

JOURNAL OF POLITICS

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- ☐ Religion and Politics : A narrative of Secularism
 - ☐ Centre-State Relations in India : Changing trend
 - ☐ Situating Protest Movements in Indian Context : Social Imperatives, Political Compulsions and Economic Preferences
 - ☐ A Constructive Approach to develop Human Readiness level
 - ☐ Human Rights in India : An Overview
 - ☐ Impact of Modern Democratic Institutions on the Indigenous Tribal Village Council of Arunachal Pradesh : A case study of Adi
 - ☐ India's Relation with ASEAN - An Observation
 - ☐ The Role of the Small States in SAARC with Special Reference to Bhutan and Nepal
 - ☐ The Question of Women's rights from 'Private' domain to 'Public' sphere
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T. Lahon

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RELIGION AND POLITICS : A NARRATIVE OF SECULARISM

Dhiren Bhagawati

It is interesting to note how secularism as a human value has developed all through the ages. In our society secularism is treated as a positive out-look to religion. It assures equal treatment to all religions. Religion is supposed to be an important and inseparable part of public life. Though the state is not theological but religion is allowed to play a decisive role in many of the actions of the state and the civil society. In this situation, it is necessary to recollect the experiences of the western society with the abuses of religion and consequent social strife which ultimately developed secularism to get out of the impasse. It is not suggested that the western cultural experience is similar to that of ours nor that the west is the torch bearer of modernity. On the other hand, we had much stronger secular tradition than the west and the colonialism was a primary factor in extirpating the secular tradition of our society. Certain basic values of the human species cannot be flouted in the name of their origin. It is also ridiculous and absurd to pursue globalization and liberalization in economic activity but shut our society off the ideas and thinking of the west because we are different.

The value assumption of this paper, but not, of course, its theme is that secularism is a basic human value which is based on a negative attitude to religion accompanied with an out-look of toleration towards faiths of all people and also a respect for individual's freedom of conscience which includes the freedom not to profess any religion also. Secularism is not to be viewed merely as a bourgeois theory nor is it to be viewed as a product of enlightenment which outlived the eclipse of the agenda of enlightenment. Secularism requires that politics as a public activity must be devoid of any religious connection and connotation. Without entering into polemics about the relevance and meaning of religious experience, it can be suggested that religious experience as a spiritual experience can best be left for contemplation by the saints and the sages. It should not be used in politics to mystify the real issues of common man and woman.

After laying down the value premises of the paper let us go straight to the historical roots of secularism. The analysis will provide the background of secularism and the historical necessity of secularism when a society is torn apart by religious strife. In the ancient societies of Greece and Roman Empire politics was the most dominant public activity and it obtained a measure of autonomy. Till the advent of Christianity religion played a second fiddle to politics. Catholicism through its organized Church dominated politics in the middle ages. In the rise of organized Church and the doctrine of one Church, the ideas of St. Augustine (350-430) were most instrumental. The ideas of the original sin and the redemption were essential for subjugating the political order to the religious order. It was successfully done. In fact, St. Augustine did not invent all these. The ideas of a centralised religious authority and its sanction for political power and even invoking God's agreement (covenant) to the rule of a king were embedded in the religious writings of the Hebrews including the Old Testament. These ideas were subsequently incorporated in the Christianity and were put into practice in the centuries following the rise of the Christianity in Europe. Another tradition that the Christianity derived from the Hebrew origin was the animosity of the ruling class to the king because the king was created by the twelve tribes of Israel out of necessity and there continued to be resistance to his rule from rival social forces that effectively used religion to check the king's power.¹ The Christianity in its origin was an anti-authoritarian and liberating force.

Early Christian thought including even that of Jesus was concerned with the imminence of the theocratic rule to replace the rule of king. But the Christianity and Jesus himself were also concerned with the political life of the people. The role of the Messiah that Jesus was attributed to, was to emancipate humanity from the real world of politics of the Jews and also from the temporal situation in which the humanity was placed. The Messiah was a political figure if its spiritual responsibility was removed. In the Messiah both political and spiritual responsibilities are adjoined. The Christianity also assumed this character in its course of development. In the initial period of its growth the Christianity faced severe persecution from the declining Roman Empire. It accentuated its hostility towards state in this period. As time passed the Christianity ascended to the position of the preferred religion of the Roman Empire. Still the Empire could not prohibit other religions and the Christianity continued to demand it till the Church established itself as an independent and hierarchically organised centre of power. Once it was done the Church now needed the authority of the state to punish the heretics.

By the fourth century the rivalry between the Church and the Emperor came to the surface. During the reign of Theodosius I (347-395) Pope Ambrose intervened in the political action of the ruler of punishing some subjects on the charge of rebellion. The Pope proclaimed his supremacy over the ruler and excommunicated and excluded him from the Church. Theodosius I ultimately apologized publicly. But the conflict continued. Emperor Zeno (426-491) asserted his authority to ultimately determine theological questions. This attempt of the Emperor provoked reaction from the Pope and what resulted in was the so called doctrine of two swords. Pope Gelasius was its author. This doctrine while refuting the union of the priest-hood with the royal authority, held that the Emperor's authority was a grant from the people and the Church's authority was allotted through Christ by God. In temporal matters, the Pope was subject to the Emperor but in spiritual matters, the Emperor must submit to the Church. In case of dispute who was final ? Gelasius did not spell out but his emphasis on divine connection of the Church answered it in favour of the Pope.

But the separation of spiritual and temporal powers in the same society leaves scope for conflict if 'the coordinating and defining authority' is vested in the Church. It was the case with the middle ages. By the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries, the semblance of the Pre-Christian Roman Empire vanished, feudalism took its deep roots in society. The kings lost their hold and ruled in name alone. The real powers lay with the clergy and lords in the isolated communities of the villages. The Church with the Pope, and the clergy got thoroughly permeated by the traits of the feudal order. By the tenth century the Pope refused to submit to even Gelasian doctrine and demanded complete supremacy over the temporal power. The conflict between Emperor Henry IV (1050-1105) and Pope Gregory VII over the investiture controversy resulted in the excommunication of the Emperor and also his deposition by the Pope. The Pope could master the support of the nobles also for his action against the Emperor who was forced to mollify. Over a long period the temporal authorities were meddling in the affairs of the clergy. The clergy by its involvement in the feudal processes degenerated into a corrupt institution. When the Church took initiative to reform itself, the Emperor felt his interests were at stakes. The imperial claim to investiture created the strong revulsion from the papacy. The battle was won by the papacy with little concession to the temporal power.²

At the height of the supremacy of the Church in the society, the challenge to its authority came from the forces from within. At first it was at the individual level. Arnold of Brescia (1100-1155) attacked the Church for its worldly

involvement and demanded the Church to renounce wealth and temporal power. He was initially exiled but he came back and exiled the Pope from Rome. He headed a republic in Rome for sometime. But ultimately he was captured and was put to death. Another such person to launch a series of criticism against the temporal involvement of the Church was Peter Waldo (1218-d). But Waldo was successful in developing it into a movement. This movement raised important questions about the authority of the Pope, upheld the right of women to preach, observed that priests were not superior to laymen and prayers could be offered anywhere and even confessions could be made before a layman also. The Waldenses were reformers but they were branded as heretics.

But the basic tenets of the Christianity were questioned by a heretic movement called Albigenses in France and Cathari in elsewhere Europe in 12th and 13th centuries. This movement incorporated some ideas of the ancient Manichaeans. They questioned such institutions as marriage, family and sex relations because of material connections of these institutions. They also challenged the Christian notion of God and Satan, evil and spirit and even Incarnation too. The papacy reacted violently to the Albigenses. Pope Innocent III declared a crusade against them. They were massacred in large number and the places of their habitation were destroyed. But dissatisfaction with and resistance to the orthodox Church continued in 13th and 14th centuries. The Joachimites (from Joachion of Flora born about 1130) and the Amalrichtites (from Amalrich of Bena, died in 1204) and the Franciscans (from St. Francis of Assisi, 1182-1226) shared certain common views about the reform of the Church and the imminence of freedom from the bondage and hierarchy of the feudal order. Though they were not branded as heretics but they posed a threat to the Church was realized.

In the face of these attacks and growing resentment against the papacy, it instituted the Inquisition. Pope Gregory IX first initiated constituting the Inquisition in 1231. In 1252 Pope Innocent IV issued the document, *Ad Extirpanda* providing the justification for the institution of the Inquisition. The temporal ruler under this bull had to appoint a commission of twelve members who were to be chosen by the ecclesiastical authorities. The power of the temporal ruler was nominal and the ecclesiastical authority could nominate new members in place of the existing ones at any time. The commission was to trace out the heretics, take possession of their property and try their cases, perpetrate all sorts of physical torture to extract confessions from the accused and ultimately hand

over the heretic to the temporal authority for burning the heretic alive in public. Several prominent historical figures were subjected to the Inquisition. Among them were Giordano Bruno, Galilei Galileo (he was fortunate to escape the death penalty), Joan of Arc. Inquisition was the device to terrorise and suppress any sort of resistance to the papacy. It was also a way to subjugate the temporal ruler by the Church. If any temporal ruler disassociated with the process of the Inquisition he was to be excommunicated and the territory was laid under an interdict.³

Above circumstances laid the background against which the ideas of secularism arose in Europe. The Renaissance and the scientific temper created by Copernicus and Galileo heralded the modern age which successfully challenged the supremacy of religion in human life and established the primacy of human over divine. The rise of national aspirations of France and England as manifest in the conflict between King Philip IV of France and Pope Boniface VIII in the early fourteenth century also resulted in the decline of papal supremacy over temporal powers. Initially the challenge to ecclesiastical supremacy came from a poet, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). Dante upheld the universal rule of the Roman Empire over all mankind at a time when the Empire was on decline. Dante also proclaimed the supremacy of the temporal power over the papacy. For Dante humanity should be ruled by a universal monarch and the monarch should be the Roman Emperor. All other authorities including ecclesiastical authorities should be subordinate to the universal monarch.⁴

But the most radical figure of this period was certainly Marsilius of Padua (1275/80-1342). Marsilius perhaps for the first time in history limited absolute monarchy by placing it under a representative body chosen by people in accordance with their status and knowledge. In spiritual matter he placed the Scripture above the Church and wanted the Scripture to be interpreted not by the Church but by the intelligentsia e.g. the University of Paris. To further limit the Pope, he made the papal authority subordinate to a Council of the Churches. The Council was to be summoned not by the Pope but by the Emperor who would also decide the issues before the Council and would even give directives to its deliberations. Marsilius was much ahead of his time.⁵ A contemporary of Marsilius was William of Ockham (1285-1349) who publicly held that Jesus and his disciples had no property. It offended the papacy and he was put behind the bars. In the relation between philosophy and theology, Ockham took a nominalist stand which denies the essence of universals and holds that singulars

are the real. Such a view anticipated the modern empiricism. But for the time it effectively challenged the spiritual power of the papacy.⁶

Renaissance produced Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) a great theorist who converted religion to a tool in the hands of the temporal ruler for manipulating it to attain political purposes. He glorified a ruler who could prove his skill in the art of manipulation, Caesar Borgia for example. For Machiavelli, therefore, politics has no religious content, rather it may wear a mantle of religion for pursuing its goals effectively. Machiavelli's attitude to the Roman Church is expressed by the following words.

The nearer people are to the Church of Rome which is the head of our religion, the less religious are they .. Her ruin and chatisement is near at hand .. we Italians owe to the Church of Rome and to her priests our having become irreligious and bad; but we owe her a still greater debt, and one that will be the cause of our ruin, namely that the Church has kept and still keeps our country divided.⁷

The Reformation of the Catholic Church by Luther and Calvin did not yield any secular principles. In Luther there was no scope of any individual reason or volition, it was total surrender to the Scripture and in Calvin state absolutism was reinforced by religious association. The Reformation created Counter Reformation of Loyola who formed the group of the Jesuits who pursued their interests with the military zeal and enforced strict discipline among its followers. They claimed absolute supremacy of the Pope and revived the Inquisition against the heretics. The confused state of politics in the three hundred years following the Reformation was a history of royal assassinations and violence among different religious sects. The only gain from this situation was the emergence of the notion of religious pluralism and the issue of toleration which drew more attention from the intelligentsia in the subsequent periods.

This was also a period which witnessed a silent revolution. It was the revolution of science brought about by the works of Nicolaus Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler, Galilei Galileo and ultimately, Issac Newton. An inspiring force behind the scientific revolution was Francis Bacon who introduced the inductive method of inquiry into all phenomena of the universe against the deductive method of scholasticism in the medieval period. The new revolution of science radically altered the intellectual perspectives of humanity. From revelation and authority of religion a great shift was made to understand the universe and the human beings through the help of reason, logic and observation. Rene

Descartes, B. de Spinoza, G.W. Leibniz liberated philosophy out of the clutches of theology. It was Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) who founded politics on human instincts and needs; and discarded the traditional concept of divine right of king. Hobbes despiritualized politics and made everything civil or spiritual subordinate to the sovereign.

All this transformation occurred through the decline of feudal order and the rise of new productive relations that started to grow from around thirteenth century. The primacy of religion and subordination of politics to spiritual power was the backbone of the feudal order. The society was immobile, hierarchically organized, status based and dependent on extractions of the surplus of the produce of the peasantry. The Church itself was a part of the landlord class, it extracted revenues in the form of tribute from the kings and the lords; the nobility thrived on warfare for perpetuating and expanding their control, peasants were ordained by religion not to resist. The hierarchy of the religious order headed by the Pope, the hierarchy of the temporal order headed by the Emperor, kings and the nobility and the peasantry constituted the three static blocks that supported the society. No challenge to this order of the society was tolerated. But the fundamental relation between the lord and the vassal determined the character of the order. The alliance between those who prayed, those who fought and protected and those who worked was the basis of preservation of the feudal order.

The primary contradiction was between the lords and the vassals. The occasional conflict between the temporal and the spiritual power was generated by the rivalry between the king and the Pope over extracting revenues and sharing revenues. The temporal order refused to pay tributes to religious order because it needed money to wage war against the rival groups or kings. It also levied taxes on the clergy for the same purpose. At other times there was mutual dependence of the temporal and religious orders and it was ordained by the Gelasian doctrine. The protest movements against the Pope and the Church were against the temporal interests of the spiritual authority. The protest movements were directed against the Pope as the land-lord. These movements did not obtain sympathy from the temporal power because the interests of the temporal and the spiritual orders were not in direct conflict on most occasions till at least the conflict between Philip IV and Bonafice VIII. But the Reformation was a different event. It got support from the temporal power because it wanted to strengthen the kings at the cost of the Pope. Moreover, the Reformation did not represent the interests of the peasantry. Martin Luther held the following opinion against the Peasants War of 1524-26 in central Europe.

My opinion is that it is better all the peasants be killed than that the magistrates and princes perish, because the peasants took the sword without divine authority ... Even if the princes of the world go too far, nevertheless they bear the sword by God's authority....Therefore no pity, no patience, is due the peasants....⁸

The emergence of the Reformation coincided with the decline of the feudal order. The enclosure movement in England from about the thirteenth century, rise of a commercial class, rise of trade centres cum prosperous towns in different parts of Europe, shift to moneyed economy led to the decline of the feudal order. From the womb of the feudal order arose the conditions of the commodity production and market. The need of a strong and centralized political authority was felt. It was to be despiritualized authority to fulfil the basic mundane needs of the individual. Security, self aggrandizement, political obligation not salvation from original sin became the concern of the human beings. Calvinism provided the individualistic creed in order to strengthen the movement against the old order. Along with the decline of the feudal order, its dominant classes fell and the Church also lost its hold over land. The Church remained a spiritual authority devoid of its temporal importance. The separation of the spiritual from the temporal was complete. The political linkage of the Church remained symbolic.

In the seventeenth century England the Levellers' Movement actually represented the development of a new social order which threatened the feudal order. One of the demands of the Levellers' Movement was that the Parliament must not have the power "to make any Laws, Oaths, or Covenants, whereby to compel by penalties or otherwise any person to anything in or about matters of faith, Religion or Gods worship ..."⁹. It was a clear example of keeping politics away from religion. There could not be a stronger argument for secularism than to prevent Parliament from involving itself in religious affairs of the individual. The Levellers represented the interests of those who advocated limited government and freedoms for the individual and his private rights.

The decline of the landed regime stripped the Church of its temporal powers and the rise of the individualistic thinking constrained the political role of religion. Different versions of the contract theory were attempts at providing a non-religious (non divine) basis to political power.. The monolithic structure of the Church fell and there arose a host of sectarian religious schools; the argument for toleration was more forcefully put forward.

Since the rise of the capitalist order, the ideas about the role of religion in politics developed in diverse directions. Even in the seventeenth century Spinoza conceived of a God removed from religion and identified with the nature. Rousseau in eighteenth century would confine traditional religion to the private sphere of the individual's life because he upheld tolerations in the life of the community but would replace traditional religions by a civil religion combining moral responsibilities with political obligations. In the same century David Hume in his "The Dialogue Concerning Natural Religion" forcefully rejected the notion of a design and the designer behind the universe. The eighteenth century utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham and James Mill swept away all elements of religious and spiritual base of politics and founded politics on purely hedonistic terms. In the nineteenth century the British biologist Charles Darwin (1809-82) developed his theory of evolution and natural selection of all living species including human. His theory struck a great blow to the religious belief about the origin of life. It shook the orthodox religion severely and stirred strong reaction from the religious authorities.¹⁰ Darwin's impact in the intellectual life of the twentieth century is invaluable. That there is no design nor is there any final cause behind the creation of life is scientifically reaffirmed.

Another tradition of ideas on religion was associated with Luduig Andreas Feuerbach (1804-72). Feuerbach viewed religion as a form of human alienation. While worshipping God human being worships himself. Because all the attributes of God are essentially human. But human being is becoming poorer of it by surrendering it to an imaginary God. These alienated powers of man set to dominate him. Human being has to liberate himself from religion to realize his essential human character. Karl Marx agreed with certain notions of Feuerbach but criticized his ideas on religion. According to Marx, Feuerbach was wrong in criticizing religion alone because it was the social condition of the human life that created religion. Therefore, the task was to alter the social condition of life to get rid of religious illusion. The religious illusions shed a camouflage on the real nature of relations of production and religious illusions can be exposed by revealing the basic conflict of economic interests of the society. For Marx, removing religion does not end the basic conflict. Transformation of society through free and creative human action can liberate human beings from illusions. The latter Marxists including Lenin chose a way not to abolish religion but to restrict it as a private matter of individual. In practice, therefore, while the Marxists hold religion as an obstacle to the unity of working class, they uphold the right of all religious communities to free worship.

The twentieth century disillusionment with religion emanates from the critical thinking of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) also. Nietzsche particularly condemned religions such as Christianity which suppress the "Will to power" of the "over man". Nietzsche's "over man" will act creatively after liberating himself from the bondage of religion that enslaved his free and natural passions. Religion feeds on the suppression of free will of the individual for creative action. Nietzsche's "Beyond Good and Evil" is the forerunner of the twentieth century's scepticism about the conventional virtues. Freud's analysis of the effect of the unconscious mind on our conscious thought and behaviour; and effect of the forgotten past over the present thought and behaviour resolved many a puzzle of human action in a more convincing way than religion could do.

In spite of all this, religious upsurge has become a world wide phenomenon in the later half of the twentieth century. This revival of religion and the world views, customs and institutions associated with religion is held to be the result of failure of the capitalist culture to provide meaningful sustenance for large number of people in most of the societies of the world. In the traditional societies religious revival constitutes popular response to capitalist domination because here culture is indigenous but capital is alien. Liberation theology of Latin America where the Catholic Church became the symbol of anti-imperialist liberation movement in 1960's is a manifestation of alignment of religion with progressive forces. Moreover, in many of the developing societies religion has some vitality and potency to provide a source of resistance against western civilization and imperialism as in Iran. So it is suggested that religion is to be viewed as a cultural component in the struggle of the people against the domination of the imperialist civilization.¹¹ But the fact remains that the religious revivals in the non-western societies quite often turn out to be either a victim of reactionary forces or an ally of the imperialist regimes.

The western experience teaches us that a religion originating in the anti-authoritarian liberation movement and promising human emancipation ultimately found itself a prisoner of the feudal order. As a result, the struggle against the feudal order became also a struggle against religion. When the struggle was won, the religion was restored to its original position in society. Though religion has the potency to play a role as a part of culture and a source of morality of the people to act against the domination and injustice but there is no guarantee how the autonomy of religion can be preserved against the dominant economic

and political interests of the time. The forces of reaction very often intrude themselves into the domain of religion. It is always better to restrict religion to the private sphere of the life of individual human being. Secularism draws the line of demarcation between religion and politics.

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8. Quoted in Mulford Q. Sibley, *Political Ideas and Ideologies*, New York, Harper and Row, 1970, p. 316.
9. Quoted in *Ibid*, p. 366.
10. In 1925 John T. Scope, a school teacher in the State of Tennessee in the U.S.A. had to face a trial in the court of violating the state law forbidding teaching of Darwin's theory of evolution. The Darwin's theory was forbidden because it was against the interpretation of the Bible. Scope was found guilty. However his conviction was set aside.
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CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS IN INDIA : CHANGING TREND

T. Lahon

The paper makes an attempt to analyse the changing trends of Centre-State relations in India in the framework of the federal political system provided by the Constitution. Before going to analyse the changing trends in Centre-State relations, it would be worthwhile to note that the nature of federalism that prevailed in India is different from that of a classical federation. Unlike the classical federation of United States of America (which is formed by the among the sovereign independent states), the Indian federation was formed with the provinces which were not independent and sovereign. Before the formation of Indian Federation., the provinces were administered by the Government of India headed by a British Governor-General. Although, autonomy was introduced in the governors' Provinces under the Government of India Act 1935, the powers of the Council of Ministers and the Provincial Legislatures were circumscribed by the "Special responsibilities" of the Governors who were in discharge of those "responsibilities" responsible to the Governor General. The framers of the Indian Constitution, therefore, nowhere in the Constitution mentioned the word 'federation', instead they described India as a 'Union of States' and this created a controversy about the nature of Indian federalism.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar while presenting the Draft Constitution before the Constituent Assembly said that it establishes a dual polity with the Union at the Centre and the States at the periphery, each endowed with sovereign power to be exercised in the field assigned to them by the Constitution. He further pointed out that the Constitution has avoided the tight mould of federation in which the American Constitution was caught and could be both unitary as well as federal according to the requirements of the time and circumstances. In normal times it is formed to work as a federal system and in times of war it is designed to work as an unitary system.

From the statement of Dr. Ambedkar, it is clear that the Constitution of India bears some unitary features along with the federal features. The existence of dual polity both at the Centre and in the States; division of powers between the Centre and the States; supremacy of the Constitution; existence of independent judiciary etc. which are the main determinants of the federal system are present in the Indian Constitution. But at the same time there are some other features in the constitution which help the Centre to play the role of 'Big Brother'. Now the question before us is what is the nature and status of the States in our constitutional framework and what is the actual nature of our federalism. This question has been very much debated and discussed at different forums.

In the light of the above, an attempt has been made to examine the trends of Centre-State relations during the last fifty years. The experience of last fifty years shows that the Centre-State relations was not always normal and cordial. It has undergone changes at different times in political situations. The changing trends of Centre-State relations in India can be discussed under the following stages :

Stage I : 1950-1966:

In this state the Centre-State relations was by and large cordial, smooth and normal. Of course, strains were witnessed at this stage over the question of setting aside the State Constitutional machinery and imposition of President's Rule in four states under Article 356¹. In all these cases, the opposition parties criticised the Congress Government at the Centre. But there was no open confrontation because of the Charismatic leadership of Prime Minister Nehru and the rule of the Congress Party at the Centre and in most of the States. The conflicts between the Centre and the States were resolved amicably during this period at the party level.

Stage II: 1967-1970:

This stage is known as the era of Centre-State tension. The theory of one party dominance that developed in the first stage had partially come to an end after the Fourth General Elections held in February 1967. The Congress Party fought this election without Nehru² and the dominance of the party at the Centre considerably declined³ and in some states the party lost its powers.⁴

As soon as the non-Congress Government in the states were formed, they brought both specific and common charges against the Centre and demanded for reviewing the Centre-State relations. The Tamilnadu government even set up

a three-member committee headed by P.V. Rajamannar in 1970. The committee made the following recommendations:-

(a) An Inter-State Council comprising the Chief Ministers of all the states or their nominees with the Prime Minister as its Chairman should be constituted; (b) The Planning Commission which is an extra-Constitutional body should be disbanded and in its place a Statutory Body should be constituted with the scientific, technical, agricultural and economic experts to advise the states which should have their own Planning Boards; (c) The Finance commission should be set up on a permanent basis and there should be larger devolution of taxes in favour of the states so that their dependence upon the centre minimised; (d) More subjects should be transferred to the state list from the Union and the Concurrent list; (e) The Governor of the states should be appointed by the President in consultation with the state Cabinet or some High Power Body should be set up for the purpose and once a person appointed as Governor he should not be appointed to any other office under the Government; (f) The High Courts of the states should be the highest courts for all matters falling within the jurisdiction of the states. Cases involving the interpretation of the Constitution could however, continue to be brought before the Supreme Court; (g) Equal representation should be provided to all the states in the Rajya Sabha; (h) Maintain special status of Kashmir in the Indian Union; (i) Retain of English as link language between the centre and states; (j) Settle the Inter-State water disputes through Supreme court etc. ⁵

The recommendations of the Rajamannar committee did not receive any favourable response from the Central Government on the ground that the committee was not appointed by the Centre but by a State Government. Moreover, the opposition government formed in the states after the Fourth General Elections was also fall because of infighting among the coalition partners. The groups or individuals who failed to get a good office defected to the other side and prepared the strategies to topple the government. Thus, the coalition government became a game of all of the opportunists and power-hungry politicians.

Again, in this stage a new dimension added to the Centre-State relations because of the split in the Congress party in 1969 over the question of the Presidential candidate.⁶ After the split in the Congress party, Mrs. Gandhi's government reduced to a minority and for the survival of her government she had to sought support from the Akali Dal, DMK and CPI. Because of the dependence of Mrs. Gandhi on Akali Dal, DMK and CPI she had to deal with

the state governments ruled by these parties in a very soft manner. However, in view of the pressures from the Chief Ministers of the opposition ruled states and other leaders of the opposition, Mrs. Gandhi compelled to call for a careful study of the issue of Centre-State relations. The demands and suggestions received by the Government were examined by the Home Ministry, Government of India. After the scrutiny, the government announced that the Constitution of the country is sufficiently sound and so there is no need for any amendment in the Constitution to re-define the Centre-State relations. The government further stated that it was not the Constitution but the political situation of the country that was faulty and confusing. Thus the Central Government turned down the suggestions to review the Centre-State relations. On the other hand, Mrs. Gandhi thought that the best way to resolve the Centre-State tensions would be to establish the rule of her party both at the Centre and in the States. She advised the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha and order mid-term poll. President V.V. Giri accordingly issued the order on 27th December 1970. Thus it can be said that after the split in the Congress the opposition Government in the States began to assert their right of independence against Central control. But this trend did not last long.

Stage II: 1971-1976;

In this stage the Centre-State relations changed to a great extent. The dream of Mrs. Gandhi fulfilled by the Mid-term Lok Sabha Poll, 1971 and the subsequent Assembly Elections in 1972. In the Lok-Sabha election Mrs. Gandhi's Congress Party secured 352 seats out of the total 518 seats. The Fifth General Elections held in Sixteen states in February - March 1972, the Congress (I) secured majority in fourteen states and formed the Government on its own strength.⁷ In other two states - in Manipur the party formed its government with the support of independents and the members of the small parties. In Meghalaya it could not form its Government as it could secure only 9 seats out of 60 seats. In February 1974, Elections were held in Uttar Pradesh and Orissa State Assemblies and in both the states Congress (I) formed its government. Thus out of twenty one states, in Seventeen Congress (I) was able to establish its own rule. The four non-Congress State governments were Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Meghalaya and Nagaland. Thus, it has been seen that during this stage the tension between the centre and the states partially ended and the relationship became normal as there was no strong opposition as well as demand for greater powers from the states.

The plan of Mrs. Gandhi no doubt worked well. But in the mean time she faced a serious problem i.e. the Allahabad High Court in its verdict on the writ petition of Raj Narain⁸ set aside the election of Mrs. Gandhi to the Lok Sabha.⁹ Hearing the verdict of the High Court, the opposition leaders demanded resignation of Mrs. Gandhi. They also called upon the people to rise in revolt against Mrs. Gandhi if she would not resign by her own. To pressurise her the opposition leaders in support of Jaya Prakash Narain, J.B. Kripalani led demonstrations, processions, organised rallies etc. everyday. But the situation somewhat changed because of the Supreme Court's stay order on the verdict of the Allahabad High Court. Justice Iyer of the Supreme Court delivered the following in the verdict :- (a) Mrs. Gandhi will remain as a member of the Lok Sabha for all purposes except that she will neither participate in the proceedings nor vote, nor draw remuneration as member,

(b) She can remain as the Premier or Minister and in that capacity can participate in the Proceedings of either House of Parliament or Joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament but without right to vote and can draw salary as such.¹⁰

Immediately after the verdict of the Supreme Court, the Congressmen, Congress legislators and Congress Chief Ministers at the advice of Mrs. Gandhi organised big rallies in support of Mrs. Gandhi from June 13 to 20 at various places of the country. The Congress Chief Ministers in the states collected huge fund to meet the challenge of the opposition. The resentment of the people had also gone up and on 25 June 1975 they organised a big meeting under the Chairmanship of Jaya Prakash Narain which was attended by about 5 lakh people. The meeting was also addressed by J.B. Kripalani. Considering the whole development against her government, Mrs. Gandhi ultimately decided to impose internal emergency in the country on 25 June 1975 and she got full support from the State Governments. During the period of internal emergency from June 1975 to the end of January 1977, the states became completely subordinate to the Central Government and India became virtually a unitary state. To be precise the internal emergency (1975-77) further strengthened the hold of the Centre over the States and the spirit of Co-operative bargaining which characterised the relations between the Centre and the states was replaced by the 'Big Brother' role of the centre.

Stage IV: 1977 - 1979;

This stage is more known as an era of Centre-State confrontation. The year of 1977 became known as the most significant year in the political history of India. The elections to the Lok Sabha that was held in this year ended the congress rule at the Centre for the first time since independence. The Janata Party that was formed by combining - Jan Sangh, Congress (O), Bharatiya Lok Dal, Socialist Party and the Congress for Democracy formed the Government at the Centre with its 292 members.¹¹

Soon after assuming power the Janata Party also repeated the theory of Mrs. Gandhi of same party rule at both the centre and the states. To give effect to this theory, just after a month in power it took the decision of the dissolution of nine state Assemblies ruled by the Congress party on the plea that congress lost the mandate of the people.¹³

Immediately after the dismissal of the government and the dissolution of the Assemblies in nine states the Centre-State tensions mounted up. The aggrieved states filed petitions against the Central Government in the supreme court but the court dismissed the petitions. The election Commission then announced the dates of elections to the nine state Assemblies (June 10, 12 and 14, 1977). Out of the nine, in six states Janata party formed its government.

It is significant to note that during the Janata rule, the Akali Dal government in Punjab; DMK in Tamilnadu, the Nagas of Nagaland; the Mizos of Mizoram and CPM led left front government of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura consistently demanded more autonomy for the state. They bitterly criticised the Central government for ignoring their demand. By demanding more powers to the states, the akali Dal in its Anandpur Sahib Resolution on 23 August 1977 laid down that the Centre should confined its powers only to the defence of the country, foreign relations, communications, railways and currency. It demanded the transfer of all residuary subjects to the states. Soon after, the West Bengal Government submitted a memorandum to the Centre in December 1977 demanding the removal of the Constitutional tilt in favour of the Centre and making the States wholly supreme in their fields. Their demand became more vigorous when the Janata Dal government suffered from crisis because of infighting among the leaders. Ultimately Janata Party splited into two with the creation of new party namely "Janata party secular" under the leadership of Charan Singh. After the formation of the Charan Singh Government at the Centre,

the opposition government in the states became more critical and started to ignore the directives of the Central Government. The Central Government because of its internal weaknesses found itself helpless to take any steps against these states. Due to internal conflict, Charan Singh Govt. could not survive and on 20 August, 1979, Charan Singh resigned from Prime Ministership leading to the fall of his Govt. Thus it has been observed that during this state the Centre-State relations was more tough.

Stage V : 1980 - 1983;

This stage is known as the stage of Centre State confrontation. Mrs. Indira Gandhi again returned to power after the midterm elections to the Lok Sabha held in January 1980. Mrs. Gandhi by repeating her old strategy again sought to establish the hegemony of the Centre over the states. For this, by repeating the same wrong which was done by the Janata government, she dissolved the nine state Assemblies on 17th February 1980. The dismissal of the state governments en-masse created lot of Centre State tensions. In the elections held in the nine state Assemblies on 28th and 31st May, the Congress (I) secured majority in eight states. Only in Tamilnadu it suffered a setback where ADMK returned to power. Thus, Mrs. Gandhi was successful in establishing the hegemony of the Congress(I) at the Centre and in most of the states and Union territories. But the states like Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, West Bengal where there were non Congress(I) Governments brought different charges against the Centre. It is important to note that in view of growing tensions between the Centre and the non-congress(I) ruled states, the President of India Sanjiva Reddy said that it became "almost impossible" for the Centre to deal with the multifarious problems of the states promptly and efficiently. He, therefore, urged greater autonomy to the states which was rejected by Mrs. Gandhi.

The issue of Centre-State relations entered into a crucial phase when the Chief Ministers of all non-congress(I) ruled states and leaders of all opposition parties joined hands together in demanding for more powers to the states and re-examination of Centre-State relations. President Sanjiva Reddy also extended support to the demand for greater autonomy by the states when he delivered his speech in the Sardar Patel Memorial Lecture on 31 October 1981. This call of the President welcomed by the opposition governments in the states. But this was severely criticized by the Congress leadership. By opposing the concept of greater autonomy for the states they advocated for a strong Centre. Thus, it can

be said that during this stage the allegations of the states against the Centre and counter allegations of the Centre against the states continued and the federal structure of the Indian Polity operated under great strains.

However, in view of the growing demand from the non-congress(I) state governments and the opposition leaders for reviewing the Centre-State relations, the government of Mrs. Gandhi at the Centre announced on 24 March 1983 its decision to appoint a commission under R.S.Sarkaria, a retired judge of the Supreme Court. The other members of the Commission were B. Sivaraman, the Cabinet Secretary, S.R. Sen a former Executive Director of the IBRD, and Ramasubra Maniam, Member Secretary. The non-coongress(I) governments in the states immediately hailed this move of the Prime Minister with the hope of getting a favourable report and recommendations from the Sarkaria Commission.

Stage VI : 1984 - 1989;

In this stage the Centre-State tension remained same. The congress(I) government headed by Rajiv Gandhi again came into power with three - fourth majority through mid-term Lok Sabha Elections held after the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi in 1984. The non-Congress(I) Government in the states again reiterated their greater autonomy demand. By the end of the Rajiv Gandhi's government Sarkaria Commission submitted its report to the Government.

The Sarkari Commission in its report submitted to the Government in 1988 has made the following suggestions :-

1. The National Development Council be retained and Zonal Council should be activated.
2. The constitution should be amended to provide for sharing of corporation tax, levy of consignment tax, and tax on advertisement and broadcasting, between the centre and the states.
3. An expert committee should be appointed to examine taxation reforms and resource mobilisation and make suitable recommendation.
4. Loan grant - pattern of central assistance should be reviewed.
5. The centre should have full powers regarding deployment of central forces regardless of the wishes of the state government.
6. The commission has commended the practice of consultation with the states as well as with the Vice-President and the speaker of Lok Sabha for the appointment of the governor.

7. Regarding the functions of the governor, the commission has said that he should appoint as Chief Minister either the leader of the majority party or (if there is no such party), then the person who in his judgement, is most likely to command majority in the Assembly, but in the latter case, the person so appointed should seek a majority vote in the Assembly within thirty days.
8. Articles 200 and 201 should be retained, but when the President withholds assent to a bill the reasons should be communicated to the state government.
9. The residual matters, other than taxation should be in the concurrent list and the centre should consult the states before making a law on a subject in the concurrent list.
10. Regarding imposition of President's rule under Article 356, the commission has said that before declaring failure of the constitutional machinery in the state, the possibility of an alternative government should be explored and without getting a proclamation approved by parliament the state Assembly should not be dissolved.
11. The commission has disapproved the dismissal of state governments en-masse as was done in 1977 and again 1980.
12. The commission has rejected the demand of giving autonomy to AIR and Doordarshan as demanded by non-congress(I) governments.
13. On the language issue the commission has recommended that the three-language formula should be implemented in its true spirit uniformly in all the states and the commissioner of Linguistic Minorities should be activated.
14. Regarding civil services, the commission has said that in order to maintain the unity and integrity of the country the All India Services should be retained and the centre should dissuade the state government from using their powers of making transfers and promotions in order to discipline them¹³.

Although there were some good suggestions in the report of the Sarkaria commission atleast to minimise the Centre-State tensions, the Congress(I) Government did not take any initiative to implement them. Instead it declared that it would take a decision on it after the country-wide discussion. However, before the process could be completed the Congress(I) Government fell.

Stage VII : 1989 - 1990;

In this stage new trend developed in the Centre-State relations. It was so because in the elections to the Lok Sabha held in 1989 no party could secure majority. As a result of this a National Front Government was formed at the Centre under the leadership of V.P. Singh. To normalise the Centre-State relation and also to restore the federal character of the national polity this government set up an Inter-State Council in June 1990-. The step taken by the National Front Government was certainly raised hopes in resolving the problems of Centre-State relations. But before initiating any specific policy in this direction the life of the National Front Government came to an end. The Congress(I) again returned to power through the mid-term Lok Sabha poll held in 1991.

Stage VIII : 1991 - 1995;

The relationship between the centre and the states at this stage somewhat changed because the Congress(I) Government formed under the leadership of P.V. Narasimha Rao did not enjoy majority in the parliament. Later, of course his position was somewhat improved following the joining of the Telegu Desam party with 6 members in 1992 and Janata Dal (Ajit Singh) with 10 members. It also received the support of the AIADMK, another regional party of Tamil Nadu. To remain in power with the support of the regional parties of the states it had not only to be soft cornered towards the states but also implemented a few of the recommendations of the Sarkaria commission. Thus, it can be said that during this stage the Centre-State relations was somewhat bargaining.

Stage IX : 1996 Onwards.

In 1996 there was a change in the government at the centre. In the elections of 1996 the BJP emerged as the single largest party in the Lok Sabha and by virtue of this the President invited its leader, A.B. Bajpayee to form the government. But he stayed in office only for 13 days. Thereafter a new government called United Front, a coalition of 13 parties formed under the leadership of H.D. Deve-Gowda. But because of internal conflict the leadership in the United Front Government was changed and I.K. Gujral headed the United Front Government. During this stage a new trend developed in the Centre-State relations. After assuming power in June 1996, it appointed a High-Level Committee to review the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission. Prime Minister Dev Gowda in this regard stated that the most important requirement for a healthy Centre-State relationship was frequent interactions. He further stated that the

Centre and states were supreme in their own spheres and the differences should be sorted out through sincere consultations. But this time also before the process could be set in motion the United Front Government fell. Thus it can be said that although good effort was made by this Government in normalising Centre-State relations it could not be materialised because of its short duration.

In the last Lok Sabha elections the same situation emerged. None of the national parties could secure majority. This time the regional parties emerged as indispensable in the national politics. After the election, the coalition government which was formed under the leadership of A.B. Vajpayee contains 22 regional parties under the banner of National Democratic Alliance. To cope up with the political situation the coalition government formulated the Common Minimum Programme which emphasised the need for devolution of more financial and administrative powers and functions to the states and cordial Centre-State relations¹⁴. In fact the NDA Govt. for its survival has to follow a policy of soft corner to the States. The state governments now are in a position to assert their rights and decide their policy as against the earlier practice of carrying out the policy determined by the centre. The states which have their regional party in the coalition government even play the bargaining game with the centre.

Thus the issue of state autonomy has been neutralised in the present political juncture. Moreover, instead of taking cohesive and united plan for state autonomy by the states the regional leadership is more concerned to look to the interest of their respective states. In the national agenda it has been incorporated that a commission would be set up to review the Constitution of India in the light of the experience of the past 50 years and to make suitable recommendations; devolution of more financial and administrative powers and functions to the state; decentralisation right up to the grassroots level etc.

In all our debate on federalism and Centre-State relations over the past 50 years, the most neglected aspect is local-self government. There can not be true federation and cordial Centre-State relations without the local people having near-complete control over their destinies. The much talked about 73rd or 74th amendments to the Constitution of India are but very hesitant steps in the direction of true federalism of our polity. Unless power is really transferred to the states and through the states to the people, Indian democracy will continue to be illusory. We have to create a nexus between the vote and the welfare of the citizens. The major issue of tensions between the Centre and the states require our urgent attention to redress the imbalances that surfaced in our federal polity and to establish cordial relations between the Centre and the states.

In any such serious re-negotiations of Centre-State relations, there has to be a measured and balanced approach of give and take. While there is a lot of fat that the Centre should shed and the states must be provided with appropriate sinew to deal with their enormous responsibilities, there is also a very strong case of greater central intervention in certain areas in order to achieve unity, national integrity and economic growth. It is clear that any meaningful renegotiations of Centre-State relations can not be a one way traffic. There has to be a measured balance between greater autonomy to states and the imperatives of promoting national unity and harmony keeping in view our past experience. In this back-drop, we have to pursue a creative and democratic method to engineer the review of existing Centre-State relations. A non-partisan National Referendum on the need for fundamental reforms on this issue is a creative way out of this impasse.

Notes of References

1. The states brought under President's rule were East Punjab on 20 June 1951; Patiala and East Punjab states Union on 5 March 1953; Andhra on 15 November 1954 ; and Travancore-Cochin on 23 March 1956.
2. Nehru died on 27 May 1964
3. The majority of Congress in the Lok Sabha was reduced from 361 in 1962 to 282 seats.
4. In six states out of seventeen, opposition parties formed United Front of coalition governments. The six states were Punjab, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. In Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh non-congress governments came into existence because of defections.
5. Prakash Chander, Indian Government and Politics, Cosmos Bookhire (P) Ltd., p.82.
6. After the demise of President Zakir Hussain the Central Parliamentary Board of the Congress decided to give the party ticket to Nilam Sanjiva Reddy for the office of the President but Mrs. Indira Gandhi ensured the victory of V.V. Giri who contested as an Independent candidate.
7. The states where congress(I) formed its own governments were Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tripura, West Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra.
8. Raj Narain who fought against Mrs. Gandhi in March 1971 Parliamentary election from Rae-Bareilly defeated by a margin of over one lakh votes and challenged the election of Mrs. Gandhi for corrupt practices in the election.
9. The Allahabad High Court in its verdict on 12 June 1975 set aside the election of Mrs. Gandhi for her corrupt practices in the election.

10. Darbara Singh, *Indian Politics*, Sundeep Prakashan, 1978, p. 12.
11. The representations were - Jan Sangh led by A.. Vajpayee 90 Congress(O) led by Modraji Desai 55, Socialist Part led by G. Fernandez 51, Bharatiya Lok Dal led by Charan Singh 68, and Congress for Democracy led by Jagjivan Ram 28. 6 dissidents Congress members led by Mohan Dharia also joined the government.
12. The nine states were, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana.
13. J.R. Siwach, *Dynamics of Indian government and Politics*, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1990, pp. 519-520.
14. In the national agenda it has been incorporated that a commission would be set up to review the constitution of India in light of the experience of the past 50 years and to make suitable recommendations; devolution of more financial and administrative powers and functions to the states; decentralisation right up to the grassroots level etc.

SITUATING PROTEST MOVEMENTS IN INDIAN CONTEXT : SOCIAL IMPERATIVES, POLITICAL COMPULSIONS AND ECONOMIC PREFERENCES

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I

India provides an ideal example of a plural society - a society that is divided on what Harry Eckstein Calls "segmental cleavages" of religious, ideological, linguistic, regional, cultural, racial or ethnic nature¹. As a result, the political parties, interest groups, media of communication schools, and voluntary associations tend to be organised along the segmental cleavages². It has been a well established proposition in Political Science that in a plural society, it is difficult to achieve and maintain stable democratic government³. The root of this proposition may be traced to Aristotle's observation that "a state aims at being, as far as it can be, a society composed of equals and peers"⁴. Social homogeneity and political consensus are thus treated as pre requisites for, or factors strongly conducive to, stable democracy, and social divisions and political differences within plural societies are thought to be responsible for instability and breakdown in democracies⁵.

As such, India, like other plural societies, has been witnessing a spurt of protest movements during the last four decades, especially since the seventies, and these protests emanate mostly from the plural character of Indian society leading to a situation which Kohli designates as the "crisis of governability."⁶ India has moved from stability to instability and has even acquired the reputation of a "functioning anarchy"⁷ in the face of these protest movements that aim at

expressing dissent from conditions of powerlessness, deprivation, injustice or loss of identity and seek various remedial empowerment and entitlements.

Under the circumstances, an understanding of the protest movements in India inevitably requires an analysis and understanding of the social, economic and political dynamics of the system involving major contradictions operating at different levels. The present paper seeks to unfold these contradictions that are noticeable in the dynamic interaction of the various parameters of the system covering the social, cultural, ethnic, religious, economic and political dimensions that are thought to be the breeding grounds for dissent, agitation and protests in India.

II

Social Contradictions

By the logic of plural society, India exhibits the heterogeneous presence simultaneously of modernity with tradition; relatively developed urban centre with all the modern facilities and amenities with the backward rural peripheries; the presence of caste hierarchy as a social phenomenon having large scale political penetration with pronounced equality; and rampant corruption at all spheres of the society leading to a situation in which the society is divided between the privileged few and the oppressed lot. Undoubtedly, all these contradictions tend to impair the legitimacy of the political system.

India, being the second most popular polity in the world, exhibits the beliefs and behaviour pattern of its large masses that are characterised by great antiquity, continuity and diversity unmatched by any other political system⁸. This manifest contradiction results in a unique norm that the Indian live in one country but in many centuries. The urban centres with all modern looks and outlooks simultaneously coexist with the rural areas with age-old values and beliefs. These two represent two extreme cultural polarities in their outlook and lifestyle and yet these may also be congruent in some respects⁹. Indeed, there have been great techno-economic achievement in the fields of science, technology and engineering but most Indians still continue to subscribe to beliefs whose philosophical foundations were moulded several centuries ago and whose ideological core has remained intact despite momentous changes in the political realm and regular contacts with different and / or divergent cultural traditions¹⁰.

Observers like Morris - Jones¹¹ and Weiner¹² have attempted to encapsulate the process of contradiction and adjustment that is going on in India

by arguing that there are a number of "idioms" or "cultures" that are in conflict with each other. The "Traditional idiom" of Morris-Jones and the "mass political culture" of Weiner are found in the rural areas rooted in the kin, caste, and communal relations while the "modern idiom" of Morris-Jones and "elite political culture" of Weiner are found in the cities. Thus, there are two basic and general pattern political culture in India from the village to the national level denoting a distinct manner of political thinking and behaviour¹³.

In line with the modernity - tradition dichotomy there exists the rural urban contradiction. The urban areas are found to monopolise most of the modern and basic amenities of life while the rural areas are left to the basic minimum, even less of the basic needs. In terms of education, health, marketing of products and purchasing for sustained livelihood the rural areas have virtually no option but to look to the urban areas. The consequences become deplorable when the people of the rural areas cannot afford to go to the urban areas for education or for medical purposes. Under the circumstances, they are left to the seemingly predestined option of remaining uneducated or half educated, unemployed or underemployed, traditional in outlook, and victims of traditional ways of medical treatment by the "ojhas" or the local quacks. However, during the last few years, the picture has started changing. With the revitalization of Panchayati Raj, the horizontal and vertical penetration of political parties in the rural areas, particularly in West Bengal, and the policy of the Central Government to allocate more funds for agriculture and rural development, the rural areas are gradually being integrated with the mainstream of the political system. But in view of the rural-urban divide that still persists to a significant extent the rural people are left to feel alienated inviting drives for mobilization for dissent, agitation and protest.

Another social contradiction that affects the social, economic and political system in a big way is the organization and persistence of the Indian society on caste hierarchy on the one hand and the constitutional declaration for equality on the other. It is not surprising to note that 'caste' - 'a homogeneous, endogamous social organization with distinctive rituals, especially those pertaining to religious purity'¹⁴ has not disappeared from the society despite significant changes in the fields of science, technology, communication, education. Rather, the new constitutional arrangements, may be unintentionally, has given a fresh lease of life to caste politicisation. A close examination of the social and political process in India reveals that castes have grown significant and every political

party including the communists, has taken due note of it though overtly caste factor has been denounced by most¹⁵ of the party and leaders. The process of transformation revealing certain notable changes in the social system of India does not at all mean end of caste framework¹⁶.

As against the organization of the society on caste hierarchy there exists the constitutional mechanism that tends to ensure equality for all and provision for non-discrimination on grounds of caste, creed, race, religion and sex. But the contradiction emanates from the same constitutional mechanism that provides for special privileges and preferential policies for some. This has indeed aggravated the caste relationship in India and thus has provided fresh impetus to caste induced social tensions. The acceptance of the recommendations of the Mandal Commission extending the coverage of the reservations for the backward castes and the subsequent anti-reservation movement throughout the country is a case in point.

Even though some scholars¹⁷ have extended laudable recognition to caste as positive channel of communication and thus conducive to social integration, the objective of caste and caste associations has never been to strengthen the social order based on democratic values¹⁸. In practice, the leaders of the caste association project their interests as those of their castes and their interests are generally directed towards gaining or retaining or promoting their own political and economic dominance. Caste conflicts are thus more an extension of the conflict of interests of caste leaders. Such conflicts promote what Rajni Kothari calls 'negative communalism'¹⁹. As such, violence in the name of caste is growing both in number and severity. The issue of the integration of the low castes as effective participants in a democratic political order and of caste conflict between the elite castes and backward castes have persisted throughout the post-independence period upto the present and have posed recurring challenges to the maintenance of an integrated society, an egalitarian polity, and non-violent mechanisms of conflict resolution²⁰.

Finally, of late, the society is experiencing unprecedented amount of corruption, moral degradation, and erosion in the integrity in the component parts of the system, thus questioning the very legitimacy of the system itself. Previously, petty corruption at the bottom level of administration was within the limits of tolerance of society. But the extensive level of corruption at the top level politics and administration like the Bofors payoff scam, Security scam, Hawala scam, Fodder scam, Urea scam, the recently unearthed Defence scam

by the Tehelka and the like has virtually shattered the foundation of the trust of the society over politics. All the national political parties and some of their leaders excepting of course, the left political parties have been indicated on charges of corruption. This has led to the distrust of the people to the politicians and the political parties. But this also signifies the institutionalization of corruption and the elasticity of the social system to absorb the vice without much resistance. This is itself a contradiction in the social system of India - the contradicting between the rhetoric of moral considerations and values and the reality of moral degradation.

Ethno-Cultural Contradictions

In the Indian Socio-political system, a major contradiction revolves around the ethnic and cultural domain - the contradiction between 'nationalism - an attachment to the broad identity of being Indian - and a variety of what is called subnationalisms - cultural, linguistic and ethnic - denoting narrow loyalty or attachment to a particular culture or language or group as constituting primary identity. All these varieties of subnationalism actually lead to the regionalization of politics thus extending the contradiction to national integration and regionalization.

There are two schools of thought on the role of impact of these micro nationalistic variation. One school believes that the activities of the groups at micro level certainly hampers the nation-building process and consequently destabilises the balance of the state system²¹. The other school does not find any reason to believe that micro loyalties are disastrous moves of the human collectivities to thwart the very basis of the concept 'nation-state'²². Rather these may contribute to the strengthening of the nation-state²³. The period of 'nation-building - the passage from a 'nation-in-the becoming' to a 'nation in-the being'²⁴ - where the 'national consensus on the institutions and mechanisms of the state through which social conflicts get articulated and resolved' is lacking is likely to be characterised by internal strifes and conflicts over clashing values and interests, over issue of discrimination, exploitation and oppression. Hence, conflicts taking place without the state during this period need not be interpreted necessarily as destabilising, anti-national forces bent upon destroying the country. Rather, these should be considered as constituting the very stuff out of which a nation-state will get galvanized²⁵.

However, in spite of the optimism of the sound school of thought, the Indian situation, particularly in the recent past shows something different and

alarming. The reorganization of states on linguistic consideration has not been able to contain the proliferation of regional movements. Rather, regional movements on ethnic ground having secessionist as well as autonomy orientations have been going on with considerable intensity and as such, pose threat to the very foundation of national integration and the nation-state itself. All these movements indicate the divide between secular national identity and primordial regional identity. The institutional and procedural incapacity of the political system to tackle and resolve these conflicts further aggravate the perceived feeling of deprivation, discrimination and oppression of one group by the other. Logically, this feeling further widens the gap between nationalism and regionalism and the alienation of the deprived section from the mainstream of the Indian political system. Thus whatever may be the cause of their origin, these movements pose threat to the national identity of India. The intensity of these movements are such that questions like "Is the Republic Up" are raised²⁶.

The foremost threat to national integration comes from the North-Eastern States, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, and to a limited extent, the activists of the Gorkhaland movement and Kamtapur movement in the state of West Bengal. From the North East, the threat is apparent from Naga National Council (NNC), National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), Mizo National Front (MNF), Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) Peoples Revolutionary party of Kanglei Pak (PREPAK), All Tripura Tribal Force (ATTF), Tripura National Volunteers (TNV), United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), Bodo Security Force (BDSF), Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) and the like. Armed rebellion has been organised by these organizations and thus insurgency has been the most popular method for the realization of the goal. These organizations claim that neither the Hindu norms nor any Indian traditional pattern match with the conglomeration of the myriad ethnic tribes in the region. In Punjab, the Akalis initially spearheaded the demand for Punjabi Suba. But later on, the slogan for sovereign theocratic state - "Raj Karega Khalsa" - got matured and exploited by a number of militant Khalistani outfits. As a result, the widespread terrorism and the resultant massive state repression are the factors that come in the way of the bridge between Panjabi identity and India's national identity. In the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the fear of the Kashmiri Muslims who constitute about 95 percent of the population of the valley of cultural marginalization due to a process of state sponsored imposition of sanskritised pan-Indianness along with manipulative politics of the ruling elite, impoverishment, unemployment, corruption and adhocism of the

government acted in favour of exclusivist interest and ideology²⁷. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) leads the agitation in Kashmir Valley and demands a totally independent State of Kashmir.

As against these anti-Indian movements, the movements for Gorkhaland and Kamtapur in west Bengal do not pose serious threat to the unity of the country though they substantially impair the integrity of the society. The basic thrust of the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) was for a separate State of Gorkhaland so that the alleged Bengali hegemony over the hill people could no longer be there. Thus, it was the movement of the hill people with distinctive identity against the 'Bengali hegemony'. And the gap between these two identities has not yet been bridged even though partially the demand of the GNLF has been fulfilled with the formation of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC). Similarly, the northern part of West Bengal, particularly the districts of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and the Siliguri Subdivision of Darjeeling district is witnessing a movement since the 1980's. The objectives of this movement range from mere assertion of cultural identity based on language and heritage, to a separate state of 'Kamtapur'. The movement is being spearheaded by the All Kamtapuri Students Union (AKSU), the Kamtapuri People Party (KPP) and the militant outfit, the Kamtapuri Liberation Organization (KLO). Here too, the objective is to assert the separate Rajbangshi identity against the Bengali hegemony. Thus, in all these movements reflects the divide or contradiction between two attachments - nationalism and regionalism.

Contradictions Relating to Communalism and Secularism

One of the most ominous aspect of the political crisis in India today is the conflict between professed secularism on the one hand and communalism spreading hatred and inflaming passions in the names of religion on the other. In recent years, the contradiction between these two ideals has reached to such a pass that the century old Indian tradition of communal assimilation and harmony have been subjected to major challenge acquiring truly explosive dimensions²⁸.

The phenomenon of communalism in India has been treated by different scholars from different perspectives. Bipin Chandra²⁹, P.C. Joshi³⁰ and Asghar Ali Engineer³¹ trace the roots of communalism in Indian colonial economy and polity. Louis Dumont³², Satis Saberwall³³ and Ratna Naidu³⁴ try to explain communalism from the perspective of social structure, cultural heritage and social change in India. The studies by Paul Brass³⁵, Joseph Rothchild³⁶ and Francis Robinson³⁷ treat the phenomenon of communal identities and communal conflict

from the political perspective assigning primacy to political determinants. However, it cannot be denied that communalism in India was the resultant outcome of a complex interplay of a number of forces and factors - colonial past, social structure and political manoeuvring in the main.

The partition of the country and the Hindu Muslim Strife that preceded and followed the partition made secularism appear the only possible basis for the modern Indian state. Thus, India was to be a secular state that guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion, is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion, nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with religion³⁸. But for the last five decades after partition, Hindu-Muslim communal division continues to be a central feature of Indian politics thus pointing to the contradiction between professed secularism as is reflected in the constitution and the widespread practice of communalism. The root of this phenomenon may be found in the varied perceptions prevalent in both the communities. The Congress Party being the ruling party for a number of decades has been looked upon by a section of conservative Hindus as a pro-Muslim party and this has made the Hindu Communalism more aggressive in the post-Independence period. The Congress Party's approval to the scheme of partition, Nehru's opposition to Hindu revivalist tendencies, assignment of prominent positions in political and administrative fields to many Muslims, reluctance shown by the Congress party to initiate reforms in Muslim Personal law and, above all, its political alliance with the Muslim League in Kerala are the reasons as to why the Congress has a pro-Muslim and communal image among the Hindus. The helplessness of the Hindus in prevailing upon the ruling party to follow the harsh policy towards the Indian Muslims makes them adopt aggressive attitude towards the Muslims³⁹. As a result Hindu nationalism, particularly as represented in the RSS and its family of organizations has reached the peak of popular support and importance⁴⁰.

As a counterforce to this growing trend of strength of Hindu nationalism, Muslim solidarity has increased as well in recent years, as a consequence of the belief that the constitutional protection and the secular overtone of the Congress Party have proved to be too inadequate to wipe out the Muslim fears about the growing Hindu communalism. Legislation passed by the States like Utar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan on the ban of cow slaughter, government's lukewarm attitude towards Urdu language, less opportunities given to them in administrative or industrial fields, deliberate

ineffectiveness shown by the law and order machinery at the time of communal riots⁴¹, shifting stands of the Congress Party during the tenures of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi towards using the Hindu card for neutralizing the Bharatiya Janta Party and winning the majority Hindu segments, and the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya - all these make the Muslims think that the constitutional secularism is too inadequate a safeguard for them.

Under the circumstances, as the Hindu and Muslim communalism have intensified, the secular ideal has been subjected to challenge. Hindu nationalists consider it false, a 'pseudo-secularism', which has actually favoured the Muslims and other minorities. Similarly, the Muslims perceive that the 'so-called secular state has not been able to protect their lives property, and even their mosques against Hindu attacks. Thus, it has been observed that "The state has remained committed to secularism but the widely diffused communalism and the highly strung atmosphere of the country has made it impossible for the secular values and ideals to be realised"⁴². The situation has been such that some observers feel that India needs a new state ideology that recognises religious pluralism and the importance of faith in people's lives, and stress the message of tolerance social to be present in all Indian faiths rather than secular neutrality⁴³.

Economic Contradiction

The economic contradictions in India emanate from the disparity between growth and equity, that is, economic growth on the one hand, and the pattern of distribution of the growth on the other. This has been the inevitable result of the contradiction between the rhetoric of welfarism and the reality of capitalism.

After Independence, Indian policy makes opted for rapid industrialization in the overall framework of economic planning and mixed economy in a multistructural society of feudal, semi-feudal and capitalist social formations with consequent absolute unequal distribution of social and economic powers. The pronounced objective of the policy was to eradicate poverty and inequalities and to raise the living standard of the common masses. The draft of the First Five Year Plan stated that "it is essential that private enterprises should function in conformity with the social and economic policy of the state, recognise its full responsibilities, and cooperate in the implementation of such measures of control and regulation as are considered necessary."⁴⁴. Similarly, the second Five Year Plan document stated : "For creating the appropriate conditions, the state has to take on heavy responsibilities as the principal agency speaking for the acting on behalf of the community as a whole. The public sector has to

expand rapidly ... The private sector has to play its part within the framework of the comprehensive plan accepted by the community."⁴⁵ In line with the welfare orientation, the Constitutions of India also lays down the objective of conciliation between development and justice in article 39 : "The state shall in particular direct its policy towards securing (i) that the ownership and control and the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good, and (ii) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment"⁴⁶.

However, the framework of development and justice as provided in the Five Year Plans and the Directive Principles of State Policy got distorted in actual operation. Despite our four decades of planning under the mixed economy which was meant to reconcile growth with justice, the scenario of the national economy remains dismal⁴⁷. Soaring prices, increasing unemployment and the decreasing purchasing power of rupee are the alarming symbols questioning the very foundation of the pronounced objective of achieving growth with justice. Hence, India has witnessed growth and poverty, not growth eliminating poverty⁴⁸.

The root of this phenomenon may be traced to the evolution of capitalism in India. Capitalism in India was the product of colonial development. The British established the state in India to safeguard the class interests of the metropolitan capitalism. Thus, the indigenous capital in India found a powerful colonial state coming in the way of its development. As such, the Indian 'bourgeoisie involved itself in the struggle for transfer of power from capitalist class of the metropolis to the bourgeoisie of the oppressed society'⁴⁹. "The bourgeoisie-led Indian nationalism fought against imperialism, mobilised the Indian masses for struggle but did not allow radicalization of the mass struggle against internal and external oppressors and exploiters"⁵⁰. Thus, when power was transferred, it was transferred to the bourgeoisie and their political representatives and the state became the instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie for their development. Under the circumstances, the objectives that were pronounced in the constitution and the plan documents were bound to be rhetorics devoid of any real content. Politics in India had become merely an instrument to exercise power and use public resources for sectional and personal political advancement⁵¹. The legitimization of the system was sought to be found in rhetorics like 'socialist pattern of society, 'Socialism', 'Garibi Hatao' etc. The inherent logic of this capitalist path of development inevitably led to social tensions, dissents, conflicts and protests.

Since the early 1990s, there has been a shift of policies from mixed economy with centralised planning to liberalization, privatization and globalization of the economy. The resultant policies of liberalization of import-export regime, dismantling of the state-directed detailed planning and development and export - oriented growth have been adopted with the pronounced expectation that such policies would lead to expansion and diversification of manufacturing capacities, stimulation of agricultural production and increased employment generation. The logic for these policies lies in the assumption that the conditions of the poor would improve through the general 'trickle down' effects of an expanded economy. But the experience so far reveals that these policies offer no direct benefits to the poor. In fact, the 'Manohanomics,' as the New Economic Policy in India is popularly known, and as it is carried through even in a more vigorous way by the present BJP Government, is the reflection of the interests of both the indigenous and metropolitan capitalism. Capitalism in India that developed under state protection during the last four decades had reached to such a stage that the domestic market was not adequate enough for its operation and exploitation. Hence, it was in need of expanded markets. Similarly, under state protection, Indian capitalism had developed to the extent of competing with the foreign and transnational capital either individually or in collaboration.

Under the circumstances, it is noticeable that the pronounced rhetorics of growth with justice, peoples welfare etc. as found in the Constitution and other policy documents have little implications for the reality. Rather, the reality is that the assets of the big business and industrial houses are ever increasing as before despite the eyewash of the Monopoly and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, while poverty is not eradicated. So comes the contradiction leading to social tension, dissent, conflict and protest.

Political Contradictions

Closely linked with the economic contradiction of growth and justice emanating from the inevitable outcomes of capitalism is the political contradiction centering around the principles of democracy and freedom on the one hand, and authoritarianism, interventionism, repression and hegemony on the other. An analysis of over five decades of the functioning of democratic political system in India reveals some outstanding achievements but these achievements have been far outweighed by failures. The most important achievements of the India political system have been the persistence of constitutional government, holding of periodic

elections on the basis of universal adult franchise and at regular intervals, and constitutional guarantee to the citizens justiciable fundamental freedoms and rights. The impact of elections on Indian society is claimed to have been qualitative; the percentage of voters' turn out has been quite satisfactory and competition in politics has been free and legitimized. In fine, politicization of an indifferent and apathetic community is the first step towards democratic advancement of a society and elections have achieved this in India⁵².

But the appearance of democracy in India is different from the reality of democracy. Elections legitimize the wielders of political power but this does not determine the totality of politics⁵³. In practice, the power coalition that wields power in India is not, and cannot be the representative of the community at large but consists of the exploiting class, that is, the capitalists, Landlords and rich peasants and their goals are bound to be different from what they appear to be. An analysis of the composition of the personnel of the state system, its shifting ideologies, policies pursued by the government, the relationship between the ruling class and the state and the relationship between the rulers and the ruled clearly unfolds the character of the Indian state. It is intolerant of all dissent, hostile to the demands of the toiling masses. It claims to be wedded to democracy but that democracy is with elite foundation. Whenever its foundations are threatened it resorts to curb freedom, enact anti-people legislation, suppress the opposition leaders by any means, murder brutally the dissenters or rebels, promote extra-constitutional centre of authority, personalise power and impose emergency - official or otherwise - under the cover of "national" interest⁵⁴. This state of affairs unmasks the twin face of Indian democracy - the formalism between the appearance and the reality.

Thus, the Indian Political system has been witnessing a rapid escalation of confrontations between the government and the people. Whenever these confrontations tend to challenge the foundation of the existing order, the state - the instrument in the hands of the exploiting class favouring the maintenance of the existing order - intervenes with all its resources and becomes more and more repressive and authoritarian. As such, democracy in India remains a mere rhetoric, the reality is the repression and hegemony of the state acting on the behest of the ruling class. And hence, this contradiction of democracy and authoritarianism provides ground for social tension and social conflict thus paving the way for more organised protest movements.

III

Given all these contradictions operating at different levels in Indian society, economy and polity, protest movements should not be viewed as sudden outbursts, nor should they be confined to apparent context. The protest movements could neither be explained through the theoretical frameworks available, namely, the Relative Deprivation Theory⁵⁵, The Strain Theory⁵⁶ or the Cultural Revitalization⁵⁷ Theory because the notion of deprivation and urge for cultural revitalization is essentially psychological while the state of structural strain leading to malfunctioning of the system and resulting in deprivation is relativist. The assumption in all these theoretical frameworks is that when people feel deprived of, or are under strain, or feel the urge for cultural revitalization, protests emanate, Social, cultural, ethnic, economic and political factors that are the sources of deprivation have not been properly covered in any of these framework. Similarly, there are also some flawed understanding of the origin of protest movements in general as if the protests are made to originate and thus, artificially cultivated for narrow sectional interests under the garb of universal community interests⁵⁸. This mode understanding is flawed because unless objective social, economic and political conditions pose threat to consciousness and identity of a section of the community leading to a perception of deprivation in social, economic or political spheres of life, passive common masses cannot be mobilised for protest. Protest movements cannot be made to originate; they originate if the social, economic and political parameters of the society demand. Thus, explanations to protest movements in India should be sought in the broad dynamics of intersections of social, cultural, economic and political parameters of the society.

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A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOP HUMAN READINESS LEVEL

Rajeesh Viswanathan

Manager by name implies to anyone who manages or controls activities of a person or a team in sports, entertainment, business etc.. He in other words has an executive control or authority over the others. Managers are the basic and the most expensive resource in business organisations. A manager is not just built or created overnight. It takes a lot of time and effort to create a manager. It is more or less like a refinery process. A manager has greater authority and his first duty is to attain the objectives of an organisation. His second task is then to analyse the task of his own unit and to define various activities to achieve the objectives. A manager must develop team spirit among his colleagues and should try to do every thing to promote best interest of the organisation. Finally the manager has much greater responsibilities towards his subordinates. Management job should be a rewarding and self satisfactory one. It is the manager who motivates and creates a healthy environment and get the maximum output of human potential and ultimately creates a positive ethical climate in an organisation. The spirit of an organisation should be such that whatever and whenever excellence appears it must be recognised, encouraged and rewarded. Promotion should be related to purely on performance and in other words a manager plays a vital role in development of human resources.

'Drucker' believes in the fact that the worker is a 'Human Resource'. When the worker is considered as a 'Resource' he can be shaped and made into an excellent worker by better management like a piece of metal is shaped into a special tool by an experienced blacksmith for the best way to utilise its resources. Though it is purely an engineering approach, the ultimate goal is same. However, a worker being a human resource the process differs. Man is a social being and he has a moral unlike any other resources, He has the ability to think, capacity to judge, imagine things etc.. Rather than being utilised like other resources a 'Human Resource' man can only be utilised by himself. A man has control over himself

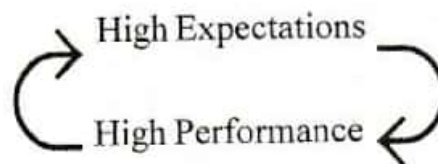
and can decide how better and how much he can work. In other words man determines the quality and quantity of production.

Managers need to devote time to nurture the leadership, potential, motivation, morale, climate, commitment to objectives and the decision making, communication and problem solving skills of their people. Thus an important role of a manager is the development of the task readiness of their followers.

Some managers always treat their subordinate in a way that leads to superior performance. But most managers, unintentionally treat their subordinates in a way that leads to lower performance than they are capable of achieving. The way managers treat their subordinates is subtly influenced by what they expect of them. If a manager's expectations are high, productivity is likely to be excellent. On the other hand, if his expectations are low, productivity is likely to be poor. It is as though there was a law that caused a subordinate's performance to raise or fall to meet his manager's expectations.

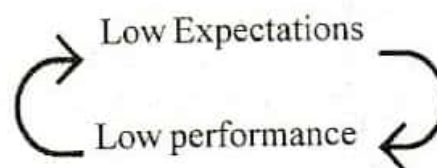
When people respond to the high expectations of their managers with high performance, it shows that there exist an 'effective cycle', as shown in diagram below.

Effective Cycle

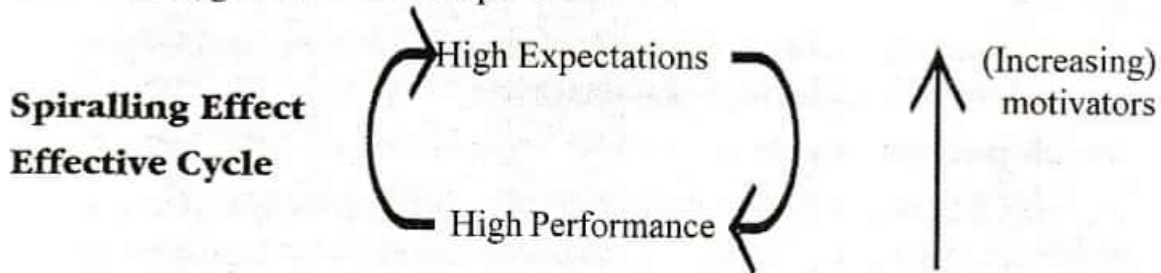


On the other hand, sometimes the concentration on output variables as a means of evaluating effectiveness tends to lead to short - run task oriented behaviour. Under such a style in some case it does not allow much room for trusting relationship with employees. Instead, subordinates are told what to do and how to do it, with little considerations expressed from the ideas. After a period the subordinates respond with minimal effort and resentment; and their low performance will be the outcome. Reinforced by low expectations, it becomes a vicious cycle.

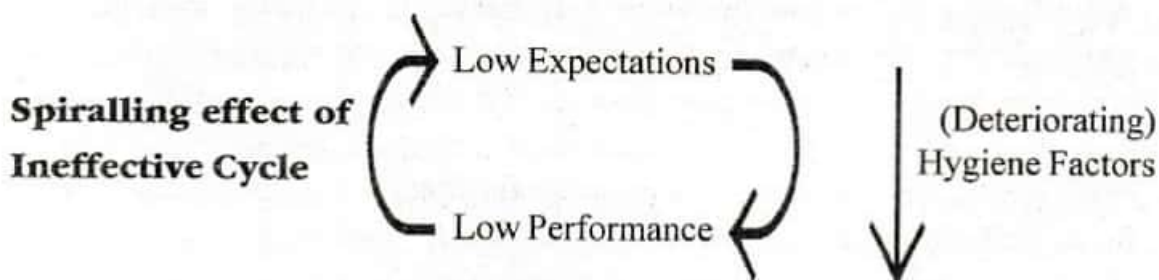
Ineffective Cycle



These cycles are depicted as static, but in reality they are very dynamic. The situation tends to get better or worse. It almost becomes like a typhoon as shown in the figure below. Spiralling or typhonic effect is caused by an increase in leverage created through the use of the motivators. As people start performing better, they are given more and more responsibilities and opportunities for further achievement, growth and development.



Spiralling effect can also occur in a downward direction like currents in the ocean. Low expectations result in Low Performance, which reinforces the low expectations and produces even lower productivity. It becomes more or less like spiral effect like a whirlpool as shown in the diagram below.



If this tendency of downward spiralling left unchecked, the cycle may reach to a point where it cannot be turned around in a short span, mainly because of the considerable amount of negative past experiences that had built up in the organisation. Reactions to deteriorating hygienic factors will ultimately slowdown the work performance. Under such a situation, even if a manager actually changes behaviour, the credibility gap based on long term experience is that the response is still distrust and skepticism rather than bringing about any change.

Bringing a new manager from outside would only be an alternative solution at this juncture, since this has higher probability of success. The sum total of the past experiences of the people with the new manager will be more or less like a clean slate where in different behaviours can be on a much more believable basis.

Although new managers may be in a better position to initiate changes in situation that has been spiralling downward, still they do not find it as an easy task. Essentially, they have to break the ineffective cycles. Under such a circumstance generally replacement of the employees or responding to low performance employees with high expectations and trust alone does not generally work out.²

Managers need to change or maximise the task relevant readiness of their followers through a developmental cycle.

Developmental Cycle :

The role played by managers in developing the readiness level of their people is an important task. It is seen that generally managers do not take responsibility for the performance of their people, specially when they are not doing well. It must be understood that it is the manager who is responsible for making their people winners and this is what the developmental cycle is. In other words developmental cycle can also be called as growth cycle.

Managers play the role of a supervisor of the group. When the subordinates are at low levels of readiness, the managers must take the responsibility of management functions like planning, organising, motivating and controlling. Once the managers develop their people and see that they are at high levels of readiness, the subordinates can then take over much of the responsibilities for day to day management functions. Managers can then change their role from supervisor to the next level of the organisation.

A manager can devote much of his time by developing the people in 'high pay off' management functions for acquiring resources necessary in maximising the productivity by communicating both horizontally and vertically by coordinating the effort of their group with that of other departments to improve overall performance and productivity.³

In order to improve their potential in the high-pay off functions, the managers must change their style and take an active role in helping others to grow. It can thus be said that the development of subordinates depends not only on the manager's behaviour, but also on values and expectations.

Area to Influence :

A manager must in the area of influence he wishes to take up before influencing his employees for their development. He must be clear about the duties and responsibilities of his subordinates or employees. Once the objectives

or responsibilities are identified and understood, managers must clearly specify what constitutes good performance in each area, so that both they and their subordinates know when their performance is approaching the desired level. Managers must specify what should be the level of good performance. Merely by asking an employee that he want him to manufacture a cabinet or cup board is not sufficient. It must be made clear that how many cabinets he wants him to produce or fabricated in a stipulated time. Managers cannot change and develop their subordinate's behaviour in areas that are not clear and specific.

Analysing the Performance :

Before the beginning of the developmental cycle a manager must analyse employees present readiness level on a specific aspect of job, level of willingness or motivation and finally how able is the person to take responsibility for the specific behaviour. To enable this a manager has to have a very good counselling skills to learn about each and every minute details of an employee and about his personal or other problems.

Determining Readiness :

In assessing the readiness level of an individual, a manager will have to make judgements about the employees ability and motivation. Ability can be determined by examining the past performances of an employee by rating his performance level that how well he has performed and what was his rating etc. It is also necessary to examine whether the staff member had adequate knowledge to perform well in a specific area and also about the clear awareness of the employee's about their job and how to do it. Willingness can be determined by observing an employees behaviour level of interest and commitment and level of self confidence in a particular case.

An employee could be at any of the four levels of readiness in each of the areas of responsibility. An employee's readiness level in other words gives us a good clue about how to begin any further development of that individual. If a manager wants to influence a staff member in a particular area in which the persons both unable and unwilling (low readiness level), the manager must begin the developmental cycle by directing, controlling and closely supervising (telling) the staff members behaviour. If however the persons is willing (motivated) to do something but not able to do it (low to moderate readiness), the manager must begin both the cycle of directing and supporting (selling) the desired behaviour. If the person is able to do something without direction but is unwilling to do it or

insecure (moderate to high readiness), the manager is faced with a motivational problem. Individuals reluctant to do what they are able to do are often insecure or lacking confidence. In this case, the managers should begin the developmental cycle by using a supportive style (participating) to help the individual become secure enough to do what the individual already knows how to do.

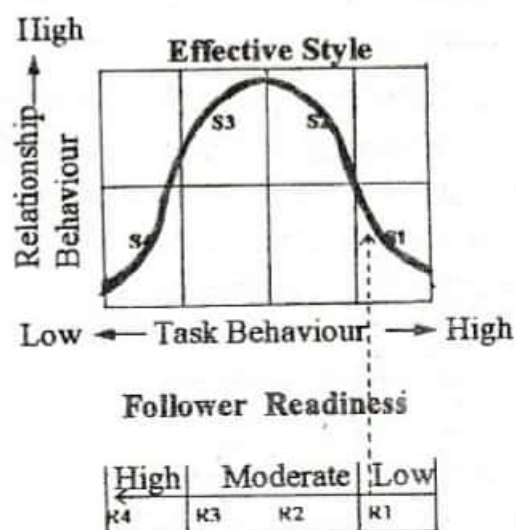
Finally, if staff members are found capable and willing to direct responsibility by their own behaviour (high readiness), we can merely delegate responsibilities to them and could be sure that they can perform well. When such a situation occurs, it is clear indication that there is no need for beginning the developmental cycle as the person has already achieved or possessing a high degree of readiness in that area.

Increasing Readiness :

Managers should engage in the developmental cycle, any time if they attempt to increase the task relevant readiness of an individual. In other words the developmental cycle is a growth cycle. If the managers wants the staff member to perform well in an area without supervision, the manager must determine the appropriate leadership style for starting the developmental process. Once the readiness level of the employees has been diagnosed as low, the appropriate style can be determined by constructing a right angle from a point on the readiness continuum to where it meets the curved line in the style of leader portion of the model.

Fig 01

Determining an Appropriate Leadership Style



S1 High Task and High Relationship

S2 High Task and Low Relationship

S3 Low Relationship and Low Task

S4 High Relationship and how Task

First time, to start with the manager have to tell the staff exactly the various stages involved in developing a budget. The, thereafter the manager has to show the staff member how to do each of the task involved. Although this telling style is high on direction and low on support this does not mean that the manager is not being friendly to the staff member. Low supportive behaviour in this situation merely means that managers are not patting the staff member on the back before the member has actually earned it.

At this stage manager can however increase the readiness level by giving more responsibilities. This is generally a risk, unless the manager knows about the capabilities of an employee based on his past performance.

Manager by assuming that his subordinate knows the functions well, delegates the responsibilities without analysing further about their knowledge on work or willingness to do. Subsequently on completion of that piece of work, the manager finds all kinds of mistakes and problems with it.

Managers should always keep in mind that no one including him could learn anything in one go. Everything is learned in due course of time if guided properly. If a manager wants somebody to do something totally new, he should reward/appreciate even a little job a person does or even on showing a slightest progress in the desired direction.

Thus, while attempting an individual or group to take more responsibilities for performing a specific task - a manager must first tell and show, and then only delegate and finally he should reward as soon as possible any behaviour in the desired direction. this process should continue as the individual behaviour comes closer and closer to the leader's expectations of good performance.

Relationship behaviour would involve providing 'positive strokes' and reinforcement. Positive reinforcement strokes are anything that is desired or needed by an individual and it is important to remember that reinforcement must immediately follow any behaviour in the desired direction. Reinforcement at a later stage will be of less or no help in getting the individual or group to do something which they have never done before on their own.

The three important steps towards positive reinforcement are :-

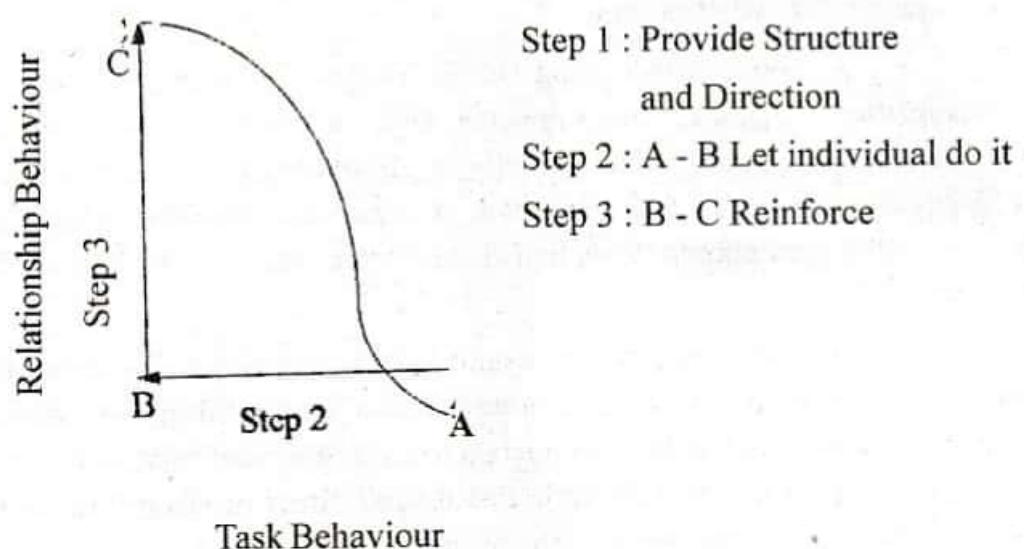
- a) Initiating structure or providing direction (task behaviour)
- b) Reducing the amount of direction and supervision.
- c) Increasing socio-emotional support (relationship behaviour) after adequate performance.

This concept is generally known as performance management in industrial circles and is developed by associating with behaviour modifications and reinforcement theory. This concept is as illustrated in figure below with the following examples :-

If a manager wanted to change leadership style of an individual from Point A to point C along the curved line or curvilinear function of situational leadership, the first step of the process would be to provide some structure and direction for the individual at point A. The next step would be to delegate some responsibility by decreasing task behaviour to point B. This is a risky step since the manager is turning over the direction and the supervision of some of the tasks to the follower. If the follower responds well to the increased responsibility, then it is appropriate to engage in Step - C -> positively reinforcing this behaviour by increasing socio-emotional support (relationship behaviour) to the higher level point C, as shown in the Fig :02.

Fig : 02.

Three Step Process of Developmental Cycle

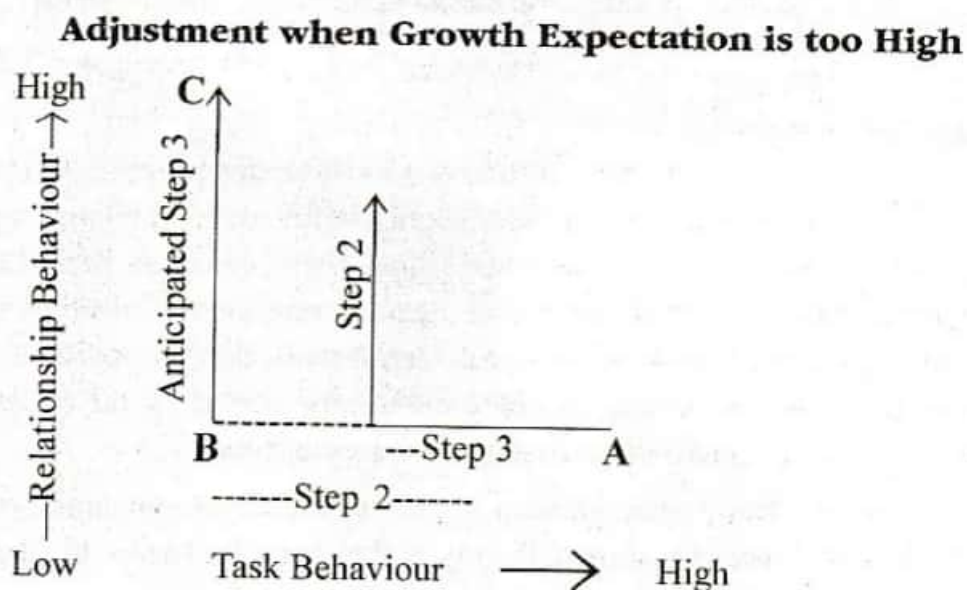


A common error generally committed by most of the managers is that they delegate too much responsibilities to the person down below too soon. If the manager does such a thing, then it can lead to a total failure and frustration of a subordinate and ultimately that would even prevent that person from wanting to take additional responsibility in the future. The process is often started by good intentions. The manager provides direction and structure but then moves too quickly to a 'leave - alone' leadership style. This abrupt movement from 'telling' to 'delegating' often sets the person up for failure and punishment, since it assumes that telling is learning. The manager is likely to return to style 1 rapidly in a punitive way if the job is not getting done.⁴

It should also be observed that manager should not increase the socio-emotional support without first getting the desired performance. In positively reinforcing non performance, this manager may be viewed as a soft touch. That is the reason why the manager in the example does not immediately move from point A to point C along the curved line in the Figure 02.

If the manager moved from point A to point C without some evidence that the individual could assume responsibility at point B, it would be like giving reward before the person has earned it. Thus the leader should develop the readiness of the followers slowly on each task that they must perform, using less task behaviour and more relationship behaviour as they become more willing and able to take responsibility. When an individual's performance is low on specific task, one must not expect drastic changes overnight.

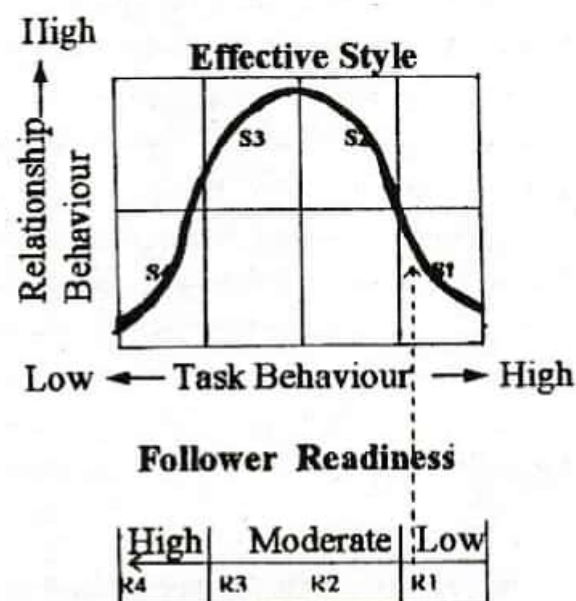
Fig 03



If the manager finds that the follower is unable to handle that much added responsibility when task behaviour is decreased to point B, the manager should return to a point in between point A and point B. This new level of task behaviour is as indicated by point B, in the Fig: 03. If the employee is able to prove at that level, then the manager can appropriately increase socio-emotional support to point C. although this level of socio-emotional is less that depicted at point C, it is appropriate to the amount of task behaviour that the follower, at that time is able to assume.

Fig 04

Development Cycle as People Mature over a period of time



As shown in the Figure : 04 above, this three step process - telling and showing, cutting back structure and then increasing the socio-emotional support, if the subordinate can respond to the additional responsibilities, this tendency will continue until the individual is assuming moderate levels of readiness. This continual decreasing of task behaviour does not mean that the individual will have less structure but instead of being externally guided by the leader, the structure can now be internally provided by the subordinate.

An interesting phenomenon occurs in the developmental cycle on reaching the curvilinear function to the top of the curve. It can also be observed

that during this time the function crosses the average task behaviour and till it is reached to this point the leadership style of readiness is used for supervising the people at moderate to high levels of readiness (R3 and R4). Upon reaching this point the leader not only reduces the task structure, but also reduces the socio-emotional supports.

In other words, supportive behaviour is often treated as dysfunctional and can be interpreted by these high-readiness people as a lack of confidence and trust on the part of their leader.⁵

Time and the Developmental Cycle :

Time and developmental cycle is a function of intricacy of being performed and performance capacity of individual or a group. There is no set blueprint in terms of amount of time necessary to develop an individual or a group. A manager has to do very well to move a group from the readiness level 1 to level 2 over a period of 18 months to 2 years.

Thus, time can be said to be a function of the complexity of the job being performed and the performance potential of the individual or a group.

Changing Readiness Through Behaviour Modification :

Behaviour modification is a useful tool for managers and leaders because it can be applied in almost all environments. Although it may involve a reassessment of customary methods for obtaining compliance and cooperation, it has relevance for persons interested in accomplishing objectives through other people. Behaviour modification theory is based on observed behaviour and not on internal unobserved emotions, attitudes or feelings. Its basic premise is that behaviour is controlled by its immediate consequence.

Behaviour can be increased, suppressed or decreased by what happens immediately after it occurs. Because probabilities are difficult to work with, we use observations of the future frequency of the behaviour as a measure of effectiveness of consequences. Five of the major concepts of reinforcements that help one to make behavioural changes are positive reinforcement, punishment, negative reinforcement, extinction and schedule of reinforcement.⁶

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HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA : AN OVERVIEW

Manjula D. Bhuyan

History of mankind is full of struggles against political, economic, social and cultural oppression and against injustice and inequalities. It was during the course of these struggles that the conception of certain basic rights, which every human being is entitled to enjoy, gradually emerged.¹ However, a global framework of human rights was laid down for the first time by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948 in the form of 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights'. Fifty-two years after the Universal Declaration, it is now well recognized that respect for human rights is absolutely essential for achieving the agreed global priorities of peace, development and democracy.

In their basic meanings, human rights imply availability of such conditions which are essential for the fullest development and realization of the innate characteristics which nature has bestowed upon every individual as a human being.² In other words, the human rights are those minimal rights that every individual must have by virtue of being a member of the human family, irrespective of any other considerations. "They give all people moral claims on the behaviour of individuals and on the design of social arrangements - and are universal, inalienable and indivisible".³ In simple terms, whatever adds to the dignified and free existence of a human being should be regarded as human rights.

A number of international instruments have emerged which not only codify human rights but also draw up measures for their enforcement. These include the 'International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)', the 'International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)' and the 'Optional Protocol to the Civil Covenant (1976)', which provide the rights for individual petitions. These are the fundamental documents which lay the basis for the protection and promotion of human rights throughout the world.⁴

Human rights can be classified into various categories. The traditional distinction has been made between civil and political rights (i.e. liberty oriented

rights) on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights (i.e. security-oriented rights) on the other. It was felt in certain quarters that while one set of rights was subject to immediate application the other set required progressive realization. However, it has been realized now that it is not really possible to make a rigid demarcation between these two sets of rights as human rights are interdependent and indivisible.

Of late, certain new concepts of rights have emerged which are known as the third generation of human rights. These include environmental, cultural and development rights. They are concerned with rights of groups and peoples rather than of individuals and include such rights as the right to self-determination and right to development.⁵

After the Vienna Declaration (1993) there seems to be a global consensus on the fact that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.⁶

The Indian Framework

The constitution of independent India laid down a sound foundation for the protection and promotion of human rights in the country. The preamble to the constitution expresses the solemn resolve of the people of India to constitute India into a 'Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic' and to secure to all its citizens social, economic and political justice; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and opportunity; and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and unity and integrity of the nation.

Chapters on Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles have been designed to turn these goals, specified in the preamble, into reality and which together reflect the basic principles of the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' and the 'Covenants on Civil and Political Rights'. Although Directive Principles are non-enforceable in a court of law, nevertheless they are considered fundamental in the governance of the country.

Besides these constitutional provision, several laws have been enacted with a bearing on protection and promotion of human rights in the country. Some of the important laws are - the Protection of Civil Rights Acts (1955); Immoral traffic (Prevention) Act (1956); Dowry Prohibition Act 1961); Bonded Labour (System) Abolition Act (1976); Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (1986); Juvenile Justice Act (1986); The National Commission for Women

Act (1990); The National Commission for Minorities Act (1992) and the Protection of Human Rights Act (1993).⁷

The National Human Rights Commission was set up in 1993 as an autonomous body to inquire into complaints of human rights violations, review the safeguards provided for the protection of human rights and recommended measures for their effective implementation.⁸

However, despite these constitutional, legal and institutional safeguards, a parliamentary democratic structure of governance, an independent judiciary, a free press and a competitive party system, the human rights violations are taking place at various levels and in various forms.

Nature of violations

The nature of violations ranges from the socio-economic deprivations to custodial deaths, torture and rapes, disappearance, illegal detention and other police excesses, terrorist/naxalite killings, excessive use of force by the paramilitary forces in terrorist prone areas, pathetic condition of prisoners in jails, long trial delays, atrocities on women, children, SC/STs and other marginal groups, degradation of physical environment, displacement of persons due to construction of river dams and large-scale building projects and so on.⁹

Even after fifty-three years of independent existence we have not been able to provide even basic amenities of life to many of our people. According to U.N. Human Development Index (HDI) we are placed at 128th rank out of 174 countries.¹⁰ 35 per cent of our people are below the poverty line according to national standard and 44.2 per cent according to U.N. standard. Nearly one-fifth of our people don't have access to safe drinking water, one-fourth are without basic health services and majority without sanitation facilities.¹¹ About 150 million houses are without electricity and 40 per cent villages without road connectivity.¹²

About one-third of our people are still illiterates and nearly 40 per cent children of school going age are out of schools.¹³ The universalisation of elementary education, thus, still remain a distant dream. According to UNESCO report on the 'Situational Analysis of Education for Street and Working Children' over 1.39 crore children in the age group of 5 - 14 years are working as child labourers in India in various formal sectors. The figure does not include those working in informal sectors as domestic helps.¹⁴ Nearly 47 per cent of world's malnourished children live in our country and infant mortality rate continues to

be high.¹⁵ The condition of women in our society is still very critical. Violence and crime against them have become the order of the day and in overwhelming majority of Indian households women continue to suffer from traditional inequalities and injustices. Dowry remains the norm and female infanticide is one the rise. Compared to men the percentage of women receiving education is still very low and their representation in the Legislature, Bureaucracy and Judiciary is dismal. At no time the percentage of women parliamentarians has exceeded 10 in the Lok Sabha.¹⁶ In the 'Indian Administrative Service (IAS)' their representation has slightly increased from 8.8 per cent in 1974 to about 10 per cent presently.¹⁷ Since the inception of the Supreme Court in 1950, only three women judges (Fathima Beevi, Sujatha V. Manohar and Ruma Pal) have adorned the Bench.¹⁸ A long overdue, 'the Women Reservation Bill' is still pending before the Parliament and the way things are going on, it is not likely to be passed in the near future.

So, the condition of women and children in our country is very pathetic from the human rights point of view. Another areas of grave concern are police excesses, pathetic conditions of prisoners in jails and atrocities on SC, STs. During the year 1999-2000 out of 20,944 cases admitted for disposal by the NHRC, 1239 related to custodial deaths. (954 in judicial custody and 185 in police custody), 1157 to illegal detention/arrest, 1647 to false implication, 5783 to other police excesses, 5443 to failure in taking action, 511 to jail conditions and 341 to atrocities on SC/STs. In total the commission received 50635 complaints of violations during the year.¹⁹ All these figures explain the gravity of human rights violations in our country.

Reasons behind violations

Our failure lies in the fact that despite having a democratic structure of governance we have failed to evolve the kind of norms, values, attitude and styles of conduct conducive to the functioning of a healthy democratic system and observance of human rights. Feeling of casteism, communalism, regionalism, linguism etc. still run very deep into the minds of many of our people. When such feelings combine with a sense of socio-economic deprivations, social tensions and violence are generated which ultimately affect the rights of the vulnerable sections.

Moreover, political-bureaucratic corruption has become an endemic feature of our political life so much so that today we are considered among one of the most corrupt countries of the world. The Transparency International has for the year 2000 listed 90 countries under the 'Corruption Perception Index'

from the least corrupt to the most corrupt and we are ranked at 69.²⁰ Very often the corrupt politicians go unpunished and even get re-elected again and again. Since corruption involves the loot of public money it is badly affecting the process of development and thereby the interests of the weaker sections of society.

Criminalisation of politics is yet another factor affecting the functioning of our political system. Earlier politicians in some parts of the country were taking the help of criminals to win elections, but now criminals themselves are becoming politicians and even Ministers on a large scale. As is well known, several Ministers in Bihar and UP cabinet are history-sheeters. In a situation like this how can we expect reduction in crime and violence against the women, the weaker sections and the common man.

In fact, lack of accountability and transparency have been the key factors responsible for the poor functioning of our democratic system and our poor record on human rights front. Earlier people joined politics out of their desire to serve the society and the nation but now they consider politics as the most profitable business and an effective instrument of getting enriched overnight. This change of attitude has resulted in sharp deterioration of standard in public life.

Our politicians in general, seem to have been interested in people's vote and not in their well-being. From their perspective it has been a simple formula, "Vote tumhara, Raj hamara."²¹ (yours vote, ours' throne). A general thinking prevailing among them is that even if they don't do anything for the people, they can get re-elected either by giving casteist or communal slogans or on the strength of their money and muscle power. As a result, the task is not taken very seriously and most of the promises made during election time remain unfulfilled.

Due to the failure of our political system to deliver goods, poverty and illiteracy are still very rampant and which in turn create a chain of violations of various kinds.

Indeed, lack of awareness among vulnerable sections has been one of the main reasons behind all kind of violations in our country. According to a study conducted by the 'International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), 58 per cent of women consider domestic violence normal. Many of them don't even know that even slapping and beating amounts to domestic violence they wait till they are brutally assaulted.²²

Conclusion and Suggestions

Thus, the human rights situation in our country is far from satisfactory. Mere assertions of the principles of human rights in the constitution and various laws cannot ensure the protection of these rights unless massive awareness campaign is launched in the field. Education and training of the vulnerable groups, particularly the women and the children, and those engaged in ameliorating their cause are the crying need of the hour. The bureaucracy, the police force, the judiciary - all need to be educated about the proper ways of carrying out their functions keeping in view the requirements of human rights. It is only education that can liberate the mind from the thrall of the obscurantism and bigotry, nurture democratic values and promote social transformation. Moreover, suitable electoral reforms are needed to prevent the misuse of money and muscle power in elections. Efforts should also be made to expedite the judicial process by increasing the number of judges in courts, reducing the number of court holidays and adopting modern techniques of court management. Code of criminal procedure should be suitably amended to prevent the misuse of the unbridled powers vested in the law enforcing agencies.

Besides these, the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 should be amended to ensure financial autonomy of the National and State Human Rights Commission and to bring the human rights violations by paramilitary forces under NHRCs purview. And, most of all, the task of 'human development' should be given top priority by the government because human development is a process of enhancing human capabilities and is essential for realizing human rights.

History is moving fast at the start of the 21st century. The processes of liberalization, globalization and breakthroughs in the field of information technologies are breaking the national barriers. This new context opens unparalleled new opportunities, but it also given rise to new threats to human security and human freedom. And so if we don't address ourselves to the human rights concerns in the 21st century our survival as a nation would become difficult and this 'functioning anarchy' may soon become 'dysfunctional'.

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IMPACT OF MODERN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS ON THE INDIGENOUS TRIBAL VILLAGE COUNCIL OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH : A CASE STUDY OF ADI

Milorai Modi

Arunachal Pradesh, located in the extreme north eastern part of the union of India, falls in the Trans-Himalayan region. It has a staggering area of over 83,000 square km, which makes it the largest among the seven states of North East India. As per 2001 census, state has a population of about 11 lakhs people of which the scheduled tribes are in majority. It is the land of myriad of tribes that speaks different dialects and are characterized by their varied socio-cultural patterns. There are 25 major tribes and as many as 110 sub-tribes. All the tribes have a long tradition of self-governing institution regulating life and order in the villages, through indigenous village council.

The village and the village councils were the political units of all tribes of Arunachal Pradesh till the introduction of the Panchayati Raj. In Arunachal Pradesh, till 1969, there were no representative institutions, except the village councils and though far behind in political development, the people of Arunachal were not entirely unfamiliar with self-governing institutions at the village level. Each tribe of Arunachal Pradesh has its own village council, reflecting its own nature and requirement, which still exist and continues to function side by side with the statutory Panchayat System. The political organisation of the tribal community is the traditional way in which the society recognize the exercise of authority. This authority may be vested in a single individual acting as the head man of the village or it may be entrusted to a few chosen representatives of the village forming a council of elders and acting on behalf of the whole village community whose confidence they may command, as it was supported by social and religious sanction.

The century old popular forms of village councils were evolved as an administrative mechanism for fulfilling local needs. The village council is known by different names in different tribes. Mangjom among the Mompas, Jumba among the sherdukpens, Melley among the Akas, Nyele among the Nishis, Buliang

among the Apatanis, Abala among the Idu Mishmis, Mochup among the Kamtis, Ngothun among the Noctes and kebang among the Adis. In organizational matters, the village council differs considerably. The variation in the tribal councils was due to the social outlook and psychology of the tribes. Thus, some villages were least organised while others were well organised.

The Indigenous and traditional village councils of Arunachal Pradesh, govern and administer the life of the people, when we analyse the structure and methods of adjudication and conflict resolution, the Kebang of the Adis is considered to be highly participatory and democratic. Even before the advent of the Panchayati Raj institution in India in 1957, the three-tier system of Kebang was in existence in the tribal and indigenous society of the state. This old age institution i.e. Kebang, is very powerful, as it occupies a dominant place in Adi society and life of the people is controlled and directed by it from cradle to grave. In fact, the entire Adi's life revolves around it. Verreir Elwin wrote in his book "A Philosophy for NEFA (1957), that "the most highly developed and effective of all the tribal councils is the Adis, Kebang, which may well, become a model for the whole of NEFA."

Kebang has a hierarchical order with a three-tier structure. At village level, there exists a Dolung Kebang, which is a regular village council and its meetings take place at regular intervals to adjudicate and resolve almost all the problems of the village. At the block or circle level exists the Banggo Kebang, which is for the resolution and management of inter-village disputes. The third tier is the Boigum Bokang Kebang, which is the highest and supreme Kebang. It acts almost like an "Adi parliament". Bogum Bokang Kebang is convened for looking into the resolving the cases of highly important concerning the Adis society. It enacts laws, formulates policies and discusses matters relating to war, peace, culture, religion, language, development, etc.

Introduction of modern democratic institutions, particularly the Panchayati Raj in NEFA in 1969 was a great venture towards bringing the people of Arunachal Pradesh in the mainstream of democratic life of the country. The basic objective of Panchayat in Arunachal Pradesh was for rural development and to give it a distinct political identity, thereby to develop a new political culture, involving the community into the larger national life. It was aimed at decentralized form of administration, giving opportunities to rural folk to study their problems and to find solution by themselves.

Though, the Panchayati Raj System was introduced in the state with the objectives to speed up the developmental activities with the people's participation, to serve as a symbol of unity among the people and all the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and to generate conditions favourable to a uniform growth of political development of different tribal groups; and has been successful in bring about the positive changes in social and economic sectors, but its introduction had a far reaching impact on traditional political institutions of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh in general and on the Adis Kebang in particular. It has upset the age-old political equilibrium in Adi society and the political system of the village. The two higher level kebangs- the Banggo kebang and Bogum Bokang became the first casualty of the Panchayati Raj System.

Verreir Elwin, who was all for the retention of tribal custom rightly saw in the statutory Panchayat a threat to traditional tribal council. Moreover, with the coming of party politics and the resultant political interference in the village affairs, Adi society, today, is divided on party basis. Now the institution of kebang is totally politicised. Besides, it has also changed the leadership pattern and political outlook of the people. Modern Democratic Institutions has made a profound impact on the traditional political processes of the Arunachal Pradesh. It has influenced the traditional village council, which operated on completely different set of principles. It has given a new orientation to politics in Arunachal Pradesh, which was deeply imbedded in small group psyche. It has made it a political unit in the real sense of the term instead of a group of fragmented tribes and communities. It has changed the political outlook of the leaders and trained them to think in terms of the district and territory instead of the village, the community or the tribe.

With the introduction of Modern Democratic Institutions a new breed of leadership emerged i.e. Gram Panchayat Members, Anchal Samiti Members, Zilla Parishad members and party leaders. The breed of new leaders tends to assume the role of village elders and undermine the age-old institution. Despite the fact that the role of the Gram Panchayat members, Anchal Samiti members and Zilla Parishad members is quite different from the role of the village elders, yet there is a tendency among them to meddle in village politics. This has created a sense of mutual scepticism, distrust and defiance among the villagers. Also, they tend to view every decision of the Kebang on political lines which has not only created a rift but also a vertical division in the otherwise, so homogenous and cohesive village hierarchy. This is rather a very unwanted, disturbing drift towards degeneration of Kebang.

Today, Kebang is faced with erosion in its efficacy and has lost its earlier traditional charm, glamour and lusture. Although, there has been no provision of party system in Panchayat elections, the Panchayat elections normally took place on party lines, rather panchayat elections have paved the way for the political parties to enter into village politics. The symbols of political parties may not figure openly, parties play a big role in these elections. In 1992 Panchayat elections in Ayeng village, East Siang District, elections were fought openly on party lines. Out of 8 Gram Panchayats, Congress supported candidates bagged 5 seats, candidates supported by BJP and Janata Dal secured 2 seats each and 1 seat was bagged by an independent. The meddling of political parties in Panchayat elections and village affairs has created dissensions among the villagers. These dissensions are reflected in the Kebang, leading the people to view the decision of the Kebang to be on political lines.

Before coming of modern democratic institutions, the Kebang operated on the basis of the solidarity of the village, unflinching loyalty of the individuals to the community, respect for age, experience and the knowledge of the village elders. But with the coming of the new-leaders, specially with the introduction of the new concept of elections such as representation, adult franchise, and instant leadership has brought about a significant change in the village politics and functioning of the kebang. It has been observed that there is a tendency on the part of the new leaders to exercise greater influence on village politics than those of gam and traditional village leaders. Traditionally, Kebang functioned with unquestioned authority over the people and the people had great loyalty and adherence to Kebang and its decision. But now - a days, its decisions are questioned. Thus, the traditional leaders are losing control over the village council and the people are at the hands of the new-leaders. The traits of traditional and new-leaders are quite different. The social base of the new-leader is gradually becoming broad based and their outlook and attitude are also quite modern.

However, it is found that people, particularly younger generation welcome the changes in the traditional kebang system. They wanted change especially in superstition and rigid system prevalent in kebang. Even some elders also favoured the change or modernization of the kebang system and emphasized for the codification of traditional laws of the Adis. But these people preferred the change in approach and not the structural change in the kebang. It has also observed that Adi people think that Panchayati Raj and party politics have brought changes in the traditional kebang system. They also felt that the change has

effected the pattern, criteria and method of choosing leadership, and it has increased social and political consciouness among the people.

With the introduction of Panchayati Raj, Civil Laws and coming of party politics in the state and the eventual conflict between the power and jurisdiction of the village authorities and the civil laws, presently, certain problems have cropped up in the way of the smooth functioning of the kebang. These problems are compounded with the increase in innumerable cases of complicated natue and the appearance of a mixed social and cultural order in the society, and the declining competence of kebang members to handle the cases effectively at all level. It is clearly seen that erosion is taking place in the authority and jurisdiction of the kebang. However, situation is better in the interior village, because modern democratic institutions and modernization have least affected these villages. The villages which are falling within the periphery of district headquarter and circle headquarter are more affected, because of easy access to these offices. Thus there is a growing tendency to evade or pass the decision and authority of the kebaqng. This also seen that many a time, parties with political and monetary clout appeal to the Deputy Commissioner court and to higher courts against the kebang's decisions. Twenty years back, a Deputy Commissioner of East Siang District, Pasighat, Mr. D.S. Nigi also observed, "a tendency has crept in the villagers to by - pass the village Abus and refer the cases directly to the Deputy Commssioner".

However, it would be too early to say that the kebang is completely declined or eroded altogether. The Bogum Bokang Kebang held at Pasighat on 7th, 8th May, '2000, to revitalize it, clearly indicates that kebang is still popular among the Adis. The recently held Bogum Bokaan kebang on 19th & 20th August - 2000 at Naharlagun appealed to all the segmens of the Adi to maintain unity and make efforts to revitalize and rejuvenate the traditional system of the people to face the chanllenge of modernization and the modern instituions. In fact, today, all Adis who have reached the age of reasoning and rationale, are die hard to preserve and protect the kebang from the onslaught of modernization and modern political institutions. The best example is the recent attempt to revive Bogum Bokang Kabang. The Kebang, today, is still popular among the Adis notwithstanding the fact that it no longer enjoys the same ligitimacy as it had enjoyed in the traditional Adi society. It cannot remain unsusceptible to the changes taking place within the Adis' society and outside when the whole world is changing. Some changes in the kebang system are required to cope with the process of

modernization and to make it (kebang) universally acceptable to all segments of the Adis' society.

Considering all the issues and problems, the following suggestions are made to restore the glory and legitimacy which the Kebang system enjoyed as an indigenous traditional institution among the people, particularly, the Adis of Arunachal Pradesh.

1. The proper revision of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1945 is urgently needed to re-organise and strengthen the kebang system which will be for the interest of not only the Adis but also the general administration and the state.
2. The criteria for selection of Gams should be modified. They should be chosen by the villagers on the merit of their personal capacity and capability, their knowledge of traditional laws, customs and their oratorical skill.
3. Appointment of Gams on political consideration and on the pressure of political parties be stopped.
4. Proper documentation of customary laws that have been orally passed on from one generation to another generations should be made, as it is found that some deviations from the original customary laws and practices are made from time to time.
5. Superstitious and evil practices like oath and ordeal should be discouraged.
6. The functions of traditional village councils, i.e. the Kebang and Panchayat should be properly demarcated, so that there should not be any misunderstanding between the two.
7. Clear guidelines, demarcating the civil laws and traditional laws are also required to strengthen the institutions of kebang.
8. Proper organisation of the structure to make Banggo and Bogum Bokang a functional body is also needed.
9. Politicization and interference of the party politics in the village affairs should be discouraged.
10. Financial Assistance to some extent, for handling the regular activities of village Kebang is also needed if it does not amount to political and administrative interference in the functioning and the decision making process of the Kebang.

While doing so, care must be taken that culture, custom and customary laws should not be destroyed, rather all good things of the traditional political system should be activated, encouraged, developed and preserved for the future generations. Also, all the good things of the modern system should be incorporated in it. With little modernization and modification, Kebang can be a model for rural local government for the entire state and the social, cultural and judicial relevance of this age-old traditional insituion can be maintained.

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- _____ : Perme, Kepant, (Leader) Damro village.
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- _____ : Yirang, Ojong, (Village Secretary) Ayeng village.

INDIA'S RELATION WITH ASEAN - AN OBSERVATION

Salma Nasreen

Regional cooperation has been a characteristic feature of the post-cold war period. The development of the Association of the South East Asian Nations (hence forth used as ASEAN) as a dynamic economic organisation in the South East Asian region has been the sphere of attraction to the countries of the world. However, the financial crisis in South East Asia in the late nineties to a lesser extent affected the economics of all the member countries of the ASEAN. Despite its economic doldurms, foreign investors like Japan showed interest in the region and reforms were made within these South East Asian countries which subsequently led to a state of recovery. Hence, India could hardly afford to overlook a region that is generally seen as the most economically vibrant in the world.

The ASEAN came into existence on August 8, 1967 by signing the Bangkok Declaration at a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysai being held at Bangkok. Brunei joined the association in 1984 while Vietnam was admitted in July 1995. Laos and Myanmar joined in 1997. Though for long, Cambodia's entry was put on hold because of domestic political upheaval on April 30, 1999 Cambodia was formally welcomed to the ASEAN Forum as a full-fledged member. The major objectives of the Bangkok declaration was -

"to accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region, to promote regional peace and stability through adherence to the principles of the U.N. Charter, to provide active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest; to provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional, technical and administrative spheres, to collaborate more effectively for the greater utilization of their agriculture, industries and trade, to promote South East Asian studies, to maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organisation."¹

However, at the outset, ASEAN was established primarily with the goal of establishing regional security and political stability in mind, even though the so called Bangkok Declaration emphasizes economic progress, social and cultural development and not political cooperation. This is certainly not surprising considering the problem that prevailed in the region at that time such as Indonesia's confrontation * with Malaysia, the Philippines disputes over Sabah, escalation of Vietnam war etc. Under these circumstances, five countries - Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand opted for a pro-west and anti-Communist foreign policy. Being small and weak, the countries feared that they would be pawns in international power competition. Thus, it was rightly said that ASEAN arose mainly due to the fear psychosis shared by these five countries.² However,, the US military presence and its strategic objectives in the region had a considerable, if not decisive impact in bringing about an atmosphere where local initiative for the formation of ASEAN was possible. Moreover, the situation became favourable after the demise of Sukarno in Indonesia as confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia was over and under General Suharto's New Order**, Jakarta was eager to restore harmonious relations with its neighbours. Further, Ferdinand Marcos, who became President of the Philippines in January 1966, restored diplomatic relations with Malaysia. These changes were set against the threatening background of escalating war in Vietnam. However, political sensitivities demanded that U.S. should remain in the background and provide guidance in the formation of ASEAN through its own initiative. All these events led to a desirable environment for the non-Communist powers to bury their differences and seek regional cooperation. Thus, the formation of ASEAN was criticised by Soviet Union and China. The Soviet newspapers like 'Izvestia' and 'Pravada' attacked ASEAN as a tool of the Americans.³ While China's reaction to the formation of ASEAN was viewed as broad based "plot" directed at it.⁴

However, when the formation of ASEAN was announced in August 1967 through the Bangkok declaration, India's official spokesman in New Delhi abstained from making any comments. In fact, it was clear that India was not very happy about the development due to covert presence of America in the formation of ASEAN probably because of this, India "may be taking a slow turn" in her policy.⁵ Initially, Malaysia and Singapore wanted India to join ASEAN but countries like Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines were not in favour of India's joining the same. Indonesia feared that with the induction of India with its

vast size and resources, Indonesian predominance of ASEAN might be challenged. On the other hand, Thailand and the Philippines took an alarmist view of India's close relation with the USSR, in view of the fact that members of ASEAN were in varying degrees aligned to the US, militarily and economically.

Subsequently, attempts were made to develop close links with India and ASEAN countries but politics played an important role in determining ASEAN relation with India. In March 1979, a formal approach was made to the ASEAN Central Secretariat in Jakarta and the ASEAN Secretary-General, Datuk Alibin Abdullah visited India to explore the idea further. At that stage, however, political factors intruded and ASEAN annoyance with that was seen as Indian bias towards Vietnam on the Cambodian question delayed an ASEAN response until March 1980, when the Indians were advised that the way was open for a dialogue. It was in these circumstances for the first time official level meeting between ASEAN and India was held in Kuala Lumpur on May 15-16, 1980. India's Secretary of External Affairs, Mr. Eric Golsalvis attended the first dialogue meeting of senior officials. However, the recognition of the Heng Samrin government by India on July 7, 1980, immediately added to a sense of an alienation of ASEAN states from India. Thus, India's relation with ASEAN grouping had been suspended.

While ASEAN countries perceived the developments in Cambodia as a serious threat to their security, India did not judge in that way. India recognised the Heng Samrin regime as it had full control over the area in Cambodia and as it was recognised by the socialist countries at that time so it followed the same line. The differences on the question of Cambodia left little scope for any prospects of implementing what was agreed as a result of the first dialogue. Similar events took place in Afghanistan which too disturbed the relation between India and ASEAN. When Soviet invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, India refused to come out in outright condemnation of military intervention. Instead of condemning the Soviet move, India reiterated the Soviet rationale that the action was taken for self-defence. However, the move was seen as a consequence of growing US aid to Iran and Pakistan. But for ASEAN countries there was a linkage between the situation in Cambodia and Afghanistan and stressed that such aggression in both countries is unacceptable and should be condemned.

However, the mid 80's was the turning point of Indo-ASEAN relations. There has been perceptive change in the political and economic outlook of India

and ASEAN which had significant effect in their relationship. Firstly, during the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi, India adopted a process of liberalization by opening itself to foreign investment and economic activities. Subsequently India's potentialities as a vast market became evident to individual investors which brought about a significant change in the perception of the west towards India. This change in Western perception towards India also led to a change in the ASEAN perception of India.⁶ The change was not brought about dramatically but gradually. However, this change in ASEAN countries was due to the setback received by these countries in their economic front. Though for two and a half decades, most of the countries of ASEAN recorded spectacular growth but the debt burden was increasing as there was a dramatic change in the role of the US. The ASEAN countries noted the growing trend of protectionism in the US, which resulted to look towards other regions like China and India.

Secondly, on political issue also, areas of agreement gradually emerged between India and ASEAN. The common approach pursued by them towards the resolution of Cambodian problem in late 80's brought India and ASEAN into closer contact.

Thirdly, China's emergence as a military might brought India and ASEAN closer. The security of India and ASEAN countries are threatened due to China's claim over the South China sea. But for India's active role in the long term security of Asia-Pacific, ASEAN countries tried to develop good relations with India.

Fourthly, the new economic policy pursued by India in the wake of the 1991 economic reforms helped in developing cordial relationship between India and ASEAN.

Fifthly, the market factor affected the relationship between India and ASEAN. India holds the promise of a strong middle class market for ASEAN export led economies. On the other hand, ASEAN market provide additional avenues for Indian export of goods.

Since 1989, India has impressively improved its position in ASEAN countries. India had been seeking upgradation of its ties with ASEAN and acquired the status of a sectoral dialogue partner in January 1992 through which India was able to have a dialogue with ASEAN on promoting trade, investment, tourism, scientific and technological coopeation. In December, 1995, India was offered

the status of full dialogue partner and entered the ASEAN Regional Forum (AFR) in July, 1996.

In fact, the 'Look east' policy followed by India is a right direction to proceed with. Fortunately, South East Asian countries are also redefining their strategic and security concerns in the post cold war era.

Whatever, it may be, since the end of the cold war India's chances to tie up with the ASEAN nations have increased. Not only in volume but its composition of trade has subsequently moved in India's favour turning the balance of trade position as well as enhancing the proportion of export to ASEAN countries.

Apart from trade, the service sector's also another significant area where India and ASEAN could interact in the coming years. Asean countries have already excelled in providing various kind of success to the world. India too has achieved remarkable excellence in building a strong base of high-skilled human resources in the field of construction, technology, banking and financial services etc. Therefore, ASEAN is a right partner to do business to wider the scope of cooperation in the service sector.

There is yet another politico-military dimensions that India would like to discuss with ASEAN countries. This dimension relates to New Delhi's stand on the Kashmir issue since countries like Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand are multi-ethnic state and they, like India are having ethnic problems. So India's task of wooing their support may be well appreciated.

Further interdependence of India and Asean is essential for the mutual benefit of both region. As India with large and sound human resources base can provide ample opportunities to ASEAN's surplus capital to reap advantages by investing in India. India provides a favourable investment environment to ASEAN investors with the opening of the Indian economy. Moreover, India with a democratic form of government, coupled with the availability of cheap labour and ample scientific and technological manpower as well looked upon by many ASEAN countries as a better place for investment. But to attract ASEAN investment mere macro level economic reforms are not adequate. What is essential is widespread improvement at the micro level in the basic infrastructure. Unless, India improves the basis facilities such as arterial roads and ports, water resources, power and software etc. no large scale foreign investment could be expected. Thus, interdependence of India and Asean is essential for the mutual benefit of both the regions.

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- * Confrontation was the term used by President Sukarno of Indonesia to describe the Indonesian opposition to the creation of and existence of Malaysia.
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THE ROLE OF THE SMALL STATES IN SAARC WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BHUTAN AND NEPAL.

Sewali Kurmi

Regional co-operation has been a characteristic feature of the post second world war period. Regionalism is a concept of organising states on regional basis. Sisir Gupta, an expert on South Asian affairs, conceptualises regionalism by analysing the definition of Norman J. Podelford in the following manner, "an association of states based on location in a given geographical area, for the safeguarding or promotion of the participants, an association whose terms are fixed by a treaty or other arrangements". It seems that such an association can only be the product of a long period of planning and cooperation of the people of a particular region. In a broader sense, regional integration mean any tendency on the part of any group of nations belonging to some region or adjacent regions to cooperate in the fields of their national and international policies or coordinate their efforts in order to promote an ever increasing relationships, as distinct from the relationships with other parts of the world.¹

The process of regionalism emerged in a concrete shape only after the second world war. Two distinct factors are mainly responsible for the development of regionalism - (i) security concerns and (ii) developmental objectifes - such as economic, social, cultural and political integration. Besides these, many other factors are also responsible for the growth of regionalism in different parts of the world. These factors include geographical proximity, homogeneity, functional interest, common threat perception, acceptance of pivotal power in the region, strategic harmony and regional institutions.

In South Asia, the geographical proximity of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan helped the growth of the SAARC. The comon threat perceptions from the super powers i.e. the USA and the erstwhile USSR in the South Asian region and the economic backwardness of the region are also responsible for the development of the SAARC.² The establishment of SAARC

in December 1985 reflects an organised approach to social and economic problems of the South Asian region. The SAARC was established to promote the welfare of the people of south Asia and to improve their quality of life.³

The idea of regional co-operation has always been an attraction to the poor and small states, because the smaller states are more sensitive with the complexities of their small states and identity. The small states believed that in an organised way they would be able to enhance their status and preserve their identity. Therefore, being a small states, Bhutan and Nepal responded favourably and promptly to the Bangladesh's proposal for regional cooperation. Bhutan and Nepal's basic interest in the SAARC, as of any small states would be, to preserve its identity and independence in the region and foster an independent economic development. The basic problem of Bhutan and Nepal has been to preserve their identities vis-a-vis a big power on which they are overwhelmingly dependent. The SAARC has been viewed as a possible alternative for balancing relations between the big and the weak states of the region.

It is against this backdrop that the present study seeks to analyse the role of the small states in the SAARC i.e. Bhutan and Nepal and the primary motivating factors of these two small states to join in the SAARC forum.

Bhutan is a land-locked country situated between India and China, the two Asian giants, who are also rivals. Bhutan's geographical conditions under developed economy and strategic environment around Bhutan resulted in its search for its separate identity and preservation of independence. The problems which Bhutan faces are low level of economic development, lack of transport and communication facilities. Bhutan thought that these problems could be mitigated through the SAARC forum. Bhutan also faced some other problems like untapped natural and water resources. Therefore, Bhutan wanted to exploit all these resources through the medium of the SAARC and to develop its economy at primary level.

Bhutan is not self-sufficient in food-grains and between 15,000 to 25,000 tonnes of grains had to be imported annually. Being a member nation of SAARC, Bhutan can now take the help from SAARC's Food Reserve Programme, which may reduce Bhutan's dependence on other countries in respect of agricultural production. Through the SAARC forum, Bhutan is expecting joint exploitation of its hydel potential, natural resources, forest resources, minerals like large deposits of limestone, marble, dolomite, graphite, copper, slate, coal,

talc, gypsum, baryl, mica and tufa, which are unexploited and untapped due to the lack of infra-structural facilities and the skilled man-power.

Geographical conditions are responsible for Bhutan's limited relations with other countries of the world. Geography also restricts its foreign trade and economy, because its trade relations are through the Indian territory. The SAARC has provide an opportunity to Bhutan to diversify its trade and economic relations with other countries,. For example, Bhutan's exports to India, Bangladesh and Pakistan increased from US\$ 8 million in 1990 to US\$ 41 million in 1995.⁴ The SAARC is also providing international economic support to Bhutan and its expansion of trade in vital areas. Earlier, Bhutan's trade with India was in deficit. But its trade deficit has been reduced due to its commercial relations with Bangladesh and Pakistan. In this way, Bhutan is trying to come out of its isolation and it enables Bhuran to enhance and diversity its foreign policy option without arousing Indian annoyance.

Tourism is Bhutan's principal foreign exchange earner as it accounts for 1.2 percent of the G.D.P. of Bhutan.⁵ Bhutan has been providing various facilities to the tourist from the SAARC countries. With the help SAARC, Bhutan prompted its tourism trade at the regional level.

Like Bhutan, Nepal also joined SAARC to fulfil certain basic objectives which are related with its national interest. As a small state, the basic problem of Nepal has been to preserve its distinct identity vis-a-vis a big power on which it is overwhelmingly dependent. The SAARC has been viewed as a possible alternative for balancing relations between the big and the weak states of the region. Nepal believed that SAARC will provide a wider scope for interaction at the regional level where its national interests can be protected. The economic compulsions also drew Nepal towards the SAARC. Nepal does not have direct access to other South Asian countries,. It is India, who provides transits facilities to it. Its regional trade is less than 5 percent of the total trade flow of the South Asians countries. Therefore, Nepal is very keen to increase its trade relations with Bangladesh by acquiring an additional out let to the sea through Chittagong or Khulna ports of Bangladesh.

Water resources has become both a symbol of national identity and an area of vast economic potentials for Nepal.⁶ Nepal has three big rivers - Karnali, Kosi and Gandaki. These rivers have tremendous hydro power potentialities.

Through the medium of SAARC, Nepal wanted to exploit all water resources to reduce its dependence on India.

Nepal has to depend on borrowed technology for the implementation of its programme of development. It is possible for Nepal to develop appropriate technology and man power through mutual co-operation with the SAARC countries. Nepal has been facing problems of deforestation, soil erosion, landslides and floods. These problems can be solved through an integrated development strategy carried out jointly with other SAARC countries.⁷

It is hoped that the operationalisation of SAPTA by SAARC countries on 7th Dec 1995 would enhance Bhutan and Nepal's trade with SAARC countries by reducing trade barriers. In fact, SAPTA is the real beginning of SAARC, as Bhutan, Nepal and other small SAARC countries can share the benefits of trade expansion equitably. The proposed transition from SAPTA to SAFTA in 2001 will lead to even greater progress in the SAARC region. But the expectations of Bhutan and Nepal are not always fulfilled due the political climate prevailing in the region. In this regard, the India-Pakistan rivalry on the issue of Kashmir plays a significant role. The recent nuclearisation of India and Pakistan is another factor which stands as an obstacle to fulfil the interests of Bhutan and Nepal.

Therefore, these two small countries have shown their enthusiasm for sub-regional co-operation within the framework of SAARC among Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and North Eastern areas of India. The proposed sub-regional co-operation would help Nepal to develop its economy by providing the facilities to the sea ports in India and Bangladesh. Nepal will be able to utilise its water resources, which will help it to remove the energy crisis of Nepal as well as in the South Asian region. Through this sub-regional co-operation, Nepal proposes to use the Bangladesh-Assam water ways by trucking onwards from Dhubri to Kakarbhita in Nepal via Siliguri in order to get access to Chittagong and Mongla ports. In the same manner, Bhutan can utilise Calcutta and Haldia ports in India and Chittagong and Mongla in Bangladesh via the Dhubri river port in Assam by trucking to Phuntosholing. The developed waterway helped Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh to bring down the cost of transportation of goods to half the present cost incurred, while transmitting from India.⁸ The optimist are of the opinion that through this sub-regional co-operation, the unresolved problems like - refugees, illegal immigration, terrorism, drug abuse, poverty can be solved for the greater interest of the smaller state of the region.

The future of SAARC is based on the two important factors. First, to be effective, the SAARC process has to be consolidated from the below. It has to be based on the people, ensuring their involvement in the process. Secondly, SAARC can not and will not make any headway until it is blessed with the political commitment of South Asian's as a whole. For the future success of SAARC, another observations is that there must be a sub regional cooperation among SAARC members as an integrated development of sub regions comprising North- East of India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh as a development strategy for hilly areas in the Himalayan and Hindukush regions, coastal management by maritime states, ecological management by India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. Bangladesh has been suggesting a "fast track" to improve communications among India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. A recent study conducted by a Bangladesh Research Institute indicated that easier and more efficient movement of cargo among these three countries could result in Bangladesh gaining between US \$

50 million to US\$ 100 million in its trade from Nepal. On the reverse side, Nepal could use Bangladesh ports to export.

From the above discussion, it shows that the initiatives of regional cooperation in south Asia have come through different phases and in all these phases it is the smaller states of South Asia who have taken keen interest and initiatives to form this regional group. The following observations can be made about the role and reactions of the smaller countries towards the SAARC on the basis of the above mentioned discussion.

- (a) The stands taken by the smaller countries towards their immediate big neighbours are not always the same. Their inequalities in terms of size, population, natural and military strength tend to make this difference.
- (b) The political, social and economic inter-action among the states of the periphery (Bhutan and Nepal) are low in intensity and context.
- (c) The smaller countries are scared of the hegemonic tendency of the big powers in the region. Therefore, they opted for multilateral diplomacy through the SAARC forum to prevent the interference of big powers in their domestic affairs.
- (d) The core state (India) on its part fears that the smaller states could join together to counter its pre-eminent position in the region.
- (e) When the smaller states are at the disadvantageous position and isolated,

then they intend to come together to make a group or block in order to ensure their security and independence. The concept of sub-regionalism is a manifestation of these feelings.

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THE QUESTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS FROM 'PRIVATE' DOMAIN TO 'PUBLIC' SPHERE

Pinky Das

If the human rights agenda includes the assurance of women's fundamental rights as human beings and women's rights as human rights, it would need to penetrate the so-called 'private' domain of the family also and not confine itself only to the 'public' sphere of polity and civil society for women's primary oppression takes place within the family and is carried over into the public sphere - and, this is the most important question to be seriously dealt with when we talk of women's rights. The state that ensures fundamental human rights would thus need to ensure women's rights⁽¹⁾ and women's human rights as human rights in the home as well and bring within its purview the family which it is reluctant to do fearing a breach of individual privacy. But this is not a sound excuse because the state has time and again penetrated the 'private' sphere of the family when it has wished to do so for instance in instituting family planning programmes and in formulating inheritance and divorce laws.⁽²⁾

In India though women were given equal legal and constitutional status since independence, yet researches in the field have now established beyond doubt that this guarantee of equal right conferred on women failed to improve the lot of the women. Instead, women who compose half of the total population are the backward class, the most neglected lot. One may cite their socio-economic and political indices which are not sufficient to explain their position in society because women as a whole - irrespective of their class, caste, religion and race - are under the hegemony of male domination in a patriarchal family.⁽³⁾

As one reviews the achievements of the Indian women's movement on the threshold of the 21st Century one is dismayed to find that the movement is taken as the means to the liberation of Indian women from 'private domain' of the male extended to public sphere.⁽⁴⁾ Now a days when we find people talking about equality of sexes, women's liberation etc., we realise that the time has

come to put an end to the age old practice of discrimination against women. The practice of assuming that males are superior to females have more or less been inspired by the religious practices and beliefs of the people. Discriminatory practices against women exist in all religions. A dozen Afghan women have been disappeared by radical Islamic groups for the crime of working in women's Centres in the refugee centres of Peshawar in Pakistan. The regime in Afghanistan headed by the Taliban, a radical Islamic organisation have banned women from working in offices and are forced to use the Veil/Burkha covering every part of their body. If anybody did not comply with these diktats, they were strictly dealt with which included whittled away the rights of women.⁽⁵⁾

Islamic also enshrined certain discriminatory practices. As decreed by the Koran, the value of a women's testimony in a court was half that of a man's, men are entitled to four wives while a women can have only one husband. A husband can make his wife a puppet in his hand and if he did not like her, he can divorce he just by saying the word 'Talak' thrice. All these practices open up avenues for the exploitation of women both physically and mentally not only in private life but also in public sphere.⁽⁶⁾ It would be unjustified to say that discriminatory practices against women exist in Islamism only. In Hinduism too women experience this degrading practice against them.

Since empowerment of women is linked to the family and society at large, it is imperative that the question of women's rights should also be viewed from this perspective. In a patriarchal society male domination in private life in miniature form gets its expression in bigger form in public sphere. For example, though the 73rd. Amendment Act, 1992 provides for 1/3rd of the total number of offices of chairperson in the Panchayats reserved for women⁽⁷⁾, the government of Orissa has however, made it mandatory that wherever the Chairperson is male, the vice-chairperson post would be reserved for a women which goes against the spirit of the Act⁽⁸⁾. The Act provides for reservation of seat for women in Panchayats⁽⁹⁾ but they can not contest election without the consent of male sponsor. Since women do not have the right to inherit property and since fighting an election is a costly affair, it is difficult to get the consent of a male sponsor to invest in favour of a women contestant. Many elected women in rural panchayats reported that they have to look to their male members even for bus fare to attend meetings of the Panchayats⁽¹⁰⁾. Sometimes male members have to accompany their female members for security. The traditional attitude of male towards women are still not changing even in urban situation. In Navi Mumbai

Municipal Corporation, when Mayor's post was reserved for women in 1996, the post of deputy Mayor was willing to work as a deputy under a women Mayor⁽¹¹⁾. This is a clear indication how male domination in private domain gets its expression in public sphere. Caught in a web of adverse, cultural practices and prejudices in a male dominated environment, the women are not a happy lot. Lacking access to health, education and recreation as a girl child, her role is often circumscribed by an early induction into household work, marriage and motherhood. The multifaceted role as mother, wife, career woman continues to be exploitative. The maximum number of suicides reported in Mumbai in 1997 were by married women depicting the magnitude of domestic violence perpetrated on them⁽¹²⁾. The magnitude of domestic violence on women determines the magnitude of violence on women in public spheres.

The focus of women's movement in India and women's rights was largely confined to discrimination against women in private life. The women's movement aims at to put an end to the age old practice of discrimination against women in private life. Thus, in a patriarchal society the question of women's rights was preceded by women's liberation from 'private domain'. Participation of women in public life, gender equality and empowerment of women can be achieved if we can liberate the women from 'private domain'.

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