumbai becomes more highlighted zone. It is reported that in 2106 nearly, 20,000 women and children are victimised by trafficking in India. As it is the source, transit, and destination point, women and girls are trafficked

from Nepal and Bangladesh and confined for commercial sexual exploitation (CSE). Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Bihar, Odisha, and Delhi are identified as the most affected state (Roy, 2010: 55). Many of them are saved by NGOs, police, and other stakeholders, and others are still unlocated.

> According to a report by Free a Girl Foundation, around 700-800 children are stuck in the redlight area of Nagpur, India. According to a study by *Reuters* out of an estimated 20 million commercial prostitutes in India, 16 million women and girls are victims of sex trafficking. According to Legal Services in India, every hour, four girls enter into prostitution and three of them are found against their will (Habibullah, 2021).

Trafficking is mainly caused by two elements; one is the vulnerability of a person and the other is the demand factor. Although the demand is closely linked to vulnerability, vulnerability can independently promote trafficking (Nair, 2010: 50). So, the time demands to know why vulnerability is affected largely only by a particular segment of society. The contemporary idea of development neglected numerous people who are still living in vulnerable situations and deprived of their basic rights.

Gender Discrimination: In India, gender inequality is a major contributing factor that encouraged sex trafficking immensely. Gender inequality is based on the concept that women have been marginalised in all aspects of life and that resulted in poverty which further allows trafficking (Gacinya, 2020: 70). In Indian society gender discrimination is a cultural norm. The patriarchal nature of society excluded girls to access education. This perhaps leads to a gender gap in literacy and income. The 2011 census, highlighted that the literacy rate of men was 82 per cent while women were 65 per cent and men were paid more than 25 per cent in contrast to women in the 2013 census' (Causes of human trafficking in India, 2019). Their unawareness and ignorance considered them more vulnerable. The nature of dependence makes them more lured by the manipulative offers of traffickers. Lack of education for girls in village areas and poor awareness among organisational and law enforcement bodies has played an important role in the socialisation and endorsement of the trafficking process (Nair, 2005: 682).

Gender discrimination in India has been practised for a long period and patriarchal domination has been celebrated in all parts of the nation. By indicating gender bias concerning trafficking in person, it is essential to underline how the feminisation of migration has been increasingly successful to assist women and

girls in trafficking. According to a United Nations report in 2009, 214 million women worldwide are international migrants. The demand for female workers for domestic work is rapidly increasing which is one of the worst forms of trafficking. In addition, Mishra argued that women are living with starvation and having no contact with family. They are only confined within four walls to being exploited as per the demand of the customer (Mishra, 2013: 8).

Due to sex preferences in families, girls are killed before birth which creates a shortage of females in society in comparison to males. Similarly, it facilitates bride trafficking too. Conversely, there are many marriage agencies, and bureaus are working on the recruitment of women for illicit crime (Nair, 2010: 53-54)

Socio-Cultural, Economic and Political Factors for Trafficking: Caste and class go hand in hand in Indian society. The caste system plays a dominant role and it stratified people based on structure according to the *Manusmriti* (Mishra, 2013: 7). Here a person's caste is constantly determined by their past traditional occupation, restructured as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras. Among caste, there are many sub-castes and it is further divided into lower-caste and upper-caste. The lower caste in the Indian community has limited access to growth and development. Today, the process of victimisation alienated young people from society and that forces them to move to other places where their identity remains hidden. These pitiful discrimination practices of certain castes create a trafficking-like situation where mainly women and girls are found to be imprisoned. Due to the Indian caste system and its vulnerability towards the particular section, has created a perception among Indian minds' that allows them to admit that trafficking in humans is nothing but a part of lower castes' customs and traditions (Mishra, 2013, p. 8).

Along with caste, there is a class hierarchy in India. The social construction of class is always a tussle between the powerful and the powerless. It is only based on income inequalities. In addition, the structure of a class in India can also be seen in socially, politically, and economically developed sections (Mishra, 2013). Poverty, lack of employment opportunities, uneven development, and the quest for a better lifestyle and livelihood are partly responsible to endorse trafficking. India is well known as an agricultural society, where a major section of the population depended on farming (Mishra, 2013:11). But poverty enforced people to live with scarcity and joblessness. As poverty is deeply rooted in Indian villages, the lives of people become more depressed. The rural population who are majorly unskilled labour, are excluded from employment opportunities due to incompetence with modern technology. Therefore, to escape poverty

females of poor families migrated and sometimes parents themselves sold their children for financial benefit.

Power distribution and discrimination are crucial to understanding how they expose women to trafficking. Thus, political factors do not talk about any political parties rather they analyze how within and across family and society the concept of power has been addressed. The establishment of the political sphere started at home or family and then it extended to the village and society. As India is a male-dominated society, women in the family and the village get the least chance to participate in the development process. The power of male supremacy marginalised women in every stage of life. There is a powerful example of a political system – the *Devadasi* system that shows how it exploited powerless women. Again, in a community like Bedia and Bachara, women and girls were stimulated by their male members to indulge in and accept sexual exploitation as a way of earning money. Strangely, the whole human community is silent and never questions and opposes these pitiful practices only to fulfil their needs (Mishra quoted in Veerendra Mishra, 2013: 12-13). Other practices have been practised for ages and can also be analysed in connection to trafficking like; Dhanda, Joginis, Basivis, and Mantagi across the country (Mishra quoted in Veerendra Mishra, 2013: 9-10). Hence, these factors are essential to analyse the depth of reality that makes women and children visibly invisible in society who are exploited behind the social lens of the world.

Trends in Trafficking in India

The trends of trafficking in person have been changing continuously. It is essential to concentrate on data to know the present trends. National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) has played a decisive role in articulating data. Here three figures for analysis are taken, i.e., victims trafficked, reported cases, and the purpose of trafficking. The NCRB report shows up the inclining rate of trafficking of women from 2017 to 2020. In particular, the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation for prostitution except in 2017, is consistently increasing in comparison to trafficking for forced labour, domestic servitude and forced marriage. While focusing only on sexual exploitation for prostitution in a yearly manner, it can be said that there is a downfall in the statistics that is from 2080 in 2019 to 1466 in 2020. While analysing the data on the trafficking of human beings for different purposes it looks confusing because the factual conditions speak a different fabrication. The data of NCRB indeed shows India has no human trafficking cases. Based on the ILO report 5.4 people are victimised out of 1000 people, while the NCRB reports that 4,709 people are barely victimised

per 1.3 billion people. Therefore, the inconsistency of the facts and data needs to be understood because of the massive mismatch representation of trafficking (Mishra, 2021).

So, besides these facts, other sources claim women were trafficked in a large manner only for sexual exploitation during the COVID-19 pandemic. India is consistently placed in tier 2 in 2021 (U.S. Department of State, 2021: 282). It is because the government protocols and laws are unable to meet the minimum requirement to combat it (U.S. Department of State, 2021). Due to the long duration of social isolation and limitation to movement, people lost their livelihood and lived in economic insecurity and which leads to violence towards women and children. Globally, it is evident that 72 per cent of women and children are prone to trafficking and 77 per cent of females were distinguished as a victim of trafficking for sexual exploitation (Regnér, 2020).

COVID-19 has extremely deteriorated the situation for victims who are already enslaved. The victims who are forced into the illegal sex trade and domestic captivity are disproportionately affected. The worldwide lockdown has enlarged and evident many domestic violence cases which are considered a disturbing factor for sex trafficking victims. However, the rapid spread of the virus has made the job easy for traffickers to operate in a more hidden manner. This further increases the invisibility of trafficking victims as most of the cases are unreported. Importantly, traffickers take massive advantage of the internet to recruit victims online during this pandemic because of the global online mode system. Strict adherence and investigation are very important to combat the awful trading but unfortunately due to the pandemic, victims are more invisible to the authorities. While unemployment hinders public life, online mode of operation becomes the only option for employment. Thus, traffickers take maximum advantage of it (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d. pp. 2-3).

Constitutional Provisions, Government Policies and Implications

The constitutional provisions are taking the unlawful crime of human trafficking within their purview and playing an immense role in preventing human trafficking. Article 23 and 24 exclusively focuses on the right against exploitation. The Indian Constitution prohibits and declares trafficking as an unlawful activity in Article 23 and 24. Article 23 ensures that human trafficking and other types of forced labour are illegal and regarded as criminal offences and punishable before the law. Its goal is to safeguard people from all forms of exploitation. Whereas Article 24 emphasises the prohibition of child labour

under the age of fourteen years and states that no children shall be forced to work in any kind of hazardous employment sector like; factories and mines. These two articles within the fundamental rights of the Indian Constitution carry a significant meaning with them that ensures against exploitation (Bagchi and Sinha, 2016: 116-117).

Though there are many efforts have been taken at the international level to combat the trafficking of human beings, the Government of India too had formulated several policies to prevent trafficking and revised them according to the changing scenario of the crime. The criminal law (amendment) act has enacted in 2013, is basically an Anti-Rape bill that discussed the amendment regarding sexual offences in the Indian Penal Code. Juvenile Justice (care and protection of children) act 2000 was passed in consonance with the convention on the rights of the child. It primarily focuses on child vulnerability. The NHRC of India has a pivotal role and is an autonomous body that endorses protecting and promoting human rights. It came under section 3 and the term human rights are defined in Section 2(d) which defines the rights to life, liberty, equality, and dignity of the individual (Pah, 2014). It is fully committed to anti-trafficking. It promotes human rights at the domestic level along with inter-government organisations and non-government organisations (Ray, 1997: 508-509).

In India, some policies were enacted earlier to eradicate slavery practices and treated it as a punishable offence against women. This includes the Karnataka Devadasi (Prohibition of Dedication) Act, 1982, and the Andhra Pradesh Devadasi (Prohibition of Dedication) Act, 1989. These acts include all kinds of sexual exploitation in their definition, especially giving preferences to minor girls. At the domestic level, there are many legislations have been scrutinised to prevent this unlawful crime. India has emphasised ITPA (Immoral Traffic Prevention Act), 1956, IPC (Indian Penal Code) (sections 368 to 373), 1860, Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, Juvenile Justice Act, 2000, POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act, 2012 to prevent trafficking in person. Again, the nation has taken a step further to stop human trafficking and signed as a member of the UN protocol that focuses on preventing, combating, and punishing human trafficking, particularly of women and children against Transnational crime. The Indian Penal Code has revised and replaced the earlier statement of procurement of any person in trafficking considered as a slave and later criminalised it.

It further states that anyone who will be detected in the process of recruitment, transportation, harbouring, transfers, or receiving of any person by using

threats, imposition, coercion, fraud, deception etc. only for the motive of exploitation is considered a highly punishable act. ITPA is one of the key instruments that address the problem of human trafficking in India. It also includes some domestic laws and the Indian Penal Code. Section 366A, 366B, and 374 are the most significant ones. This section provides procuration of girls below 18 years aged, from one part to another in India is punishable. Whereas 364B explains importation of girls below the age of twenty-one years is a punishable act and section 374 provides that convincing any person to labour against their will is a punishable act (Nair, 2003:243). The ITPA mainly focuses on the rescue and rehabilitation of the survivors of trafficking.

There are also anti-human trafficking units (AHTUs) at every state level for timely checking on trafficking. Another notable anti-human trafficking initiative is taken by the Ministry of Women and Child Development's 'UJJAWALA' plan, which was started in December 2007. This project emphasizes the women and children who have been trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation. The *Swadhar* scheme introduced by the Ministry of women and child development was also designed to meet the needs of females in challenging situations such as sex trafficking and other offences against them (Bagchi and Sinha, 2016: 116-117).

Conclusion

Sex trafficking affects millions of people around the world. It is a heinous crime to human lives. Due to the alarming rate of illegal trading of human beings, particularly in rural and deprived sections, policymakers, and legal bodies are executing different strategies to combat the awful crime. Though it is a global problem, it affected the Indian continent largely. Women and girls living here are always prone to trafficking. It is like a disease that affected the whole human community. In India, poverty becomes a common factor that gives rise to their deprivations. Deprivations disrupt livelihood options, and lack of access to any resources and education, together form poverty and further upsurges migration.

However, for the betterment of the poor condition of the family, people particularly women, migrated from rural to urban areas and to other developed countries too. Although their purpose of migration was confined to the search for survival, ultimately it ended in sexual exploitation and commodification of their body. The multidimensional problem of human trafficking requires a multi-sectoral prevention approach. Though there are new strategies and preventive

measures implemented by the governmental bodies, there is still some gap to address and tackle the problem.

Largely poverty pushes women to migrate and the state fails to protect the migrated citizens. There are no strong immigration policies that ensure the protection of the lives and liberties of citizens, particularly women. India is consistently placed in the tier 2 category due to its weak implementation, prosecution and failure to give shelter to the survivors. While the revised anti-trafficking Bill 2021 majorly focuses on rehabilitation and it is unable to give financial aid to the shelters. As a result, the institution could not be carried effective and timely operations. There is also no emphasis given to community-based shelters which is crucial to take victims back to their community. It is therefore creating a possibility of re-trafficking. Sometimes the figure shows there is no trafficking and at the same time the nation is placed in tier 2. The reason behind the fluttering representation of data creates a sphere of disturbance. It needs a larger focus on women trafficking women trafficking, its laws and policies to protect women and girls.

There are other states in the Indian continent where poverty has a major role in dislocating women which placed them in an extremely precarious situation. But little importance has been given to it. There should be more research required to understand the factors and vulnerabilities of sex trafficking in poverty-ridden areas and how to protect women from trafficking and re-trafficking. Therefore, it is extremely important to know the illegal trading of human beings from multi-dimensional interventions. The role of different stakeholders, state, government, policymakers, civil societies, non-governmental organisations, and AHTUs has an immense role in combating trafficking. Therefore, it is required a relentless effort to the challenging issue of women trafficking. Besides policy formulation and substantial implementation of policies, it is essential to educate trafficked women and empower them economically and politically. Notwithstanding these, provide opportunities, and give them representation, recognition and distribution of resources. More importantly, the state needs to adopt a collaborative approach and work along with non-state actors in combating trafficking. The policies always are victim-centric rather than state-centric and continuous self-assessment and self-critic of the state is very much essential in combating human trafficking.

Notes

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Higher Education Institutional Social Responsibility and Rural Community Engagement: Measuring the Practices of Stakeholders for Model Development

Abstract

Education providers have been performing social responsibility as their basic function since the evolution of civilization. Today, the basics remain the same, but the responsibilities are not limited to providing education only. The scope of responsibilities has been widened globally, especially for Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs). The article focuses on one aspect of University Social Responsibility, that is, rural community engagement. The wider literature provides multiple parameters to evaluate the community engagement practices of HEIs under their social responsibilities. Considering prevailing frameworks, a model for evaluating rural community engagement practices is developed for HEIs.

Key Words: *University Social Responsibility, Rural Community Engagement, Higher Educational Institutions.*

Introduction

Social Responsibility: Definition and Scope

Numerous research on corporate social responsibility is available today. Society has several expectations ranging from economic, legal, and ethical considerations from businesses at a given point in time, that are included in

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Caroll's (1999) definition of "the social responsibility of business." According to Davis (1973), "business activity should fulfil social benefits in addition to the usual economic advantages that the corporation seeks." The core of corporate social responsibility is considering the business and society as two sides of a coin that are inter-related rather than separate entities; as a result, society has specific expectations from corporations regarding appropriate role-played by businesses towards generating mutually beneficial outcomes, according to Wood's (1991) synopsis. The scope of social responsibility now is far broader than the "philanthropy" of the past; rather, it focuses more on the role of business in sustainable development.

University Social Responsibility

The Principles for Responsible Management Education were created by the UN Global Compact in 2007, focusing on business and management schools (Burchell et al., 2015). To prepare business professionals for the challenge of establishing stronger, sustainable businesses, management education institutions have duties that are addressed by the Principles for Responsible Management Education initiative (Godemann et al., 2014). European higher education system has implemented the Bologna Process, a comprehensive procedure designed to strengthen a general legal guideline of their respective national higher education institution system (Larran et al., 2015).

Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs): Purpose and Magnitude

The Ministry of Education (2020) classified the following important objectives of Higher Education Institutions in India.

- To grow the Gross enrolment ratio in all its modes of delivery in Higher Education institutes from 15 per cent by 2011-12 to 21 per cent by 2016-17 and 30 per cent by the year 2020.
- To develop Higher Education institutional base by forming supplementary volume in current organizations, creating new organizations and incentivizing State Governments and Non-Governmental Organizations/civil society.
- *To deliver prospects of Advanced Teaching among socially disadvantaged groups and eradicate inequalities by encouraging the inclusion of females, minorities and disabled people.*
- To eliminate provincial differences in access to Higher Education by setting up institutions in frightened and challenging areas.

- To improve strategic provision for substructure and faculty growth in the establishments of advanced knowledge and attracting skilled workforce towards careers in education and research.
- To generate environments for knowledge development through better-quality research facilities in Higher Education Institutes.
- To encourage partnership with the global community, overseas governments, and international institutions, for the progression of worldwide acquaintance and intellectual property rights.
- To encourage and develop Indian languages on the world platform.
- To promote self-government, originations, and speculative reforms in higher institutions.
- To commence official reformation for developing effective, relevance and creativity in Higher Education.

Defining Community Engagement

PRIA (2015) report defines 'Engagement' as the process of developing affairs with society and tapping those affairs to make an effort to achieve common goals. The art of rendezvous centres on expressiveness when to participate in relationship building and when to tap relationships to get work done.

UNESCO (2015) report defines 'community engagement' as it refers to specific inhabitants, to whom the higher education institute is obligated to its social obligation. It can be defined as "a group of people unified by minimum one common characteristic."

Carnegie Foundation (2015) defined 'community engagement' 'as the partnership among higher education institutes and their larger groups. It enriches research, scholarship, and original bustle; improves curriculum, coaching and learning; addresses key societal issues; and contributes to the benefit of the public at large.

Review of Literature

University Social Responsibility

Vasilescu et al. in their 2010 study explain USR as "A framework established by the University and HEIs to impart outstanding performance in an ethical way towards its community that includes students, faculty, and administrative employees with the responsible management of the academic, psychological, employment generation, and environmental impacts generated by the university interactively with society in a sustainable manner." The abundant uses of

knowledge in society and the economy must instantly multiply, according to USR, and this requires a bilateral interaction between universities and society (Herrera, 2009).

Society at large expects universities to educate and produce a workforce of knowledgeable people who will improve the security, well-being, growth, and harmony of society. Latif (2017) asserts that knowing the boundaries of the law and distinguishing between right and wrong save humanity from several moral hazards.

The university can fulfil its obligations through four broad processes: management, teaching, research, and extension. Giuffré and Ratto (2014) conducted a review of the USR domain's procedures focusing on these four processes. USR is the capacity of the university to communicate and put into practice a set of overarching principles and particular values using these processes. It has been noted that because USR in universities falls under the purview of quality management and accreditation, there is a duty to strive for the bare minimum. These can be done by offering educational services and transferring knowledge while adhering to moral standards, responsible leadership, environmental stewardship, active participation in society, and the promotion of values. The following are specifics of important processes:

- Education: developing the curricula with the inclusion of different themes of social responsibility
- Research: transfer and sharing of knowledge to society for the larger good.
- Management: charting out the roadmap to implement multiple practices regarding good governance and accountability.
- Community engagement: promotion of civic principles, including participation in socio-economic development, social justice, equity, and diversity.

Jorge and Pena (2017) through their systematic literature review during the period from 2000 to 2015 emphasize the societal outlook of universities and HEIs. Universities and HEIs play an essential role in society as providers of future leaders, planners and administrators. Thus, it unravels the need to include social responsibility principles in the primary functions of universities.

In her thorough effort on the literature assessment on social responsibility in HEIs, Parsons (2014) proposed that social responsibility should be integrated into the fundamental operations of the university and should be supported and

acknowledged by the outside world. How this social duty is demonstrated varies somewhat; the main focuses might range from fostering social and economic advancement to advancing civic engagement, democracy, and human rights. Generally, it combines a variety of speciality areas with a general emphasis on social and environmental issues. This topic frequently returns to the university's role in developing students who not only understand the fundamentals of social responsibility but also produce new knowledge.

The results from Ali et al. (2021) suggested that for substantial impact, it is essential for universities to incorporate social responsibility activities within their administrative policies and management practices. In addition, participation from all parties involved in the process is essential for a long-term strategy and substantive change in social concerns. Universities all around the world are under pressure from society to incorporate social responsibility as a core organisational function and adjust their operations related to teaching, learning, and training.

The paper outlines the doable steps higher educational institutions may take to make their social responsibility programmes appear credible to stakeholders. Furthermore, it emphasises how university social responsibility differs from corporate social responsibility due to the structure of institutional operations and goals.

Additionally, the literature is illuminating and emphasising community connections. It is suggested in this discussion that collaborations between universities and the community should be encouraged and motivated to provide for additional viewpoints and the possibility for a variety of knowledge to advance growth for the greater good. It is suggested that if these exchanges are conducted in this way, the HEI may also gain from them.

The reforms in the related fields of academia emphasize the social component of universities and their significant social function in training the decision-makers and leaders of the future. This highlights the necessity of incorporating social responsibility ideals into HEIs' core missions. (Larrán J. M., and Andrades P. (2019). Brown, E., and Cloke, J. (2009) found CSR is an issue that UK universities have already started to explore. The conceptual framework by Chinta, R., Kebritchi and Ellias (2016) also includes social responsibility as one of the key components in the performance evaluation framework and model. Kouatli, (2018) developed a mechanism to quantify University Social Responsibility (USR) and its sustainability in terms of three pillars—rules and regulations-based practices; coverage of responsibility and level of involvement;

and potential barriers and organisational structural conditions. Filho et al. (2019) examined the integration of social responsibility and sustainability initiatives within the context of HEIs. According to a qualitative study undertaken by Banker et al. (2020) on the leaders of Indian Academic Institutions, nine responsibilities—visioning, fundraising, safeguarding, managing intellectuals, luring bright students, social inclusion, social responsibility, engaging in academics, and administration—were examined under four latent categories of academic leadership roles that included boundary spanning, nurturing human talent, social contribution, and operations.

According to Singh, S. (2016), even though most HEIs do not explicitly state that they have a social obligation, they are engaging with the community through their teachers and students as a part of coursework or voluntarily participating in extracurricular activities. Because finance is a constant concern, only those projects that have partnered with other groups, primarily businesses, have shown to be long-lasting.

Difference between Traditional HEIs and the Current Structure

The HEIs have come along a long way from their traditional conceptualization and format. As the context of the present study lies in higher education, the following studies shed light on the unique institutional characteristics of HEIs and the role of social responsibility played by those as time passed. The contemporary scenario displays the diverse roles of higher education, such as the significance of professional school and the service to society and the economic world. While the routine role of higher education emphasises largely regular education and research and provides administrators back to society. If higher education fulfils its modern role in society, it is also anticipated to promote a more human and civilized society and sustainable growth (Brennan and Naidoo 2008; Cortese 2003; Parsons 2014; Scott 2006).

One of the significant changes that higher education is seeing is its corporatization. Universities are largely becoming like business organisations in terms of management and operational procedures as higher education transforms into a business activity (Jónasson 2008), under increasing pressure to generate income to lessen the effects of drastic reductions in government funding over the past few decades (Sawasdikosol 2009). Universities have had to adapt to the demands put forth by various stakeholder groups as a result of the marketization trend in education (Bok 2003). As a result, CSR and USR share certain aspects. For instance, the government's role as a business sector regulator is just as significant in the education sector, where it simultaneously

serves as the major funder of public university research and instruction. The same logic applies to significant university stakeholders like staff, vendors, local communities, and the environment.

The rapidly increasing number of students around the world is another aspect that contributes to the significance of USR. By 2025, it is expected that there will be 262 million additional students enrolled in higher education globally.

In addition, universities play a remarkable and distinct role in the communities in which they are located. Universities assist and support regional industries by developing and applying new technology (Lindqvist 2012). To raise the standard of labour markets, they work with local governments. Universities serve a special role in promoting social responsibility among younger generations as well as being important educational institutions that have an impact on human society (Muijen 2004).

Technology innovation is one of the urgent causes for starting university reform. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and other new digital education initiatives pose a disruptive danger to universities today (MOOC). Online degree programmes through MOOCs are far more affordable than those at traditional universities. Despite critically listed issues such as degree recognition, this adaptable form of distance education has advanced quickly and now represents a serious threat to established educational structures. This trend in education has several implications, one of which is the expansion of educational options. Universities are under intense pressure to improve their organisational processes as a source of inspiration and a signal to accept change. Universities are permitted to use digital technology as a useful tool under USR.

According to Gibbons (2005), the new environment that universities are operating in today is impacted by the "free economy, globalisation, innovation, and the information economy." Higher education is more competitive in these conditions.

Rural Community Engagement

Tandon, et al (2016) explained five andragogical principles. These principles included firstly, alignment to research ethics and value. Secondly, the expansion of profound empathetic power and partnerships. Third, involvement in knowing community-based research. Fourth, safeguarding a balance between classroom (theory) and field (practice), and fifth, the role of the researcher as an enabler, combines numerous means of inquiry.

Ratnakumari, B. (2016) study highlighted the position of women as selected representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutes and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). The study focused on the role played by women in the decision-making process in the substitute system. The study aimed to comprehend the issues making gender delicate in local self-governance institutes in both rural and urban areas. This developed a mutual sense of comfort and respect for both women and men. It also analysed feminine headship in local self-governance organizations.

Mastuti, S., et al. (2014) in their study explained that support from the government of Indonesia for the Community University Research Partnership (CURP) is very durable. It is made obligatory in all universities to have community university research partnerships. Government promotes rendezvous through Community Engagement Grants (CEG) Program. Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture inspires Higher Education Institutes to finance community engagement initiatives. The Grants can be utilised for various important community engagement activities such as research-based, problem-based and curriculum-based. The state administration also suggests that community engagement should be a contributing factor in developing standards in the credit score for the promotion of faculty members, along with students.

Lykes, M. B. (2013) in his study utilised creative resources such as dramatizations, drawing, storytelling, community theatre, and photography to collect information from the community. The gathered information was based on community participation and action research processes. The study found that power socializes among mental trauma, and class-based interlinking structures of oppression bring transformative personal change.

Nimegeer, A., et al (2011) study used Remote Service Futures Game to create a potential future community health service delivery plan for their community members. The result shows community teams chosen to provide local health services through unexpected roles of the nurse practitioners in the community.

Kilpatrick, S (2009) in her study explained that community engagement is a multi-level concept. It incorporates rendezvous through partnerships with organisations and stakeholders to support local services. Rural community engagement should be conducted at various levels, it is time consuming and needs regional/district as well as local and state/national health service obligations.

Higher Education Institutions Contribution to Rural Community Engagement

A socially responsible higher education institution can help in many ways to extend its support in rural community engagement. Firstly, it can help accomplish the basic civic responsibilities towards maintenance of health, hygiene and sanitation through water, waste and energy management. They can endorse foliage in the campus and rural community. Secondly, it can bridge the gap for the students between theory and practice through rural community engagement. Engaging higher institutions with local rural communities to make academics more relevant to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Third, it can provide a platform for promoting rich interactions between local countryside groups and higher educational institutions for problem identification and solution to real-life issues. Fourth, promoting service and active nationality amongst students can motivate and nurture high values among them. Finally, it can be also utilized for conducting community-based research with local rural communities through community-based research methods (University Grants Commission, 2020).

In 2015 College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, conducted community-based research on fifty workers to measure the worker's awareness and understanding of their well-being problems. The study found that the work-related health of building labourers at the workplace was in poor condition. This result invited the attention of strategy makers, medical professionals and social workers.

In 2008 Institute of Rural Research and Development (IRRAD) trained 35 inhabitants of six communities through the 'Good Governance Now' program in Mewat. Mewat is the most underdeveloped district of Haryana in India. Individuals are carefully chosen for transferring knowledge based on their knowledge, thoughtfulness, aptitude to absorb information and their willingness to learn and work for their respective villages.

In 2005, the University of Pune adopted 543 villages under the Samarth Bharat Abhiyan programme for overall integrated development. A Twelve-point plan was selected under the program to develop adopted villages in their specific location. These programs covered environment consciousness, drug dependence problems, hamlet history inscription, villages plant life and wildlife writing, energy predicament issues, aquatic and soil testing, Rural Global Information System mapping, socio-economic and well-being problems, etc.

Many law schools in India organise legal aid camps in rural locations. These camps are built to develop the practical legal wisdom of student volunteers on different issues. Students are involving themselves to raise legal awareness and record the problems of rural people through 'Legal Aid Clinics'. Faculty and attorneys are supervising the activities to make sure the students are giving accurate advice and are using good judgment.

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan and Higher Education Institutions

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan was launched in February 2018 by the government of India to bring transformative changes in rural development through the active participation of higher education institutions. The University Grant Commission is the theme of the Proficient Group on curricular reform and Educational Institutions. Institutional Social Responsibility and Rural Community Engagement indicate symbiotic associations between the universities and communities. It is commonly advantageous for both parties and adopts two ways of guiding the flow of knowledge. It is not simple regular outreach or extension functions of the university. It is a divergent approach to the construction and sharing of new knowledge for the rural community through active participation and dedication (UNESCO Chair, 2015a). In this view, the Higher Educational institutes transform from providing just education to the rural population to outcome-based activities.

The six forms of community engagement are: connecting knowledge with community service, community-based participation research, information sharing with the community, developing new syllabi and courses, including practitioners as teachers, and social innovation by students (Tandon, 2014: 9). A fruitful community engagement is constructed on three key ideas, Firstly, understanding the source of knowledge invention and dissemination. Secondly, beginning partnerships among academics and outside stakeholders such as civil society organizations and third, respecting the traditional acquaintance systems of bridging the 'elite' universities and 'common' communities' space. To practice serious community engagement, an empathetic opinion of rural communities and omitted groups is essential (Shaw and Crowther, 2017: 2). Higher educational institutions are also accountable for the influences created through their operations and activities caused by diverse groups (i.e., pupils, employees, faculty, graduates, local communities, media, NGOs, etc.) (Ahmad 2012). Students contributed to rural community development, universities, then, present a societal obligation to educate and train students with the skills and competencies they need for understanding and applying the practice of social

responsibility in their future workplace (Matten and Moon 2004). Students cannot be made aware of the real societal issues and the different challenges; therefore, it is important to educate them to manage existing demands in diverse parts such as community engagement (Ahmad 2012).

The University of Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment (2005) gave six 'C' for successful community engagement. These included Capability, Commitment, Continuity, Collaboration and Conscience.

Higher Education Institute Impact	Higher Education Institute's Socially Responsible Management Areas
Organizational	A socially and environmentally responsible campus
Educational	Social Management of Knowledge
Cognitive	Solidary university supportive of sustainable development
Social	The responsible education of professionals and citizens

5. Model of USR

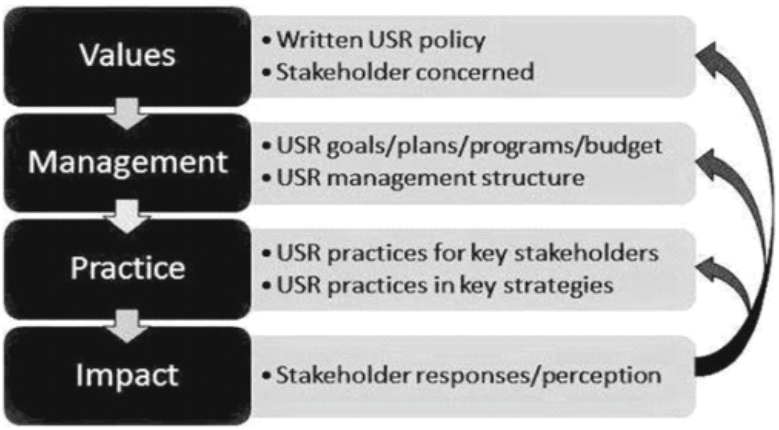


Figure: 1: USR Assessment Logic Framework (Shek et al., 2017)

The assessment frameworks have mostly concentrated on promoting environmental sustainability at universities. One illustration is STARS (the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System), a self-reporting structure that enables schools and institutions to gauge their performance in sustainability. Another illustration is, the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), which focuses on issues related to climate change and global warming. Existing formulations have some

restrictions. First, university social responsibility should incorporate the social and economic aspects of sustainability in addition to environmental sustainability. Additionally, earlier models have redundant criteria or are oversimplified, lacking some crucial elements.

A USR assessment logic framework that blends university stakeholder management and the strategic management of operational operations was presented by Shek et al. in 2017. For a comprehensive conceptualization, this framework is based on Wood's (1991) Corporate Social Performance (CSP) model and Values-Process-Impact (VPI) model.

The framework's first stage, which is depicted in Fig. 1, addresses the university's principles, including whether it has written policies guiding its engagement in social responsibility and which stakeholders are involved.

The university's ongoing USR initiatives, USR goals and plans, the USR budget, the production of an annual USR report for stakeholder communication, and the organisational structure of the USR administration are all covered in the second stage of the framework.

The third phase entails developing a matrix of university stakeholder strategies that connect.

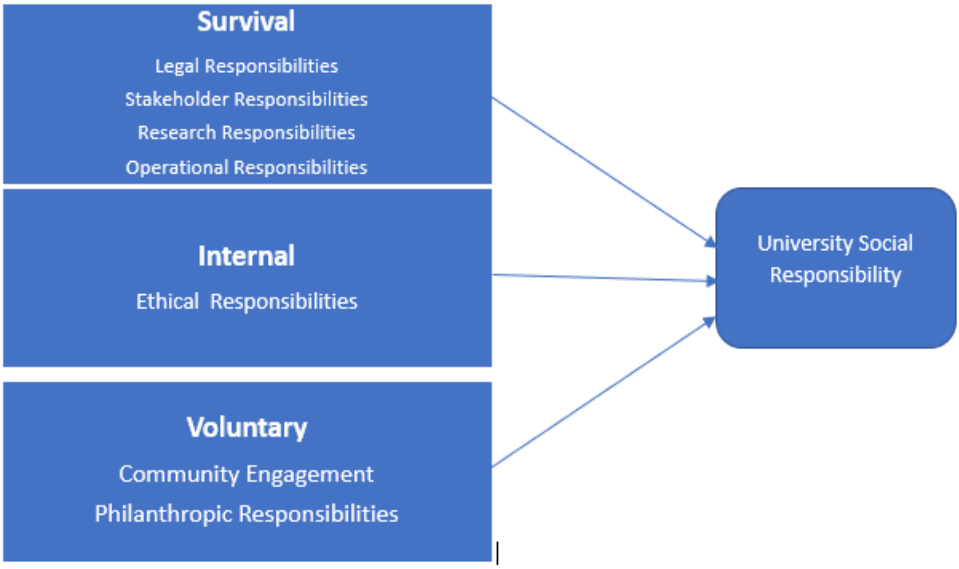
6. Conceptual Framework

For the universities in Columbia, Martha Yaneth Forero-Jimenez (2018) presented a paradigm of university social responsibility. Four pillars of higher education were developed as a result of the model: teaching, social projection, research and management, environment, and post-conflict.

A conceptual framework for evaluating institutions of higher education was offered by Chinta et al. in 2016.

In the context of globalisation, Vasilescu et al. (2010) established a generic university social responsibility model taking into account the realities and difficulties of the Romanian higher education system. Climate change, global injustice, environmental protection, and recycling are new issues that need to be incorporated into the USR landscape.

Proposed Framework



Recommendations

Based on the above study of dimensions of University Social Responsibility, it is recommended to the HEIs attempt the following nine commandments/ initiatives to be included in the practice in general and for rural community engagement in specific:

- Identify the community stakeholders for whom the HEI is responsible.
- Identify the doable initiatives for HEI's distinctive rural community stakeholders under each responsibility domain.
- Initiate a continuous process to look for measuring the progress of each responsibility fulfilment.
- Develop a 360-degree periodic review mechanism for each responsibility area.
- Create a balanced approach while performing rural community engagement practices.
- Inculcate the service-learning approach in the cultural foundation of the HEI.
- Document the learning for each new initiative to be used by other practitioners as a reference.
- Set up dedicated departments/personnel to create an ecosystem towards socially responsible behaviour and practices

- Review the ongoing practices by other HEIs for learning and implementation.

Conclusion

The study is intended to fill the gap in the existing literature. The available body of knowledge has acknowledged the necessity of being socially responsible for HEIs. Numerous studies are focusing on different dimensions, frameworks and measurements of USRs. The dimension of community engagement is widely explored internationally but rural community engagement has been greatly unexplored till date. A few studies in the African and European nations have explored it a bit and it must be studied in India to check the practices of USR in the Indian context, especially for rural community engagement. India is predominantly rural at the core and hence studying the USR practices in rural community engagement will help the stakeholders to assess the efforts and impact of it. Corporates under their function of social responsibility have extended their practices to a nearby vicinity, that too beneficial largely to the urban population. Rural India is still struggling on accessing multiple infrastructural facilities and basic needs. Ample HEIs are operating in India and they have the onus to look out for the development of the rural community surrounding them.

Apart from education, if the HEIs closely observe some common and some special issues faced by surrounding communities, there is a huge opportunity to contribute towards a larger benefit of the community. Furthermore, if these experiences are shared and exchanged among these HEIs on a common platform periodically, it can serve as a manual for the new HEIs to tread their path from their inception. It is suggested that, if each HEIs looks beyond providing education services, it can make India ahead in the race for a sustainable future. This can also lead other nations to imbibe learning in a similar context. HEIs in India have taken several initiatives and this ensures a strong outlook about the rate at which rural communities can advance and develop with the support of such initiatives and practices by HEIs.

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State Response to Naxalism in Andhra Pradesh: An Assessment of Policies and Practices (1967 to 2014)

Abstract

Andhra Pradesh government achieved remarkable success against Naxalite groups in the state. The success of the Andhra Pradesh government also termed as 'Andhra Model', attracted the attention of both academic analysts and government agencies. Available evidence suggests that many LWE-affected states also contemplated implementing elements of the 'Andhra Model' as part of their anti-LWE operations. This paper makes an attempt to analyse the anti-LWE policies of the Andhra Pradesh government from 1967 when the movement first appeared in the Srikakulam region to 2014 when Telangana was carved out as a separate state. The evolution of anti-Naxalite policies in the state can broadly be divided into three phases: from 1967 to 1980, from 1980 to 2004 and from 2004 to 2014. In each phase, the government policies have been analysed with specific characteristics that marked the evolution of a better understanding of the conflict, its dynamics, support structure and specific intervention by the state. The paper argues that the state response to Andhra Pradesh evolved through a complex interaction of a number of local factors in the state, in which a successful security-centric approach accompanied by a series of initiatives to address development and governance-related problems

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yielded desired results. Therefore, anti-Naxal policies in other states also need to address the unique factors in affected states in order to further fine-tune their responses to the problem.

Key Words: *Naxalite, Andhra Model, Left-Wing Extremism, PWG, CPI-Maoist, Greyhounds, Telangana, Srikakulam*

Introduction

Despite the consistent decline in the level of violence in the last one-decade, the Naxalite movement[1] remains one of the major challenges to India's internal security. Among the affected states, Andhra Pradesh[2] remained the epicentre of the Naxalite movements in India for nearly three decades from 1980 to early 2000, not only in terms of the spread and intensity of violence but also in terms of providing ideological and material leadership to the Left-Wing Extremist (LWE) groups active in other states. The surge in Andhra Pradesh has been attributed to the groups like People's War Group (PWG), formed in 1980, which emerged as the most powerful Naxal group in the country. The organisational capabilities and strategies adopted by the PWG, existing socio-political context, political linkage, and absence of a coherent, sustainable response from the state government provided a favourable context to Naxalite groups to consolidate and expand their areas of operations not only in Andhra Pradesh but also in the neighbouring states.

As far as state response is concerned, initially, the movement was treated as a law-and-order problem to be dealt with security apparatus of the state. Since the late 1980s, however, we find both State and Union governments taking serious note of the problem and initiating a series of initiatives in security, political and development-related areas to address the underlying causes of the problem in the state. The creation of an elite anti-Naxal force, Greyhounds in 1989, surrender and rehabilitation policy, political initiatives and a developmental approach tailored for Maoist areas proved to be effective. The results of these measures started becoming visible in the late 1990s and gradually the state government was able to achieve remarkable success against Naxal groups. As a result, there has been a consistent decline in Naxal violence and the year 2011 recorded the lowest level of violence since 1980.[3] The success of the Andhra Pradesh government has popularly been termed the 'Andhra Model', which became a matter of debate both among academic analysts and security agencies for its possible implementation in other affected states. Available evidence also suggests that many affected states also started following elements of the 'Andhra Model' as part of their anti-Naxal operations.[4]

An attempt has been made in this paper to analyse factors that led the Andhra Pradesh government to achieve substantial success against the Naxalite movement. More specifically, the evolution of the Andhra Model', including its major elements, strengths and weaknesses have been examined since 1967. The paper argues that the response of the Andhra Pradesh government evolved through three distinct phases. The first phase was from 1967-1980 when the Naxalite movement was treated largely as a law-and-order problem. In the second phase from 1980-2004, a better understanding of the movement in terms of its nature, dynamics and underlying causes led to the introduction of a series of development-related interventions and the greater role of the Union government to deal with LWE as a serious internal security issue. In the third phase of the state response, a judicious combination of security, development and political approaches yielded desired results. The paper argues that while the Naxalite groups have been consistent on their core ideology of armed struggle to achieve their objectives, the response of the Andhra Pradesh government evolved through a complex interaction with a host of local factors, which shaped the contours of the state response. The prevailing political context not only provided a conducive environment for these groups to grow but also introduced an element of inconsistency, incoherence, and poor coordination among various agencies in the state apparatus responsible for framing and executing anti-Naxalite policies during every such phase.

Law and Order Approach to Curb Initial Surge (1967-1980)

Though there were peasant movements inspired by communist ideology during the British period, the origin of LWE movements can be traced back to the Naxalbari movement in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal when a group of local CPI-Marxist leaders, inspired by the Chinese leader Mao Zedong's ideology of organised peasant insurrection, started a violent campaign against local landowners for distribution of land to landless people in 1967.[5] Led by leaders like Charu Mazumdar, Kanu Sanyal and Jangal Santhal, the movement by itself was perhaps not very significant, but it inspired a series of similar movements in other parts of the country.[6] In Andhra Pradesh, the movement started in Srikakulam, an area with a long history of peasant movements, where the local leadership became part of the Naxalite movement through the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR), which later transformed into The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), CPI-ML led by the charismatic leader of Naxalbari, Charu Mazumdar. A local leader Satyanarayana led the movement which began on the issue of local grievances of peasants.[7] The movement started in the Levidi village when the killing of

two cadres of the movement triggered widespread protests in the form of seizure of land, food grains and violence against land owners. Soon the movement spread to other parts of the region and by 1969, 15 out of 20 districts were affected by the movement.[8] Between 1967 and 1969, approximately 48 people, including landlords, moneylenders, merchants, and policemen were killed by the Naxalites.[9] The intensity of violence in terms of loss of human lives was highest in 1969.

During the first phase of the LWE movement, the response of the Andhra Pradesh government was to treat left-wing extremism largely as a law-and-order problem to be managed by the effective deployment of security forces. This approach was on similar lines as adopted by the Union government and West Bengal government and was echoed by a statement of then Union Home Minister, YB Chavan when he, in an address to Lok Sabha on 13 June 1967, described the problem as 'lawlessness'[10] Andhra Pradesh government invoked Andhra Pradesh Suppression of Disturbances Act, 1948 and Srikakulam was declared as "disturbed area". By September 1969, six sub-districts had been declared 'disturbed areas' and in these areas, massive security force operations were carried out. Many prominent Naxal leaders were arrested, and many were killed in encounters. By the 1970s, the movement in Srikakulam was contained effectively.[11]

The containment of Naxalism in the first phase has largely been attributed to an effective security-centric approach. However, closer examination of the trajectory of the Naxalite movement would suggest that this was only a tactical retreat by Naxal organisations and within a decade the movement resurfaced with renewed vigour in the Telangana region of the state. There were many other factors that were responsible for setbacks to the Naxal movement in the 1970s. Lack of strong organisational structure, ignorance of mass movement and internal differences within Naxal groups were major factors for the decline of the movement in the first phase. Though Charu Mazumdar was able to inspire and motivate people with his charismatic personality, he lacked the organisational abilities to sustain the momentum. The massive impact of the Naxalbari movement across India convinced the leaders like Charu Mazumdar that the Indian masses are ready for revolution and that by the end of the 1970s, India would be liberated from the semi-colonial order.[12] Based on his understanding of the preparedness of Indian people for armed revolution, his strategy of 'annihilation of class enemies' did not yield desired results in the absence of a strong organisational structure and mass movement.[13] The movement suffered from factionalism both at the Central as well as regional levels. As a result, the

CPI (ML) witnessed multiple splits.[14] The death of Charu Mazumdar, tactical differences over various tactical and organisational issues and effective police operations weakened the movement.

Evolving Contours of Two-pronged Strategy: (1980-2004)

While West Bengal was the epicentre of Naxal violence in the 1970s, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar emerged as hotspots in the 1980s and 1990s. Spearheaded by the People's War Group (PWG) in Andhra Pradesh and the MCC, CPI-ML (Liberation) and CPI-ML (Party Unity) in Bihar, the movement gradually started expanding to other parts of the country. The PWG was formed by Kondapalli Seetharamaiah in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh in 1980. The MCCI came into existence in West Bengal as the Dakshin Desh but took the name of MCC in 1975 when it established its presence in Bihar.[15] The CPI-ML (Party Unity) merged with the PWG to form CPI-ML (PW) in 1998. In the 1980s and 1990s, PWG emerged as the most powerful Naxal group operating in parts of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan.

One of the major reasons for the success of the PWG was to its ability learn from past mistakes of the Naxalite movements and adapt to the existing socio-political context. It rejected the strategy of 'annihilation of class enemies' advanced by Charu Mazumdar and brought the focus on mass mobilisation instead. The strategy adopted by the PWG incorporated both underground and overground components. The overground component included mass mobilisation through front organisations and the underground elements focussed on military aspects of the movement. The military strategy focussed on preparations for a protracted war, which included the selection of base areas in favourable terrain, from where they could operate without inviting direct confrontation with security forces. The organisational structure and area-wise division of responsibilities of PWG also suggested that they developed capabilities to operate in multiple states. Accordingly, they formed Committees such as Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC), North Telangana Zonal Committee (NTSZ), and Andhra Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee (AOBSZC) had the advantage of operating in more than one state.[16] This arrangement enabled them to relocate their cadres and resources to other states in case of intense security force operations.

Another major reason for the resurgence of the Naxalite movements in the 1980s was the prevailing political environment which helped these groups to resurface. In Andhra Pradesh, the relationship between political parties and

PWG became one of the crucial factors that not only helped the organisation to grow but also conditioned anti-Naxal policies of the state. Though the Andhra Pradesh government continued with the strategy of the 1970s to deal with the movement during the initial phase, there was a marked change in the government approach to the LWE movement from 1983, when for the first time a non-Congress the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) came to power under the leadership of Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (NTR). Praising Naxalites as 'friends of poor and great patriots (*deshabakthulu*)", he described them as "true patriots', who have been misunderstood by the ruling classes.[17] It is not surprising that NTR was able to secure the support of Naxal groups and win elections against the Congress Government. The soft approach of his government towards LWE provided the PWG with a conducive environment to consolidate their strength.[18] Till the mid-1980s, the PWG was able to mobilise resources to establish and expand the party network throughout the state and neighbouring states.[19] The TDP was not the only political party to have an inconsistent approach to Naxalism. The Congress governments also adopted the same approach.

For political parties, it was seen as a prudent step to seek Naxalite help for electoral advantages.[20] Such support structures created during the period were less on ideological commitment, and more for financial benefits and other forms of support that helped PWG gain access to money, medicine and arms.[21] Conceding the political nexus between PWG and mainstream political parties, one of the former Politburo member Koratala Satyanarayana commented:

> *In our experience, the political parties that have been in power in the state for the last three or four decades have been trying to utilise or use services of these extremist groups, either to come to power or to perpetuate their power...we have been...pleading with the government to take all political parties into confidence and try to solve this problem of extremism in totality.*[22]

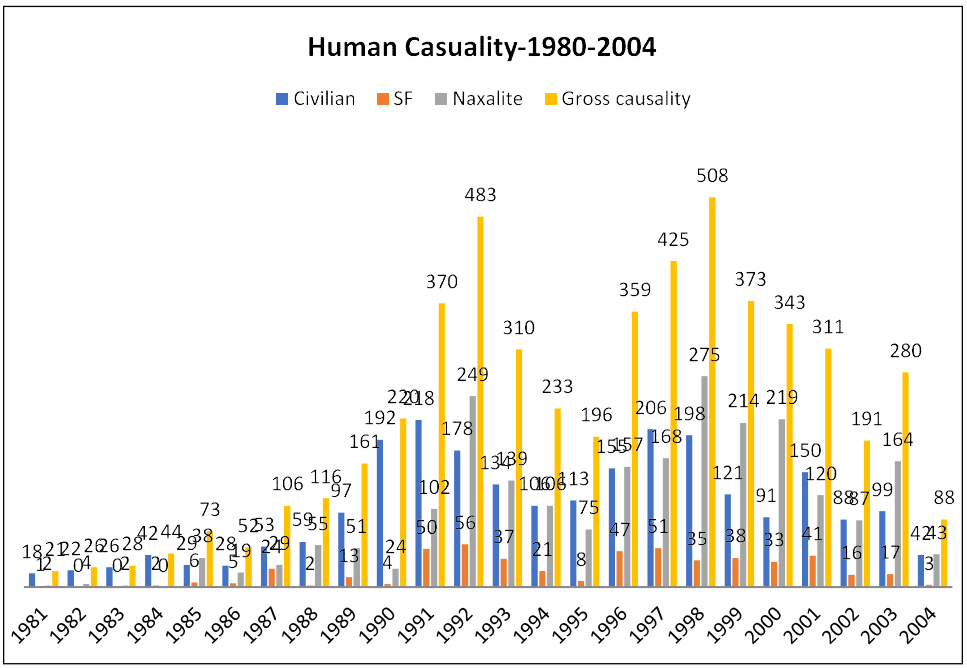
The report of the Advocate's Committee on Naxalite Terrorism in Andhra Pradesh also confirmed the nexus between politicians and Naxalites.[23]

The reconciliatory approach towards PWG by political parties has been interpreted as part of state response, a prudent strategy evolved out of the understanding that the LWE movement has a strong socio-economic base and hence it cannot be dismissed merely as a "law-and-order problem.[24]" A soft approach towards LWE was justified as part of the solution not merely political expediency to win the election. While linkage with overground political entities helped PWG grow such linkage also had a corrupting impact on the organisation in terms of its cohesiveness, work culture and deviation from stated objectives

for monetary and other benefits for its leaders and cadres.[25] Incidents of Naxal cadres indulging in corrupt practices, atrocities and criminal activities had degenerating impacts on the movement.[26] Activities of PWG during this phase suggest that the existing socio-economic context was exploited by the groups to further their organisational goal of violent insurrection which also encouraged a range of activities not linked to the socio-economic condition of people which they wanted to address. In this context, Ajai Sahni points to a widening gap between proclaimed intention and the actual activities of the groups.[27] He writes, "Once a violent movement has established itself and attained a certain level, it acquires a dynamic entirely of its own, one that is self-sustaining unless forcefully and forcibly disrupted".[28]

Despite these organisational deviations, from the early 1980s to late 1990, the prevailing political environment provided a conducive environment for Naxals to operate. The PWG, in the last part of the 1990s, was able to considerably expand its areas of operations and as a result in the North Telangana district of Adilabad, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, and Khammam, was practically advancing from a "strategic stalemate' to a 'strategic offensive" stage.[29] The group developed capabilities for securing their areas of influence also called

Fatalities in LWE Violence from 1980 to 2014



Sources: Data compiled from South Asian Terrorism Portal (www.satp.org)

'base areas and liberated zones' from counterattacks. These 'base areas' became a springboard for the further expansion of the movement. The table below shows the growth of the movement in the 1980s and 1990s.

The continuous expansion of PWG areas of influence during this period suggested that right from the beginning the state approach was short-sighted as it could not properly analyse the nature of the movement, factors that sustained the movement and the political context in which the movement grew. The state response did not take into account the nature and underlying dynamics of the fact that beyond the law-and-order problem, the LWE movement has a strong socio-economic context. As Biplab Dasgupta points out, "The most fundamental factor behind the birth of Naxalism was the existing socio-economic condition in the country. Naxalism was one of several alternative forms in which the dissatisfaction of the people with their living conditions found expression in this period."[30] Somewhat similar to this line of thinking another viewpoint suggests that Naxal violence is a product of the rising democratic consciousness of the deprived people.[31] This argument finds strength in the fact that unlike other internal security problems facing the country, the LWE movement is not a separatist movement fuelled by external sources, nor is it based on religious fundamentalism, ethnonationalism or any sense of regional or linguistic injustice.

Therefore, since the late 1990s, we find gradual realisation and incorporation of developmental aspects in the overall anti-Naxal policies. Therefore, we find that both the Central and State governments adopt a twin approach to security and development to address the issue. While there was a gradual realisation that the Naxal problem was not merely a law-and-order problem to be addressed by security forces but had strong socio-economic factors, the government was also aware of the dynamics of violence. Therefore, a security-centric approach was essential to contain violence and target Naxal groups and their leadership, government was also conscious of addressing local demands. The approach was based on an assessment of the activities of PWG on the ground, where it was becoming evident that the Left-Wing extremists no longer represent the revolutionary ideology or aspirations of the people. They believe in violence and the movement has degenerated with increasing evidence of the criminalisation of its cadres.[32]

At the same time, it was becoming evident that PWG was successful in mobilising people around a number of local grievances related to governance and development for their organisational strategy. Therefore, the government needed to evolve a strategy that would address both the issue of violence and

socio-economic factors that enabled Naxal groups to mobilise the support of people on the issue of their day-to-day grievances. Major security-centric approaches included strengthening the capacity of state police. Perhaps the most significant step taken by the Andhra Pradesh government was the formation of an elite force of Greyhounds that played an important role in countering Naxal violence. Conceived in 1989, Greyhounds cadres were drawn from other police wings in the state and were given intense training in jungle warfare. The structure of Greyhounds was also made flexible to reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies. The force had effective intelligence backups to enable them to carry out intelligence-based operations. However, anti-Naxal operations by Greyhounds started achieving significant success after 2005, more than a decade after its formation. The lack of initial successes of the Greyhounds may be attributed to a lack of proper intelligence and inadequate synergy between departments and with other Naxal affected. This shortcoming was overcome after 2005 in the third phase when we witness more focused security force operations.

On the other hand, the objectives behind 'Development' approaches were to address local factors that enabled Naxals to mobilise people on issues of lack of development opportunities, in rural and tribal areas, the poor performance of institutions of civil governance[33] and lack of effective political process in Naxal affected areas. It was evident that many in rural and tribal areas were attracted to Naxals not because of their ideology but because of the fact that Naxal was raising issues of their day-to-day existence with empathy, which was seriously lacking in state administration. Some of the major initiatives included Integrated Tribal Development Agency, the Remote and Interior Area Development programme, surrender and rehabilitation policies, land reforms, etc.

Another major development during this period was the evolution of a national perspective on the Naxalite movement. As the law-and-order is a state subject under the Constitution, the problem till now was treated as a law-and-order issue to be dealt with by affected states. The growth of Naxalism in the 1990s early 2000s necessitated a review of the threat posed by the Naxal groups from the perspective of Internal Security. First, there was a substantial expansion of Naxal activities in terms of spread and intensity as shown in the graph above. One of the major reasons for this expansion was increasing consolidation and synergy between Naxal groups. For example, the PWG merged with CPI-ML (Party Unity) to form CPI-ML (People's War) in 1998. In 2004, CPI-ML (PW) merged with MCCI to form CPI-Maoist. The unified Maoist groups also introduced structural changes in the organisation in terms of the formation of military

commissions and changes in the party Constitution. The movement also got a fillip with the success of the Maoist group in Nepal, where CPN-Maoist achieved remarkable success against the government. There was also an indication of greater coordination among Maoist groups in South Asia through organisations like the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA).[34] Secondly, the Naxal organisational structures enabled them to operate in multiple states. The lack of effective coordination became a major stumbling block for state government. There was a need for greater coordination between and among states. Thirdly, Naxal's attempts to kill the then Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu in October 2003, necessitated a review of existing anti-Naxal policies of the Andhra Pradesh government.[35] Also, with the formation of CPI-Maoist in 2004, the Naxalite movement entered a new phase in Andhra Pradesh. The ambivalent postures of the government gave way to a more determined anti-Naxal policy through the greater and coordinated deployment of security forces. Thus, we find the Government of India set up a Coordination Centre under the MHA in 1998. Thereafter, the Union Home Ministry coordinated anti-Naxal policies of affected states. Attempts were made to evolve a unified approach to the Naxal problem after taking into account existing and evolving situations in different states.

The Third Phase: Contours of the 'Andhra Model'

Andhra Pradesh state response to the Naxal problem during this phase was marked by greater synergy among security, development and political approaches and greater coordination among affected states and focussed operations by security forces. This period also witnessed a considerable decline in LWE activities.

One of the major steps taken towards solving the Naxal problem was peace talks. This initiative for peace talks was first attempted in 1996 when the Andhra Pradesh State High Court recommended that the state government arrive at a negotiated settlement with the Naxalites, which was transformed into a successful initiative in 2004.[36] Organisations such as the Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) and other civil society organisations played a significant role in the process. The peace process was initiated on an unsubstantiated assumption that negotiations would ultimately result in the Maoists giving up their armed struggle to join the mainstream. As expected, the peace process collapsed in 2005, as the Naxal group did not make any commitment towards cessation of violence.[37] Subsequent development suggested that the PWG used the breather space provided by the cease-fire only to strengthen its ideological and military base

in view of recent reverses.[38] During the peace process, PWG leaders reiterated on several occasions that they were going to surrender arms and join the mainstream. For them, armed struggle remained the essential instrument of struggle and they were using the platform of negotiations to expose the illusion of the present system.[39] As noted earlier, during the regimes of NTR and M. Chenna Reddy also, the Naxalites used a soft approach to the government to regroup and further expand their areas of operations.[40]

The failed peace process highlighted several pertinent questions about the prospects of a negotiated problem for this long-standing problem. The questions relate to the very nature of the movement which has been consistent with their core ideology of armed struggle. If, the PWG had no plan to surrender arms and join mainstream politics, why was the peace process initiated in the first place? A closer analysis of the false peace process revealed that political compulsions, rather than rational strategic imperatives, were the defining factors.[41] The government had failed to make a comprehensive assessment of either the PWG's capabilities based on its activities during the previous year or its ideological openness to a negotiated settlement. The logic of negotiations in a particular state with a group that continued with its activities in several other states was also unclear.

A more fundamental question relating to attempts to find a negotiated solution to the Naxalite problem is what will Naxalites gain by giving up an armed struggle? Giving up arms would have brought them to par with other mainstream Communist Parties. The limited space of Communist Parties in Indian politics is an indication that Naxal groups were not going to gain any advantage by giving up arms. Given the dynamics of Indian politics, the mobilisation strategy of mainstream political parties where more than class consciousness, caste and communal considerations are important, it is difficult to visualise a situation where Naxals would be able to tilt the balance of forces in favour of revolutionary transformation of Indian society. Indian democracy, despite several weaknesses, has matured gradually after independence and its institutions have proved to be far more effective in addressing problems of the poor and marginal section of the society than the methods professed by Naxalites. For these reasons, scholars have questioned the effectiveness of the 'Naxalite method' for bringing about a basic change in society.[42]

Following the collapse of the peace process, the state government led by YS Rajasekhar Reddy resumed anti-Naxal operations with renewed vigour.[43] Since then, the anti-Naxal operations started achieving remarkable success.

One of the major reasons for the success of Greyhounds during this period was that most of its operations were specific intelligence provided by the Andhra Pradesh Special Intelligence Bureau (APSIB), a separate intelligence wing of the state police. The peace process witnessed senior Naxal leaders coming out of their hideouts in Nallamala forest areas, exposing their details and making them vulnerable to security force operations. Till now, security forces had inadequate knowledge about the terrain and base areas of Naxal groups. The reprieve provided by the peace process was utilised by the state intelligence apparatus to gather information about the hideouts, the location of leaders, their support structure etc. Such crucial information provided by the SIB proved crucial for Greyhound and other units of security forces engaged in the anti-Naxalite operation.

If we compare security forces' operations before and after the peace process, it emerges that post-peace process, such operations were more precise with relatively accurate information about terrain, base areas of Naxals and the movement of their leaders. It resulted in a considerable decrease in Naxalite activities in Andhra Pradesh. For example, the number of casualties in Naxalite-related violence fell from 317 in 2004 to 12 in 2014.[44] Between 2005 and 2008, approximately 9000 Naxal leaders and cadres were either arrested or killed in the state.[45] Specifically, security forces adopted a strategy of targeting top leaders and active militant cadres in the state. As a result, many senior Naxal leaders and their cadres were killed in encounters and many surrendered. For example, in 2007-08 alone more than 40 prominent Naxal leaders were killed or arrested.[46] One of the consequences of this strategy was the Nallmalla forest, which roughly accounted for over a third of the total Naxalite cadre strength of 1100 in AP in early 2005, was left, in late 2007, with not more than 60-70 armed cadres dispersed across the area, with the entire top leadership of the party relocating outside the state.[47]

Sustained operations by the Greyhounds were accompanied by more effective policing in terms of better intelligence gathering, analysis, effective investigation and change in the attitude of the police towards common people. The police tried to change its image from a repressive arm of the state to a more professional organisation, accessible to people. Activities of Naxal groups and changes in their operational strategy also helped the police to gather better information. For example, we find the growing militarisation of Naxal organisations, greater emphasis on guerrilla operations and less emphasis on mass politics.[48] The CPI-Maoist placed greater emphasis on military aspects of its activities compared to PWG where mass mobilisation was an important

component of the strategy.[49] This resulted in a dwindling support base in many of the areas of their influence.[50] This resulted in several setbacks to Naxal organisations in the third phase of anti-Naxal operation.[51] It helped security forces not only to collect better intelligence but also to initiate a number of outreach programmes to improve the image of the administration in Naxal-affected areas.

This was part of a larger counterinsurgency strategy of 'winning hearts and minds' of people, which meant reclaiming areas of Naxal strongholds, strengthening governance there and segregating them from guerrillas.[52] Greater outreach to people also enabled the state government to initiate and implement development programmes with more success. Compared to the 1980s and 1990s, we find that development-related initiatives also resulted in greater success during this phase. These programmes had more emphasis on rural development.[53] Specifically targeted programmes such as Remote and Interior Area Development (RAID), Integrated Novel Development in Rural Areas and Model Municipal Areas (INDIRAMMA) and irrigation projects were launched in Naxal-affected areas. These interventions were successful not only in addressing the problems in rural areas but also projecting a positive image of the administration.

The Success of 'Andhra Model': Lessons for Other States

A judicious combination of security, development and political approaches was able to contain Naxal violence in Andhra Pradesh. However, during the same period, Naxal activities in other states, particularly in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand increased substantially. The decade witnessed a continuous rise in their areas of operation from 53 districts in 09 states to more than 200 districts in 20 states.[54] In September 2009, the then Union Home Minister, P. Chidambaram said the various Naxal groups were active in more than 2000 police station areas in 223 districts across 20 states in India.[55] Speaking in Lok Sabha on 22 July 2011, the Minister of Home Affairs of State, Union Home Ministry, the Government of India Jitendra Singh said that the total number of districts in India in which some form of Maoist activities has been noticed is 182. In 2009, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh described LWE as "the greatest internal security threat to our country."[56] Naxals treated this setback as a tactical retreat like in the 1970s. Commenting on reverses suffered by Maoists in Andhra Pradesh, the CPI-Maoist General Secretary, Ganapathi said: *I agree that the losses in the state of Andhra Pradesh are quite serious. They certainly have a considerable impact on the revolutionary movement in the country as a whole.*

AP, particularly the region of North Telangana, has been an important center of the revolutionary movement for a long period.... The focus of our movement had gradually shifted to Dandakaranya and Bihar-Jharkhand.... We are confident we will be able to come out of the temporary setback in AP. And what is more important, we made advances in many other states in spite of the losses we had suffered in AP.[57]

In view of the successes achieved by the Andhra Pradesh government, possibilities of implementing elements of the 'Andhra Model' in other states were discussed and even the Union government also coordinated anti-Naxal policies of affected states and provided assistance in the form of deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), funds for police modernisation, security related expenditure and central assistance in development initiative. However, the success rate of other states was not impressive given the continuous expansion of Naxal activities in other states. One of the major factors that contributed to the success of the 'Andhra Model' was spearheaded by state police, particularly the Greyhounds assisted effectively by SIB in areas of collection and dissemination of actionable intelligence. Successes in counterinsurgency operations worldwide have been attributed to intelligence-based security operations to target organisations, their leadership and support structure. After the collapse of the peace process in 2005, Andhra Pradesh police were able to strengthen its state security apparatus to harmonise intelligence-based operations. Other affected states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa were not able to strengthen their state police organisation to effectively deal with the problem and consequently they had to rely heavily on CAPFs. Police forces in these states are not properly trained, equipped and motivated. The police modernisation programmes have also not been adequate to deal with the military strategy of Naxal groups. Improved policing, surrender and rehabilitation policies and better governance also proved effective in Andhra Pradesh compared to other affected states.

Conclusion

An examination of the state response to Naxalism in Andhra Pradesh suggests that the policies of the state government evolved through three distinct phases. In the first phase, when the movement was confined largely in and around the Srikakulam district, the state government dealt with it as a law-and-order problem. This approach evolved further in the second phase during the 1980s and 1990s evolved through a better understanding of dynamics of the nature of the movement and conflict dynamics and the state government introduced the twin approach. However, the political linkage of the Naxalite groups and the

electoral compulsions of major political parties caused a soft approach to the problem and during every such phase the movement got further strengthened.

Finally, in the third phase, a combination of all these factors and a more focused security approach contributed to the decline of the movement in the third phase in Andhra Pradesh. The success of the 'Andhra Model' cannot solely to attributed to any one phase. It was an evolution that was fine-tuned at every stage with a better understanding of the challenges.

The rationale of the timeline (1967-2014): The Naxal movement started in Andhra Pradesh in 1967 and the state was bifurcated in 2014. This research paper studies the response of the undivided state of Andhra Pradesh.

Notes

1. Naxalism, also known as Left-Wing Extremism or Maoism, originated in Naxalbari in the state of West Bengal in the late 1960s. It is arguably one of the world's largest insurgencies active in the land of the world's largest democracy for more than five decades. Rejecting parliamentary democracy, the movement traces its ideology to Mao Zedong's theory of organized peasant insurrection, in which political power is captured through protracted armed struggle based on guerrilla warfare. This strategy entails the building up of bases in rural and remote areas and their transformation into 'liberated zones' that would ultimately be extended to surround and encircle urban power centers. The ultimate objective is to install a 'people's government' through 'people's war'.
2. Since the paper covers the from 1967 to 2014, the term Andhra Pradesh in the paper denotes undivided Andhra Pradesh. A separate state of Telangana was created in 2014 after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh.
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Book Reviews

Gideon Rachman, *The Age of Strongman: How the Cult of the Leader Threatens Democracy Around the World*, New York: Other Press, 2022, Pages: 288, Price: Rs. 799.00.

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The promises of the neoliberal world order, that of freedom and civil liberties, lured states into adopting it. The number of democratic countries started increasing around the world in the Post-Cold War era. In 2012, the number of democracies was 95, reflecting the faith of people worldwide in democratic values. But the number went down in 2021, to 89.1 This suggests that the world has seen a decline in civil liberties across countries with authoritarian regimes and leaders rising to power. These leaders rose to power using democratic processes but intend to do away with them once reach the top. To Erdoðan (one of the Strongman from the book), "Democracy is like a tram that you ride until you get to your destination."

The debate over the rise of populism and populist leaders in several countries has been in the air for a long time mainly due to its implications on global politics. The book under review traces the rise of populist leaders or 'strongmen' in different regions of the world, showcasing its widespread impact. Gideon Rachman, a British political journalist, particularly mentions that the phenomenon has sadly also entered the West with leaders like Boris Johnson and Donald Trump. The liberal order which is viewed as the 'victor' in the post-Cold War period has dominated the global discourse for decades despite its flaws. Arguably, the phenomenon of 'strongman' has risen out of the loopholes of this order and as a challenge. As Rachman describes, it is '…the most sustained global assault on liberal democratic values since the 1930s.' But where did it all start?

Rachman's answer to this question is Putin. Putin is the 'Archetype' of a strongman leader. His unchallenged rise to power in Russia and the financial crisis of 2008, triggered a series of dominos that lead to the emergence of 'anti-globalization' leaders around the world. The book draws a parallel between the strongmen, their rise to power, the narratives that they propagate and most importantly the personality cult that they build around themselves, and later follows the threatening actions of the leaders. Each chapter is focused on a strongman, starting with Putin and Erdoðan. The illiberal regimes entered Europe through Orbán & Kaczynski, followed by Boris Johnson and his call for Brexit. It finally gets to the White House, the upholder of liberal democratic values, with the election of Trump and moves to South America through Bolsonaro and Amlo. Africa also rides the tide with Abiy Ahmed while West Asia has seen the rise of Saudi's MBS and Israel's Netanyahu.

All of the leaders mentioned above have struck the strings of nationalism and 'culture war' to ignite fear and resentment for 'outsiders' in the masses. After the problem is given, they project themselves as the solution, campaigning 'I alone can fix it'. This gradually develops into a personality cult where all the leader's actions are unquestioned, and the criticism is drained amidst the voices of the dominant majority. While countries under such leadership do witness economic prosperity it often comes at social costs. The rights of minorities and women are neglected and these groups are looked at with disdain. The leaders and ruling parties play with conservative themes ranging from bringing back the 'glorious past' to labelling western values as corrupt. All of this points to the loopholes of the order propagated by the west, which has not been widely covered in the book rather the west is only seen as a victim of strongman phenomena.

Placing America at the centre, Rachman looks at Biden's challenges in Global Politics in the face of these leaders. While America dodged the phenomena by voting Trump out, it was a dreadful moment in history when protestors wreaked havoc outside the US Capitol. This particular event sums up the author's title of 'How the cult of the leader threatens democracy around the world'. However, America takes it upon itself once again when Biden, in his first conference after being elected, says that "This is a battle between the utility of democracies in the twenty-first century and autocracies. We've got to prove that democracy works." The author mentions the difficulties that Biden will face in achieving his aim. It is difficult to negotiate with strongmen and international cooperation is even more challenging to achieve with them.

There is a rising fear amongst masses of the authoritarian regimes and their radical actions. With the power and tools of the twenty-first century, it has become easier for authorities to curb and direct the sentiments of the masses. The internet and surveillance technologies have a major role to play in it. However, checks and balances have already started to emerge in the form of opposition coalitions forming beyond ideological lines. Rachman also writes that history is more cyclical than linear, and therefore the autocratic regimes will eventually come to an end. But the question that follows is when and how. It is also to be kept in mind that when authoritarians lose their power, they often leave the palace with chaos and void left behind.

Sanjay Kumar, *Elections in India: An Overview*, New Delhi: Routledge India, 2022, Pages: 246, Price: Rs. 995.00.

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The book under review examines the patterns and trends of voting in Indian elections since 1952, the year of the country's first free and fair election. It participates in discussions about the characteristics of multi-party electoral politics in India and their effects on Indian voters' voting patterns. The book analyses the history and evolution of the nation's electoral institutions as well as the difficulties and safeguards for holding fair elections in the greatest democracy in the world using comprehensive empirical data from the state and national elections.

Sanjay Kumar examines the relationship between election results and trends in voter turnout for local and federal elections. Specifically, he examines voting trends over the past seven decades as well as trends in the participation of underrepresented groups, young people, and the closing gender participation gap. The role of money, the criminalization of electoral politics, and its impact on Indian elections are all topics covered in the book. It also focuses on the problem of erroneous electoral constituency delineation and how it affects political representation. Despite India still being a relatively poor country, the electoral democracy has not only survived but has become stronger with time. India has successfully held free and fair elections at all levels, with some exceptions.

The Indian electoral system and the laws governing how elections are conducted in India are covered in the first chapter. The Representation of the People Act (RPA), which established several norms and regulations pertaining to the conduct of elections, is examined in this chapter along with various election

laws and clauses. The second chapter on the Election Commission of India (ECI) looks at the powers of the ECI in implementing the provisions laid down under the RPA. The chapter also analyses a brief history of the ECI, and how the commission has functioned over the years.

In the third chapter, a data-based study of who has started participating in considerably greater numbers currently than in the past has been provided. Women currently participate in the Indian elections in considerably greater numbers than they did in the past, according to overwhelming evidence. When elections were held in the early decades, women lagged behind men in voting participation. Over the years, this disparity between male and female voting began to close, and the last two Lok Sabha elections saw a dramatic rise in female voting. Men and women cast votes in virtually equal numbers in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. This is the narrative that not only affects the national elections but also the elections for state assemblies. In many states, more women than males cast ballots in the most recent elections. Over the past few decades, this is the election's biggest change. The youth have also begun to become more interested in politics, which has led to a rise in their voting engagement. Although the trend has changed over time, marginalized groups, such as Muslims, Dalits, and Adivasis, have seen an increase in participation in recent decades. But overall, there is evidence of a rise in participation among those who have been politically disenfranchised for a number of years.

In Chapter four, an effort has been made to make sense of the turnout rate using extensive data from elections held over the previous seven decades. All 17 general elections held in the nation have had their turnout data broken down by constituency for the Lok Sabha election. In the next chapter issue of representation has been discussed, It is usually argued that a very big number of our representatives (Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assembly) get elected with a tiny number of votes and hardly represent the will of the majority in our multi-party democracy with the first past the post electoral system. A common complaint is that our MPs and MLAs rarely win elections with a majority of votes.

The contaminated backgrounds of politicians who are elected to the Parliament and state assemblies are discussed in the next chapter. The growing influence of money and muscular power in elections has been a severe issue for Indian politics over the past few decades and even today. It is true that money and muscle power have long played a significant role in elections; however, since it has become mandatory for candidates running for office to declare their

assets and criminal records (if any) by submitting an affidavit with their nomination papers, this influence has become more obvious and serious.

The analysis of the simultaneous election issue is covered in the next chapter of the book. Both passionate and persuasive arguments are being made for and against the idea of conducting elections for both the Lok Sabha and all state assemblies at the same time. Simultaneous elections would save money and speed up growth because there would be no need to constantly enforce the model code of behaviour, according to those who support them. On the other hand, those who argue against holding simultaneous elections bring up concerns about how the dominance of the larger political parties will further marginalise the smaller regional political parties, harming the federal character of the Indian state, in addition to bringing up the issue of viability. The final chapter of the book is titled "Delimitation," which addresses a topic that has received attention recently as a result of the government's creation of a commission to redraft the electoral boundaries in Jammu, Srinagar, and Ladakh. Delimitation concerns have not generated much debate because a number of problems have made the procedure difficult. Delimitation was meant to be done every ten years after the release of the most recent census data but has not been done consistently.

To sum up, the book introduces the readers to the Indian electoral system and the functioning of ECI, which is an independent body responsible for holding elections in India. The seven-decade-long journey of Indian elections has witnessed a participatory upsurge, with turnout having increased both at the national and state assembly elections. there are debates about the impact of turnout on the electoral outcome and victory margins. there are some other issues of major concern, the increasing role of money and increasing criminalization in Indian elections.

Anirudh Suri, *The Great Tech Game: Shaping Geopolitics and the Destinies of Nations,* New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2022, Pages: 556, Price: Rs. 799.00.

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In today's world, technology is omnipresent everywhere and transcends all social, economic, political, cultural and the like. From rural areas to urban ones, from developing countries to developed ones, the use of technology, even though might vary in scale and intensity, is carried out by every nation of the world today. In such a situation, the global geopolitical spectrum can never be the way it was 3 or 4 decades ago since the variables in the present era are much more unpredictable and dynamic to such an extent that nobody can for sure foresee what is to come in the very next hour, let alone in distant future. People, however, indeed strive to make as much sense of this ever-evolving system that everybody is a part of, to the best of their abilities, to cater to the needs of the governments, as well as society at large.

This is the situational backdrop in which author Anirudh Suri has composed a book, entitled – *The Great Tech Game: Shaping Geopolitics and the Destiny of Nations* [2022]. Suri, being a technology entrepreneur as well as a policy advisor, takes a fresh perspective upon the possible and or/probable intertwining of technology with global geopolitics. As such, the nomenclature of the book bares testament to this fact. In the introduction, the author says: "In recent history, the world has lived through Pax Romana, Pax Islamica, Pax Mongolica, Pax Britannica and Pax Americana. We are now living through what could be termed as Pax Technologica, though the period of relative peace for this era might soon be coming to an end." This sets the undertone for the message that has been the thematic base for this entire work of literature that sets to prove the fact that technology is the new instrument of dominance that shall be utilized by the

leaders of the major powers to tilt the global opinion and support on various matters pertaining to the geopolitical spectrum.

At the beginning of 'Part II: Chapter four: Technology is the New Wealth of Nations, Suri uses a Chinese proverb that goes "When the wind changes direction, there are those who build walls and those who build windmills." This statement forms the very essence of this whole work of literature. Suri in his book has strived to emphasize the significance of the technological revolution that is still blooming in the world today. The inevitability of the fact that the nation which shall wield the most advanced technological tools, shall also have the inherent ability to assert its dominance in global affairs is amply exemplified in the entire book. The author's core area, which is the study of an amalgamation of technology with geopolitics is a recurring theme throughout the book and its reality and relevance is showcased on multiple occasions through examples in the chapters comprising the book. The fact that technology came quite handy in the past in establishing and maintaining dominance by a nation is vividly described as an example in Chapter 6: The Geopolitics of Technology Silk Routes. To quote from the book – "In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Britain had developed a monopolistic dominance of the telegraph communications network of the world. The British Eastern Telegraph Company alone manufactured between half to two-thirds of cables in the world at that time. Of the roughly thirty ships that could lay cables around the world, twenty-four were owned by the British. The British, strategically, encouraged other countries such as the US and Germany to lay their cables in and around Britain, with the effect that 'their communications came under British control in wartime". The result of this strategic move is further explained in the book. In brief, this situation and the events that followed, allowed the British to establish a position of dominance during the time of war.

Now, according to the author, the dominance through the Telegraph cable networks is replaced by the ownership and development of the 5G technology by each of the major powers of the world today, with the ultimate aspirational endgame being, using this technology, the nation can exert its influence and dominance over the rest of the globe. This, according to Suri, is the crux of the Great Tech Game. With adequate and relevant historical examples and current circumstantial evidence, Suri has indeed presented a concrete case vis-à-vis the magnified role of technology in today's geopolitical spectrum. Furthermore, reading this book is like joining small dots to create a much larger and more imposing picture – one that is as multi-faceted in its perspectives, as it is diversified in its ideas. From drawing references to several historical, political

and sociological events that have taken place in the past, Suri has indeed not presented the reader with a compelling argument regarding the very real possibility of a world that is not only driven by technology but dominated by it, he has also showcased how the governing bodies of countries themselves might become, to a certain extent dependent on big tech giants, that is companies that have a robust technological framework as well as a worldwide presence. This is illustrated further in Part 4 of the book, entitled "Setting the Rules of the Great Tech Game".

The fact of the matter remains that it is one thing to have the technology and a completely different thing to use it to its optimum potential. Now, to possess or acquire the rights to such technology may be with the Governments, however, the execution and functionality depend largely upon private companies, having stakeholders with their own vested interests, which might clash with or go against the overarching interest of the national Government. This conflict of interest paradigm can be the root cause of potential fallout between the Governmental officials and the business class. Once again this gives another dimension to the Great Tech Game, wherein, due to multiple interested parties, both public authorities and private business owners, the stakes of the overall matter are increased manifold. Further, the author also showcases concerns about the environment and draws the readers' attention towards climate change in the penultimate part of the book. To quote the author from the 14th chapter of the book, "Today, the scant regard paid to environmental impacts during and since the Industrial Revolution has reached unsustainable levels. Fortunately, contemporary technology offers us alternative energy solutions that might both enable a more sustainable economy and make the century-old geopolitics of oil irrelevant. As in other areas of the current tech revolution, this once-in-an-era energy transition presents both an opportunity, and an urgent need: the choices we make and implement in the coming decades will shape our ecological, economic, political and societal destiny." The fact remains that technology can indeed be used to provide solutions to some extent to the environmental problems that we face. This would not only enable nations to improve the living standards of the citizens of the world, but also preserve natural resources for generations to come.

In conclusion, it can be said that Anirudh Suri's book is more than just a literature written about the changing nature of geopolitics, instead, it is an entire assessment regarding the various probabilities that can arise due to the forthcoming advent of the era of technology. The interesting and unique aspect of the book is that it draws heavily from historical events to justify the present

situation and showcase a systematic evolution of the ways in which international politics has changed its methods of operation as well as the whole framework of functionality. In this altered situation, the variables to be accounted for has undergone a sea change when it comes to the number of global leaders who now strive to be in a position of global influence and have some level of opinion in matters pertaining to global actions. The whole book is a chronology of events that culminates in the most recent situational happenings that further prove the fact that the role that technology played several years ago, once again has become a potent reality in today's times. It is a cogent read, which can invigorate quite a few opinions and notions in the minds of the reader(s), along with raising a sizeable number of questions vis-à-vis the future of the global geopolitical spectrum and elements.

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