JOURNAL OF POLITICS

Vol. XIV, 2009

JOURNAL OF POLITICS

Editor
Manjula Dowerah Bhuyan

CONTENTS

CONTRIBUTORS

Dhiren Bhagawati : Professor, Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh.

Girin Phukon : Professor, Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh.

N.L.Dutta : Professor, Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh.

Pratap Chandra Swain : Reader & Head, Department of Political Science, Indira Gandhi Govt. College, Tezu, Arunachal Pradesh – 792001.

Rajeesh Viswanathan : Asst. Prof., HR, Janson School of Business, Pondichery.

Rubul Patgiri : Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University.

Dolly Phukon : Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University.

Seema Roy Kurmi : Sr. Lecturer, Deptt.of Political Science, Margherita College, Margherita.

Khema Sonowal : Lecturer, Margherita College, Margherita.

Chandana Goswami : Sr. Lecturer, Deptt. of History, D.H.S.K. College, Dibrugarh.

Arifur Zaman : Lecturer, North-Eastern Regional Institute of Management, PNS Bhawan, Jaya Nagar, Khanapara, Guwahati 781022, Assam (India).

Borun Dey : Part time Lecturer, Centre for Juridical Studies, Dibrugarh University,

Anita Sharma : Ph.D Scholar, Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University.

Dreamsea Das : Part time Lecturer, Centre for Juridical Studies, Dibrugarh University.

THE TRUTH OF HISTORY

Dhiren Bhagawati

As God's truth is what God comes to know as he
creates and assembles it, so human truth is what man
comes to know as he builds it, shaping it by his actions.

— Giambattista Vico

When someone says history does not explain but it has to be explained, I accept the contention but give my own meaning to it. History is constructed by historian not from facts or interpretation of facts but from the discourse which he accepts. In our pursuit of social truth we are predestined by our choices and situation. Still we claim we are scientist while a historian is not a scientist. Social sciences in their zeal to make their studies a science separated themselves from history. But they could not make much headway in their adventure and soon fell back on the historical approach. There are still many who believe history is not an appropriate ally of social enquiry because of its inherent deficiencies. Some of them believe that history is basically a non-scientific study as it deals with the unique and it can not repeat. There are two different issues involved. First the great old name of historicism coined by Karl Popper, which clubbed together a host of views critical of scientific approach. Historicism in this sense means anything that rejects application of the methods of pure sciences to the social enquiry. Karl Popper claims to expose it and then rejects it.[1] The second issue is about the position of theory in history.[2] Does history make generalizations? Does it proceed with a framework? Does history make theory of grand, medium or narrow range?

Karl Popper in the above cited work considers Marx to be a historicist because Marx in his *Theses on Feuerbach* rejected the objective laws in social phenomena and suggested the role of human intervention. But Marx's notion of human intervention is not a generic idea but the product of a historical

situation. In a conducive historical situation intervention plays its decisive role. There are patterns in the movement of history and it is possible for human knowledge to discern those patterns however different these may be from the objective laws of nature. In this sense human beings make their own history. It is possible because human beings are equipped with the power of being conscious of their own position and make planning to recreate history.

Historicism also refers to the belief that any idea, concept and theory are situated in a historical context and are relative to it. Nothing can transcend the historical embeddedness. There is no generic form of these things which applies to all the times.[3] Marxism and liberalism both have their historical limits and can not overcome it. If ideas have their limits in time and space, study of these ideas can not develop a general theory, history disqualifies to be a science. Exactly for this reason Marxism is not a science for some people. Louis Althusser refuted that argument. (Althusser, 1969) Coming to historical study the problem continues to perturb the historians. The question that occupies us is not whether the study of history is a scientific pursuit or not, because this is an open question for all the social sciences. The question is how far other social sciences can utilize the model and approach of historical study effectively in their work without compromising their scientific stint.

Looking at the past and discerning certain patterns in the progress of human society means certain things. This is a universal process and it applies equally to all forms of society at a time. But the forms of society dispersed over the universe are not similar. In this case should we wait till uniformity is obtained all over the world otherwise we are subject to the criticism of Euro-centric prejudices? What the west does today others will follow the suit. Another approach to the problem is that there may be different patterns in diverse forms of society. It is necessary to judge every situation on its own merit and we should make very general propositions which are pliable enough to fit the specifics. In this case patterns are not related to history they are generic and human creativity and genius play the most significant role in the transformation of society. Both the approaches can be justified by references to the classics of the masters. But a living theory is much more than a bundle of regularities and generalizations. No scientific exercise not to speak of Popper's theory of refutation can help understand social transformations.

Historical approach comes to our help provided its inclination to unique and specific is constrained and it is elated to trace the frames where history unfolds itself. It would not be difficult to discern the underneath thread that binds the frames in time and space. It helps us to see how human efforts find meaning in the frames and use it to make history. For example, the material basis which is a necessary frame for human consciousness can be created by super structural elements which also steer the path by emphasing the appropriate role of productive relations which are instrumental for social transformation. It is now very often seen that we stop on the half way by creating the material basis of social transformation by ignoring the generation of appropriate productive relations. Historical approach provides enough particular cases which can be closely processed and analyzed to find out if any past experiences in similar situation can give us a clue to the present impasse. Hugo Chavez's frequent reference to Simon Bolivar suggests this sort of attempts. Synthesizing Marxism with the model of Bolivar and screening twentieth century experiences on socialist experiments Chavez has moulded a novel socialist formulation.[4] Similar experiments on stronger intellectual grounds by Samir Amin have occupied quite a significant space in our thinking now.[5]

History rarely stands above the class prejudices though there are significant exceptions to it. At the same time history does not have a pretension of science to claim a detached and frigid outlook on social issues. Social sciences need to appreciate that its ultimate utility rests on its ability to act as the harbinger of social changes not as an instrument for preserving the status-quo. This was the ground for which Herbert Marcuse uses a camouflage of psycho-analysis of Freud to make a distinction between the pleasure principle and the performance principle on the basis of which arises the   surplus repression. (Marcuse, 1969 and 1964) In fact historical experiences alone can create the edifice for construction of this type of propositions. We have to traverse history for transcending reality to arrive at the abstraction negating the reification.

History's potential tendency to particularize may often lead the historians to land at narratives of immediacy lacking a vision and end for metamorphosis of human civilization. E.H.Carr for this reason has to suggest,

> What, then, do we mean when we praise a historian for
> being objective, or say that one historian is more objective
> than another? Not, it is clear, simply that he gets his facts

right, but rather that he chooses the right facts, or, in other words, that he applies the right standard of significance. When we call a historian objective, we mean I think two things. First of all, we mean that he has the capacity to rise above the limited vision of his own situation in society and in history - a capacity which, as I suggested in a earlier lecture, is partly dependent on his own capacity to recognize the extent of his involvement in that situation, to recognize, that is to say, the impossibility of total objectivity. Secondly we mean that he has the capacity to project his vision into the future in such a way as to give him a more profound and more lasting insight into the past than can be attained by those historians whose outlook is entirely bounded by their own immediate situation.[6]

Social scientists applying the historical approach should guard themselves against the possible temptation of isolating experiences lest they become unable to see the wood for the trees. The followers of narrative mode in history often claim that they do not build a mere chronological order in their narratives. Rather they construct a story by providing coherence to their work. As is pointed out by a commentator,

> As such, a narrative is more than a simple enumeration of events one- after- another in their correct chronological order. It presents every event in the series as a consequence of the mediation of the actions of different agents as they respond to the specific situation in which they are placed. In other words, it delineates a specific situation- with reference to material structures which are themselves defined by the actions of agents- and then shows other agents as reacting to that situation.[7]

Narrative is specific, it deals with a single event or a single span of time like an ethnic group or life of a nation. As it deals with the specific it takes up a single event or life span for review. But it cannot ignore the antecedents and the consequences of the event. It does illuminate the material and ideological structures that situate the event. But it refers to a single event not a class of events. However, a recent work has shown how a single social

experience can be successfully abstracted and raised to a level of genre. It represents a group of immigrants playing a significant role in the emerging socio-political and cultural life of the people of a nation or a part of it. The single experience may suffice for developing another interpretation of reality. Both facts and fiction interact in constituting the reality.[8] Secondly, it constructs the situational structures and gives meanings to them. History is therefore created; it does not exist as an objective truth. Impartial, detached and objective history is a myth. Every sort of study is shaped by pursuit of power in a society. Nationalist, rationalist and subaltern studies in this country are the product of power relation of different times.

History is an interpretation of how the historian observes the reality of a social situation at a given time. The historian is embedded in her social situation and she uses the language, concepts and tradition of the society to understand reality under her observation. Historian's existence determines her interpretation of the truth. We arrange the facts of history and give them order and meaning. In other words we recreate history. It is manifestation of our desire to subjugate and rule the past-an expression of our desire for power. A progenitor of the post-modern thinking candidly holds that truth and knowledge are our social construction; these terms have no absolute meanings. (Friedrich Nietzsche, 1873).

The notion that knowledge emancipates from domination and power counteracts knowledge has been challenged. Now it is claimed that knowledge and power are co-relative and *'power and knowledge directly imply one another'*.[9] How a concept wields power can be realized from the term *Aryan*, which may mean several things and one of its meanings may cancel its other meanings. If the dominant meaning of *Aryan* is challenged, history will have to be re-written. Truth in history is derived from authority of the historian and the authority of the historian is derived from the discourse of history. The same term *Aryan*, is used in two different discourses by K P Jayaswal and D D Kosambi. Our use of the term depends on whose authority we accept and to which discourse we adhere. A theory in social sciences too is a crystallization of certain point of views. It is a perspective of logically woven and coherently arranged views of the reality from a definite corner of the social landscape. If social theory is an interpretation and there is a multitude of interpretations,

which one is to stand? What E.H Carr says about history may equally apply to social sciences. In his words,

> The facts are really not at all like fish on the fishmonger's slab. They are like fish swimming about in a vast and sometimes inaccessible ocean; and what the historian catches will depend, partly on chance, but mainly on what part of the ocean he chooses to fish in and what tackle he chooses to use- these two factors being of course determined by the kind of fish he wants to catch. By and large, the historian will get the kind of facts he wants. History means interpretation.[10]

In the present age where all the big stories are subjected to suspicion, the question that we last raised looked fallacious. Still people seek an answer. We will be content with an answer that will visualize a course of development leading to a meaningful and dignified life for every human being. The fact that some attempts have failed does not make a theory obsolete.

Notes :

1   Karl Popper, *Poverty of Historicism*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957, p6.

2   V.Van Dyke, *Political Science A Philosophical Analysis*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1969, pp118-20.

3   Prabhat Patnaik, Hisoricism and Revolution, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 32, No. 1-2, Jan-Feb. 2004, pp30-40.

4.   George Ciccariello-Maher, Dual Power in the Venezuelan Revolution, *Analytical Monthly Review*, Vol. 5, No. 6, September 2007, pp 40-53.

5.   Samir Amin, *The Future of Maoism*, Rainbow Publishers, Delhi, 1998, pp 3-28.

6.   E H Carr, *What is History?* Penguins, London, 1961, p123.

7.   Gurpreet Mahajan, *Explanation and Understanding in the Human sciences*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992, p 78.

8   See, R. Samaddar, Shefali in Paula Banerjee, ed. *Women in Peace, Politics*, Sage, New Delhi, 2008, pp 9-199.

9.   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish :The Birth of the Prison,* translated by Alan Sheridan, Pantheon Books, New York, 1977, p 27.

10.   EH Carr, What is History? Op cit p 23.

References :

1.   Louis Althusser, *For Marx,* Allen Lane, London. 1969.

2.   Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization,* Allen Lane, the Penguin Press, London 1969

3.   _____, *One Dimensional Man,* Beacon, Boston, 1964

4.   Friedrich Nietzsche, On Truth and Falsity in their Extra-Moral Sense (1873), in Walter Kaufmann, ed. *The Viking Portable Nietzsche,* Viking, 1954, Viking Press, New York, 1954, p 42.

***

M.N. ROY : FROM COMMUNISM TO RADICAL HUMANISM

Girin Phukon

M.N. Roy (1886-1954) was one of the closest associates of Lenin and founding members of the Communist International. But gradually there developed difference of opinion between Lenin and Roy on the question of decolonization. M.N. Roy challenged the validity of the Lenin's thesis that the Communist party must assist the bourgeoisie democratic liberation movements in colonial countries including India in order to overthrow foreign capitalism.[1] It would be profitable, Lenin argued, to make use of co-operation of the bourgeoisie national revolutionary elements. Roy however did not totally deny Lenin's contention that revolution in colonial country would not at first be a socialist movement (Revolution). But he opposed to bourgeoisie leadership as he firmly believed that if from the beginning the leadership remain in the hands of communist vanguard, the revolutionary masses will be in the path and they will gradually acquire revolutionary experience.[2] Thus Roy's thesis condemned the Comintern for neglecting the colonial question. He maintained that the world capitalism was drawing the source of strength from the colonies. The colonial possession delayed the European revolution. He observed that the revolutionary movement in Europe was absolutely dependent on the course of revolution in India and other Asian countries, Roy urged the Comintern to accept the fact that destiny of world communism depends on the triumph of communism in the East.

Thus it appears that Roy's thesis propounded the theory of two distinct movements which grew further apart from each other – one is the bourgeoisie democratic movement with a programme of political independence under the bourgeoisie order. The other is to mass struggle of the poor and ignorant peasants for their liberation from the various form of exploitation.[3] In fact, the basis of

Roy's thesis was the conviction that only through the direct support of the proletariat and peasant movement, the Comintern would be promoting the interest of Indian masses. He highlighted the fact that in addition to a bourgeoisie democratic movement, a proletarian revolutionary upsurge was developing among workers who were being exploited in the process of rapid industrialization. The trend was accelerated by the great masses, Landless peasantry struggling against Feudal remnants. In view of this, he emphasized on the development of class consciousness of the working masses in the colonies. Therefore, the colonial communist movement, he argued, should devote itself to the task of organizing the truly revolutionary masses – the proletariat, the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie.

II

Roy's thesis lies in controversy between national and class struggle. He apprehended that the nationalist bourgeoisie would compromise with imperialism in turn for some economic and political concession. Lenin, on the other hand, considered India and other Asian countries to be just entering the phase in which the bourgeoisie is a progressive class with which the proletariat could suitably be allied. In colonial countries like India Roy was not prepared to concede the role of national class to bourgeoisie and was by no means prepared to leave the conduct of revolution to the bourgeoisie even though it was then the leading class and was developing freedom struggle against imperialism.[4]

Thus it shows that the difference between Roy and Lenin veered around the Indian bourgeoisie as a national class. They differed over the role of Gandhi and the revolutionary significance of Indian nationalist movement. Lenin considered that Gandhi was the inspirer and leader of the mass movement, and therefore, was a revolutionary. But according to Roy he was a religious and cultural revivalist and as such bound to be reactionary though he might appear to be a revolutionary politically. In fact, Roy presented Gandhi as the representative of Indian bourgeoisie, who as a class were not economically and culturally different from the feudal social order. Therefore, in Roy's assessment the nationalist in India was ideologically reactionary in the sense that its triumph would not necessarily mean a bourgeoisie democratic led

struggle ending in compromise with British imperialism Roy believed that the support of bourgeoisie nationalism if carried to the point of co-operating with it, would be detrimental to the interest of the colonial proletariat. The Indian proletariat must take the lead in Indian revolution, even if it was to be a bourgeoisie revolution in its first stage.

In his restlessness to liberate Indian masses soon from all oppressive relationship, Roy did not share Lenin's analysis that nationalism could be a progressive force when directed against imperialism. Nor did he agree with Lenin that it was possible to maintain class antagonism within colonial area, promoting, at the same time nationalist feelings against imperial power. Roy was convinced that such a policy would result in sacrificing the interest of Indian proletariat. As against Lenin's thesis, which split the world vertically across class lines and along national lines, Roy's thesis maintained the class struggle by splitting the world horizontally across national borders and along class lines.[5] He predicted that a colonial policy which advocates both the support of bourgeoisie nationalism and the encouragement of proletarian class consciousness will fall victim to its internal contradiction. The wavering role of Indian communist in freedom struggle justifies Roy's apprehensions. Roy's rejection of Indian Bourgeoisie as a national class emerged into espousal of proletarian hegemony of Indian revolution.

III

In 1928 Roy developed serious differences with the Communist Internationals in which he was a member. Since then he developed a new social philosophy known as Radical Humanism, New Humanism or Scientific Humanism. In evolving this new social philosophy, Roy was influenced by different thinkers like Marx, Hobbes and Lenin. M.N Roy, however, considered himself as a radical and not an orthodox in between 1940 to 1947. Towards the latter part of his life, he changed from Radicalism to what, he called, "New Humanism". In the past, man had a blind faith in the existence of a supernatural power like 'God' and he found himself helplessness against the forces of nature. But after several hundred years of struggle man could understand the illusion of his relation with God. In Europe, man revolted against the authoritarianism of religion and liberated from the tyranny of theology. In such a situation Roy

felt the need of a new philosophy primarily concerned with human life – a philosophy which would explain the experiences of Human life without reference to supernatural power.

'Humanism' is not a new ideal. It is perhaps as old a human philosophy. Roy's humanism, however rejects all theories which consider the evolution of human history as an inevitable and automatic process, determined by economic forces or by any mystic entity. It accepts the dictum – 'man is the measure of everything' – as fundamental. His radical humanism evolves round man who is the principal agent of social progress and object of all social institution. It is the man who creates society, state and other institutions and values for his own welfare, Roy argued. The fundamental principle on which Radical Humanism stands are sovereignty of man and freedom of man. It does not pre-suppose any authority over man.[6] To differentiate his humanism from other humanist philosophies, Roys uses the qualifying 'Radical' or 'New'. It is new because it is humanism enriched and reinforced by the scientific knowledge and social experience gain by modern civilization. He refers the idea of 'radical' because it goes to the root of the problem of the origin of human being. Roy treats man as a biological phenomenon, and builds axiology on this foundation deducing a values from it.[7]

Thus it seems obvious that Roy's humanism rests its ethics on the rationality of man. Conscious of his innate, rationality, man as man can be moral. Political activity can therefore be guided by moral principles. Humanism, in the words of Roy in the old doctrine of human sovereignty and dignity reformed by modern science. Scientific knowledge liberates man from the time-honoured prejudices about the essence of his being and purpose of life.[8]

IV

As a matter of fact, materialism as re-stated by Roy, constitute the basis of radical humanism. He presents it as the philosophy of 20th century Indian renaissance what Roy called, a new renaissance against the prophet of Hindu Nationalism. He believed that the captive of the past can never conquer the future.[9] A thing is to be accepted not because Marx or Manu had said it but on the ground of reason. He endeavoured to establish a close relation between the Renaissance movement and the anti-imperialist struggle – the two aspects

of the same battle for freedom. A political revolution takes place as a prelude to a social renaissance. If the national state becomes the instrument for the preservation of the established social order or for revival of older institutions, it will not be a political revolution. Thus Roy was a staunch opponent of revivalism, preached in the name of the golden Age of the past.

For Roy, the Renaissance broadly meant the revolt of man against all the fetters, spiritual and temporal that restrict his freedom. He therefore, preached revolt against authority, revolt against tradition and revolt against intolerable conditions of life.[10] Roy's renaissance takes the form of philosophical revolution to be brought about by the growth of scientific knowledge. This will enable India, he asserted, to outgrow the religious thought, which is no more immutable for her than it was for the European community. Condemning revivalism as counter reformation, Roy criticises those who talk about renaissance, and yet propose to return to 'Ramraj'.[11] Thus it appears that regeneration of man is the essence of Roy's renaissance.

Roy suggests two things for the overdue India renaissance – First, a critical appreciation of the past and willingness to benefit from the common human heritage. A critical study of the past establishes the desirability of democratic way of life to be adopted in the present. One has to be liberated from the prejudices of 'glorious past' Roy asserted.[12] He maintained that if traditional ideas check progress they may be abandoned. The critical approach to history will rescue, he argued, the positive contribution of Indian culture. Secondly, he believed that the benefit is to be derived from the common human heritage for social progress. The knowledge is not to be considered as parochial, and truth is universal. Roy asserted.[13] Therefore, he pleaded that spirit of the Renaissance should be to welcome knowledge and truth. This will make intellectual life dynamic and unless it is done, the national freedom will remain meaningless for the majority of the Indian people. Roy dismisses the belief that the materialistic culture of the West is foreign to the special genius of India. On the contrary, the secular achievements of the West are not beyond the reach of the Indian people. As such the legacy of spiritualist genius is not an assets but a liability, he observed.[14]

V

Thus according to Roy, the Renaissance in India will take place under the banner of a philosophy in which reason will act as an arbiter in all dispute in the field of knowledge and value. He advocates a new Renaissance, which is based on rationalism, individualism and cosmopolitanism. This is, he believes, essential for democracy to be realized. For this purpose, he endeavoured to propound the philosophy of Radical Humanism, which links up social and political practice with a scientific metaphysics and ethics.[15] Roy thus developed a political philosophy based on ethics, forming a part of the scientific view of universe. As a political philosophy radical Humanism covers a wide-range in which the study of human nature, society, state and his conception of politics without power occupy unique position. Roy's Humanism rejects all theories which considers the evolution of human history as an editable automatic process, determined by economic forces or by any other mystic entity.

Note and References:

1. Lenin V.I. "Preliminary thesis on the national question" *Selected Works* Vol. X, New York, International publishers, 1938, p. 236.

2. Roy, B. G.; *Contemporary Indian Philosophy,* (Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1947, pp.34-37).

3. D.C. Grover; *M. N. Roy : A Study of Revolution and Reason in Indian Politics,* (Calcutta, 1973) pp. 3-4.

4. M. N. Roy, "The role of the Bourgeoisie in the National Revolution" *Masses of India,* Vol. III, November, 1927. p.7.

5. D. C. Grover; op.cit., p. 12.

6. D. R. Bali; *Modern Indian Thought,* Sterling, New Delhi, 1996, p. 20.

7. M. N. Roy; *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* Vol. II, Rehaissance Publishers, Calcutta 1955, pp. 306-7.

8. _____; "New Humanism" *Radical Humanist,* April 5, 1959, p. 182.

9. M. N. Roy ; *Science and superstition,* Dehradum Indian Renaisance Association, 1940, p.164. Cited in D.C. Grover, op.cit., p.126.

10. M. N. Roy; Culture in East and West' *Independent India,* Vol. I, No. 43, p. 11, cited in D. C. Grover, op.cit., p. 127.

11. M. N. Roy; "Indian Renaissance" *Independent India,* Vol. XII, No. 22, 1948, p. 261. Ibid, p. 127.

12. M. N. Roy; "Pre-condition of Indian Renaissance", *Maxian Way,* Vol. III, No. 4, 1948-49, p. 363, cited in D. C. Grover. op.cit., p. 128.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

***

MANAGEMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

N.L. Dutta

Rural Development is a multi-dimensional concept and encompasses almost all the aspects of our rural life-including agriculture, health, education, village & cottage industries, Socio-economic infrastrcture, community services and human resources in the rural area/ It aims to enhanced production by systematic utlisation of all available resources with a view to engage rural people in services to improve their living conditions. Thus, rural development is a process to bring about desired positive changes in the socio-economic and cultural life of the rural society. Therefore, management of rural development has acquired great significance specially in the context of a country like India where more than three-fourths of the population still live in rural area. In this paper, an attempt has been made to highlight some major issues in the management of rural development in India.

Generally management means controlling, directing and organizing men, materials, machines and market in such a manner in which it helps in maximum economic growth and result in the excellent performance of all the functionaries at all levels in furtherance of the objectives of an enterprise. However, in the context of rural development, management is much wider and consists of activities, such as, Planning, Orgnisation, Co-ordination, Training of Personnel, Direction and Control, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation. Besides, it also covers Rural Institutions, Mobilisation of Rural Resources, Rural Credit, Rural Marketing and Rural Enterprises. In a vast country like India with full of diversities, management is an extremely difficult task.

Planning is the first step in every successful endeavour. A practical and concrete plan is required to achieve the desired objectives of rural

development. The participation of rural people in the preparation of plan is the first requisite for the success of rural development. Because, during the design phase of a programme, intended beneficiaries can provide cultural, ecological, economic and technical indigenous knowledge and designers or planners can avoid costly mistakes as the beneficiaries determine which technique and programme objectives are most appropriate for the community. It is true that the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act has given constitutional status to our Panchayat Bodies and strengthen the institution of Gaon Sabha to bring the decision making authorities nearer to the people. But in reality, grass-root planning is still a far cry. The transfer of all the 29 items to the Panchayat bodies at various levels as per the 11th schedule remains vague.

Building up of organization is another major concern of rural development management. For the effective implementation of rural development programmes, an appropriate organizational structure is very essential. But in our country rural development is absolutely government oriented rather than people oriented. Government is the only organizational agency which formulate plans, administer and implements rural development programmes. However, it has been widely realized that governmental machinery is not appropriate as it is more law and order oriented and legacy of the British rule. It also fails to deliver prompt services to the people and fails to evoke people's participation. A highly centralized bureaucracy still exists in rural development administration. Although 73rd Amendment more democratize our grass root institutions, still they are under the contral of the rich, downward percolation is very limited and depends on class interests, caste link and power relations that prevail in rural society.

As the rural development is multidimensional, multitude of Governmental and non-governmental organizations are involved in the rural development process. But there is lack of co-ordination among the various departments and agencies. Consequently, there occurs overlapping, duplication and wasteage of valuable resources. It is to be noted that our existing organizational structures provide only for vertical co-ordination and not for horizontal co-ordination. Moreover, the official non-official relationship is not cordial.

Training of personnel is also a piyotal area of rural development management. Training refers to the art of increasing the knowledge, aptitude

and skill of rural managers to do a job related to rural development. However, for success of rural development training is essential for rural producers, rural bankers, suppliers of production inputs and services, officials, policy makers politicians and even training of trainers. Added to these, appropriate training curriculum, training materials, training facilities and training institutions are essential requisites in training.

Constant supervision and control is very essential for successful implementation of any rural development programme. Control is the process by which managers assures that resources are obtained and used efficiently and effectively in accomplishing the objectives of an organization. As such, control function is very much related to planning. It enable us to know in which way things are moving. In case of any deviation, it serves as a feedback to reframe the plan by incorporating corrective action to achieve the goals.

Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation are other major issues in rural development management. Implementation of any programme involves two aspects-the proper utilization of fund and the achievement of desired objectives and results. Effective implementation depends on execution of plans and programmes in an orderly manner. The constraints like inadequate skill and inefficiency should be overcome and co-ordination among the various departments should be ensured. Moreover, participation of beneficiary group is a pre condition for effective implementation of rural development programme as it can minimizes the cost of implementation, help to evaluate the performance of Government Officials in projects execution, make the officials accountable and can speed up implementation of programmes. It also helps in extending the benefits to a greater number of people. Besides, constant monitoring and evaluation of various programmes have special significance. Monitoring provides information for the management to assess progress of implementation and the timely decision to ensure that progress. Evaluation helps to find out as to what extent the progress of the programme has met the set targets. The Evaluation should encompass all important aspects like improvement in quality, increase in productivity, differential cost and the gain as a result of adopting new practice. This kind of evaluation will help the farmers as well as the administration to decide about the efficiency of the programmes undertaken. Unfortunately no enthusiasm & initiative is noticed among the rural poor in these aspects.

To realize the goals of rural development, rural people should be organized in an institutional system. The grass root institutions like ponchayats, village schools, cooperative societies should be reoriented and strengthen in order to make them more effective in rural development process. Moreover, local institution should be vested with adequate financial and administrative powers to shouldier their responsibilities and should be made responsive to the people. Added to these, banking institutions should be set up to strengthen the financial position of the local government institutions. The voluntary organization should also come forward to play an important role for the cause of down-trodden people of rural India.

Resource mobilization and Rural credit are vital aspects of rural development. Effective mobilization of all available resources i.e. land, water, forest, livestock, bio-energy and human resource is very essential for all round development of rural areas. It is also not possible to develop and channelise the local resources without the involvement of local people. Rural credit is all the more essential for the poorer sections of the society in the economy as their saving capacity is very low and live in a vicious circles of poverty. It is true that our formal sector of credit market is virtually dominated by Government financial institutions. But due to high-default rate and some othe inherent weaknesses the formal credit system by passes a large section of population in rural areas. It has been observed that still informal credit accounts for about 2/5 of the total rural credit in India. So there is the need for a systematic approach to credit planning process to increase agricultural production and removal of poverty in rural areas.

Rural marketing is also very crucial for the development of rural poor. As the rural producers are small and marginal farmers they cannot wait inordinately for the payment of their produce. Taking advantage of the situation, middlemen are enjoying all the profits. Moreover, rural marketing suffers due to lack of transport facilities, mis-management in grading and weighment system, lack of proper storage facilities, exploitation by the middlemen etc.

Rural enterprises too play a pivotal role in promoting avenues for rural employment, utilization of resources and skills, mitigating rural imbalances, resisting rural migration to urban areas and creating capital assets for rural areas. The enterprises like bee-keeping, dairying, poultry, piggery, goatry, fishery, toymaking, puppetry, knitting, embroidery, tailoring, carpentry, nursery development, soap making, sericulture etc. have to be developed to improve the economic conditions of the rural people.

To resolve all the above mentioned issues, professionalisation of rural development management is the urgent need of the hour. Professional rural development managers should be inducted at various level in the hierarchy of development administration for all around development of rural areas. Only a scientific management with best use of human and material resources in time can help to realize the objectives of rural development.

Notes and References :

1. D.R. Shah, Alternatives in Rural Development, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1990.

2. K.D. Gaur, Dynamics of Rural Development, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1992.

3. K. Singh, Rural Development : Principles, Policies and Management, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 1999.

4. N. Bava(ed), Public Administration in the 21st Century, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi, 2004.

5. G.N. Karalay, Integrated Approach to Rural Development, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2005.

6. Rural Development Statistics 2002-03, National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderbad, Ministry of Rural Development, G0.

7. N.L. Dutta & M.D. Bhuyan (ed.) Rural Development in Assam, Dibrugarh University, 2004.

***

PANCHAYATI RAJ IN INDIA : A THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

Pratap Chandra Swain

Pachayati Raj is a traditional concept with modern philosophy. In spite of the challenging trials and tribulations Indian Panchayati Raj system has faced since independence, it is a landmark achievement that it has enhanced the spirit of grassroots democracy as well as democratic decentralization. The close of 80's and beginning of 90's experienced the revitalization of Panchayati Raj Institutions as village local government in India. Towards the fag end of his tenure, late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi started the initiative for strengthening the Panchayati Raj institutions with his popular slogan "power to the people". Significantly, the mission for empowering the rural people and ensuring their socio-economic development was materialized with the Prime Minister P.V. Narasihma Rao's government, which provided constitutional status to the panchayat, the context for the growing importance of Indian Panchayati Raj institutions, the present paper attempts to theories the concept of Panchayati Raj.

Framework :

Panchayati Raj is a dynamic framework to adopt the democratic system in the rural India and ultimately to bring the villages into the mainstream. It is an age-old Indian indigenous politico-administrative institutions for village autonomy and development. It owes its origin to the different traditional patterns of village governance as existed in many parts of India. Being associated with the Indian culture and heritage, the panchayat bodies have been working for the Indian villagers, in some form or other, since ancient times. In fact villages have been playing pivotal role in the Indian life through the ages and so also the different types of panchayat bodies.

Generally, panchayat can be described as an assembly of the village people or their representatives. Gandhiji equated panchyats with 'Village Republics'.[1] He explained his concept of village panchayats thus: "... The Government of the village will be conducted by the panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, males and females, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishment in the accepted sense, the panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its office. Any village can become such a republic without much interference even from the present government whose sole effective connection with the villages is the execution of the village revenue... Here there is perfect democracy based on individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own Government."[2]

The term 'panchayat' literally means a council of five. The principle of 'panchayat' is *Panch Parmeshwar*, which mean 'God speaking through the Five'.[3] It seems the panchayat was invented with a spiritual tone to take up politico-developmental programmes for the Indian villages. However, the term "Panchayati Raj" came into vogue in the late 50s. It referred to a process of governance, which links the people from village to state (in other words, from the Gram Sabha to Lok Sabha). Precisely, the Panchayati Raj system functions as the rural local government in India, ensuring grassroots democracy and decentralised planning. It devolves power to the villages. In the language of Gandhiji: "When Panchayati Raj is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do. The present power of Zamindars, the capitalists and the rajas can hold sway so long as the common people do not realise their own strength. If the people non-co-operate with the evil of Zamindari or capitalism, it must die of in ambition. In Panchayati Raj only the panchayat will be obeyed and the panchayat can only work through the law of their making".[4] The concept of Panchayati Raj has developed from the idea of a close knit village community to that of an organic base for a three fold revolution social, political and economic.[5] Briefly, Panchayati Raj means a statutory multi-tier intuitional structure endowed with a corporate status by a competent (state) legislature performing functions pertaining to local government.[6] As such the Indian

Panchayati Raj institutions have been designed on the theory of rural local government for the civic development of the villages. And "local government is that part of the government of a nation or state which deals with mainly such matters as concern the inhabitants of the particular district, or place together with those maters which the parliament has deemed it desirable should be administered by local authorities, sub-ordinate to the central government."[7] As the rural local government, the Indian Panchayati Raj is based on the organized social feelings of common neighborhood involving the basic necessities of the villagers and also common requirements of rural life. Thus, for the villagers this institution is considered as a necessary good. The rural society is conservative and always feels scarce of the presence of progressive urbanities. That is why the villagers remain united for the common objectives of their own socio-economic development with a separate rural identity. In fact the basic socio-economic and the common problems of the local villagers necessitate the village local government i.e. Panchayati Raj in India.

Apart from its developmental orientations, the Panchayati Raj system essentially exhibits a political character. The panchayat bodies induct the rural people into the political culture of the nation. In a democratic set up, they provide the training ground for the village people to participate effectively in the democratic process. In a way, these institutions are the extension cords of democracy to the villages.

An Organized Rural Local Government :

The local government ensures an organized socio-political entity with a common feeling for the civic development of a locality. J.J. Clarke offers a very functional definition of local government: "Local Government is that part of the government of a nation or state which deals with mainly with such matters as concern the inhabitants of the particular district or place together with those matters which parliament has been deemed it desirable should be administered by local authorities sub-ordinate to the central government."[8] In the language of Prof. Herman Finer "These local authorities supervise, direct and control our lives, awake and asleep at work and at play, they provide for all citizens a common minimum of health, education, welfare services, roads,

peace and security of the environment. The scope and detail of their work are not easily describable; both are immense. Local authorities manage an enormous amount of capital, they are intricately organized, and they are nourished by civic energies."[9]

According to the U.S. Bureau of Census, a unit of local government must exhibit three qualifications.

First, it must exist as an organized entity possessing organization and some minimum powers such as the right to enter contracts and own property.

Second, it must have governmental character as an agency of the public, to whom it must be accountable.

Third, it must possess substantial autonomy, particularly as reflected in the right to prepare a budget and raise the revenue necessary to meet it.[10]

However the local government is broadly classified into two categories viz. rural local government and urban local government as per the nature of the locality itself. In India the rural government includes the Panchayati Raj bodies whereas the urban local government includes the Municipal or Nagar Palika bodies. Indian Panchayati Raj institutions have been designed on the theory of local (rural) government for the civic development of the villages.

Panchayati Raj AS Multi-Dimensional Phenomena :

The Indian Panchayati Raj as a rural local government is based on the organized social feelings of common neighborhood involving the basic necessities of the villagers and common requirements of rural life. Thus, in village India, this institution is considered as a necessary good. The conservative rural society in India always feels scarce of the presence of progressive Urban India. That is why the villagers remain united for a common objective.

The Indian villagers are very home sick and require everything should be solved and available at the doorstep. They are interested to further their indigenous culture and tradition without any outside interference and the Panchayati Raj provides them with best possible answers. The social stratification is reflected in the Panchayati Raj system. Indian villages are caste ridden with dominant influence of class. The persons from higher caste and

higher agricultural home or higher profession regulate the Panchayati system. The rural agriculturalists, the Brahmins or the *kayasthas* have become the panchayat elites in India.

The Indian village economy is predominantly agricultural one. Thus, the farmers dominate the local authority here. The economically dominated class of farmers controls the panchayats. As per the economies of Panchayati Raj, it is based on the thesis of village autonomy and the village autonomy will be impossible without economic self-sufficiency. This Panchayati Raj introduces economic decentralization and discourages centralizing tendencies in planning and development. The panchayati authorities take care of the planning from the bottom and also the implementation of the local developmental projects. They effectively deal with the economic development of the locality with greater local knowledge, decision and action and thereby making the government free from the local burdens.

The local projects and developmental works are generally labour intensive which is most significant in a developing country like India having surplus labour, specially in agrarian sector, and large scale rural unemployment. The panchayat bodies undertaking these projects and developmental works ensure the economic self-sufficiency of the local people. Thus the economic activities of the panchayats result in the rural development of India.

Psychologically, the Indian citizens are more or less local oriented. Consciously or otherwise they have got strong weakness for their own native places. This psychological conditioning makes panchayat bodies more native agencies. The local people always feel free to be associated with panchayats. Being the taxpayers, the ordinary citizens see some tangible results when they find the panchayats are undertaking various local developmental works like road, bridge, pond, market, sanitation etc. This encourages them to take personal interests in the local development and as well as panchayats. The psychological feelings as generated by the panchayat bodies, contribute a strong desire for local development in rural India.

With the territorial jurisdictions over a particular human habitation or locality, the Panchayati Raj may be conceptualized in the geographical context.

The geography of Panchayati Raj includes topography, flora, fauna and demographic features of the particular locality. These elements frequently influence the policies, laws and administration of the concerned panchayat bodies. The Panchayti Raj, as a form of local government, is based on the idea that among the inhabitants of a particular locality there is a consciousness differentiated from their counter parts living in the other areas of the same country. In other words, the Panchayati Raj presupposes the concept of 'neighborhood' which makes the 'inhabitants of an area automatically aware of interests which infringe upon them more directly than upon others.' These interests differ in quality and character from the interest of other neighborhoods. With the interests varying from area to area, the requirements of the local people vary.

The Panchayati Raj institutions are representative bodies, representing a particular set of local views, conditions, needs and problems depending on the characteristics of population and the economic elements. These institutions provide local solutions to the local problems. In India, the distance of the rural areas from the administrative headquarter is yet another key factor for constituting democratic decentralized panchayat bodies.

Significantly, the objective of Indian Panchayati Raj is essentially political. It has been created for ensuring rural or village democracy in India, which will ultimately act as a foundation of Indian democracy. Panchayat bodies induct the rural people into the political culture of the nation. They provide training ground for the village people to participate effectively in the democratic process of India. In a way these institutions are the extension cords of Indian democracy to the villages. Their democratic character involves free and fair elections', 'group activities', 'public opinion', 'elite domination' etc. Almost all the Indian political parties are taking interest in the village politics as majority of our people live in this part. They are following the policy of village appeasement to create their village vote banks. The congress party and Rajiv Gandhi threw the ball in the court of Indian villagers with the clarion call 'power to the people' towards the close of 80s. Rajiv Gandhi tried to rejuvenate the panchayat system with a mission of empowering the village people in general and the village women in particular. All other political parties and

subsequent leadership followed his train. As a result the new Panchayati Raj came up with an increased politico-developmental tune. The connotation of Panchayati Raj was widened and thereby viewing it as 'Villagers' Raj. Now a days panchayats are becoming key factors in the electoral politics of India. Political parties are concentrating more and more on the villages. Due to active Party politics, the poor village people are being divided on the party line. Thus in the contemporary situation, the panchayats have been politicized, and the Indian Political process has been *panchayatised*. However, the fact remains that the Indian democracy lives in the villages through the Panchayati Raj which is popularly known as Grassroots Democracy'.

Philosophically, Panchayati Raj is a multidimensional idea. It has its pluralistic definitions and wider connotations in the writings of different thinkers. The father of Indian nation, Mahatma Gandhi played a leading role in the movement of rural autonomy and ultimately Panchayati Raj. Following the lines of Panchayati system, as it prevailed in ancient India, he pleaded for greater autonomy to the rural bodies and enunciated the doctrine of national development through autonomy of rural organizations. He envisaged a five-tier panchayat system viz., village panchayats, taluka panchayats, district panchayats, provincial panchayats and all India panchayats. The administrative system developed by him was that of a pyramid where in the villages would be real and moving units of administration. The higher panchayats shall contribute sound advice, expert guidance and systematic information to the village panchayats and co-ordinate and supervise the latter's activities for enhancing efficiency of the administration and public service.

Emphasizing the ideology of Panchayati Raj "Gandhiji viewed: "Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus every village will be a republic or panchayat having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbors or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of mutual forces. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured, in which every man and woman knows what he or she wants and, what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others cannot have

with equal labour. In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening never ascending circules. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose center will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but every humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

If there ever is to be a republic of every village in India, then I claim verity for my picture in which the last is equal to the first, or in other words, none is to be the first and none the last.

In this picture every religion has its full and equal place. We are all leaves of a majestic tree whose trunk cannot be shaken off its roots, which are deep down in the bowels of the earth. The mightiest of winds cannot move it.

When Panchayat Raj is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do. The present power of the Zamindars, the capitalists and the Rajas can hold sways so long as the common people do not realize their own strength. If the people non-co-operate with the evil of Zamindari or Capitalism, it must die of in ambition. In Panchayati Raj only the panchayat will be obeyed and the Panchyat can only work through the law of their making.[11] Thus Gandhiji offered a rational and idealistic model of Panchayati Raj.

However, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who is often described as the father of the Indian constitution, completely ignored about the village panchayats in the draft constitution. Rather he considered the village panchayats as "a sink of localism and den of ignorance is and narrow-mindedness and communalism".[12] To him the village republic spelled ruination for the country and played no part in the affairs and destiny of the country.[13]

Jay Prakash Narayan the advocate of total revolution had a different concept of Panchayati Raj. He visualized the success of Panchayati Raj to the extent to which political parties refrained from interfering with if and trying to convert it into their handmaiden and using it as a jumping ground to climb power. He viewed hat the "Self-government through faction-fighting will not

be self government, but self-ruination". This state of self-ruination will be regulated when the simple panchayat would fall into nasty party politics, group infightings, criminalization etc.

Well aware of this danger, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru suggested for providing incentive for unanimous elections to panchayats. Accordingly, he envisaged two types of panchayats viz : (i) those selected unanimously should be given moral powers (ii) and those elected by majority votes should be given lesser powers. It follows that the entire philosophy of Indian Panchayati Raj contains two extreme views. The first one is the Gandhian concept of autonomous village panchayats and the second one is its condemnation by Ambedkar. Further, the Nehruvian centralized leadership did not support any idea of balance power in favour of local self-government institutions. However, the idea of local autonomy was formally accepted only to please the villages oriented Indian leaders and freedom fighters. Ultimately, this led to the incorporation of village panchayats in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Art. 40) of the Indian constitution.

Both legally and constitutionally, Panchayati Raj, as a form of local self-government is a miniature body politic and body corporate. In its former capacity it is the agent of state and, as such, represents public interest. In that capacity it exercises a part of the sovereignty of the state delegated to it within its limited geographical area. Further, it must exhibit three essential qualifications of a self-government institution as discussed earlier.

As a body politic, the panchayats enjoy the status of a public agency as well as one autonomous body having the right of local self-governance. In law it is a moral legal entity or juristic person. The body corporate status given the panchayats private character. This makes Panchayati Raj body in law a 'person' with rights and duties of a private individual defined through legislation and allowed through different judicial interpretations. As such panchayats can use for the debt, to implement the penalties, to get compensations for the break of contract etc; they can also institute legal proceedings for the recovery of their properties. Further, panchayats as local authorities can act as dependent in legal proceedings; it can be sued for failure to meet its obligations as employer, landowner, debtor or purchaser.[14]

Indian Panchayati Raj is more body politic created by the legislature and exhibiting the character of public agency by undertaking different central and state government developmental programmes. Since its inceptions, Indian constitution has been recognizing the Panchayati Raj institutions under the Directive Principles of State Policy (Art – 40, Part-IV). In the beginning of 1990s due to the politico-developmental expendiency, the 73rd constitutional amendment act 1992 has enhanced the constitutional status of panchayat bodies. This has made panchayat bodies full fledged constitutional institutions with the scope for wider representations. Any violation of Panchayati Raj laws would be treated as the violation of the constitution henceforth.

Within the administrative framework, "Panchayati Raj" ordinarily means the rule of administration by the village panchayats, which consist of the representatives of the local people. The objective of Panchayati Raj administration is to associate the local people in the decentralizing process of decision-making and to see the local development with an emphasis on the civic amenities functions. Functionally, Panchayati Raj is an administrative organization with the confluence of administration, politics, and technology for local development. Accordingly the functionaries involved here can be characterized as generalist administrators, political administrators and techno-administrators. All the three sets of functionaries develop a sort of vested interest in building up a working alliance and a kind of partnership as they are constantly exposed to gaze, from above by the higher level of Government and from below by the local people. This ensures efficient delivery of local service with adequate sense of public accountability.

The panchayat authorities are strategically placed where in – "The politician can be at his best for –

> He can work out need based local relevance to policies;

> He has direct control not only over the decisions but also over their execution, and

> He is constantly exposed to public gaze.

The administrator-technocrat can prove his metle:

His immediate and ultimate bosses, injecting promptness and responsiveness; continuously subject him to scrutiny;

His knowledge and experience will produce rewarding concrete results inculcating commitment to work thereby giving full sense of satisfaction; and He will have necessary climate to make best use of his knowledge and experience."[15]

Thus, Panchayati Raj administration can combine the best of representative democracy, bureaucracy and technocracy with fewer drawbacks. The Panchayati Raj has got a distinct bureaucracy, which interacts with the politicians face-to-face at local level. The evils of bureaucracy such as red tapism, delay, irresponsibleness etc. get reduced. However in the beginning, the Panchayati Raj may suffer from excesses of democracy resulting corruption, maladministration etc.

In view of the importance of Panchayti Raj institutions, De-Tocqueville's famous statement, "Local institutions constitute the strength of nation. A nation may establish a system of free government but without local institutions, it cannot have the spirit of liberty,"[16] stands significant even today. The Panchayati Rajsystem should flourish as self-governing one within the framework of participatory democracy and development. Indeed, democracy truly breathes at the grassroots, which represent the pristine virginity of simple living. The Panchayati Raj institutions working as democratic bodies at the grassroots provide important pillars to the nation. A successful Panchayati Raj system must be tuned to the socio-political changes. As institutions of participating democracy, panchayat bodies should be strengthened in such a manner that it can restore the power to the people to whom it belongs[17]. Then only Gandhian dream of "Gram Swaraj" can be materialized.

References :

1. Gandhiji at a *Prayer Meeting*, New Delhi, 6 January 1948; See, *Kurukshetra*, Vol. XLIII, No7, April 1995.

2. Gandhi, M. K. "My idea of Village Swaraj" *Harijan* 24 July 1942; Also see, George Mathews (ed.), Status of *Panchayati Raj* in the *States of India* 1994. New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1995, p.4.

3. Gurumurthy, U., *Panchayati Raj and the Weaker Sections*, New Delhi, Ashish Publhsing House, 1987, p.2.

4. See, Gandhi, M.K., *Harijan*, 1 July 1947.

5. Nandekar, V.G. *Local Government its Role in Development Administration*, Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1979, p.1.

6. Mathur, P.C. "Re-Modelling Panchayati Raj Institution in India," in S.L. Verma (ed) *Panchayati Raj, Gram Swaraj and Federal Polity*, Jaipur, Rawat Publications, 1990, p.72.

7. Clarke, J.J., The Local Government of the United Kingdom, London, 1948, p.1.

8. Venkata Rao, V., and Hazarika, Niru, Local Government in India, New Delhi, S. Chand and Co. Ltd., 1980, p.1.

9. Clarke, J.J., Op. cit.

10. Finer, H., English Local Government, London, 1950, p.15.

11. See, Higam, S.R., Local Government, New Delhi, S. Chand & C. Ltd., 1987, p.5.

12. Gandhiji Quoted, in Kurukshetra, Vol. XL III, No.7, April 1995.

13. Misra, S.N. and Misra, S., "Future of Panchayati Raj after 73rd Constitutional Amendment", in Kuruksheta, Op. Cit., p.27.

14. See. Jackson, W.E., The Structure of Local Government in England and Wales, London, 1960, p.214.

15. Muttalib. M.A., and Alikhan, Mohd Akbar, *Theory of Local Government*, New Delhi. Sterling.

16. Quoted in Prof. K. aman Pillai, "Democratic ecentralization in Kerala: Problems and Prospects", *Kurukshetra*, Vol. XLII, No.7, April 1995, p.57.

17. Swain, Pratap Chandra, *Panchayati Raj : Grass roots Dynamics in Arunachal Pradesh*, New Delhi, APH Publishing Corporation, 2008, pp.124-125.

***

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM IN IT (INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY) INDUSTRY WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES (TCS)

Rajeesh Viswanathan

The performance of an Organization is managed by monitoring and managing the performance of the individual employees in the organization. The objectives and goals of individual performance are determined, based on the objectives and goals of the organization. Hence, the successful performance of an organization is a culmination of individual performances and contributions. Performance appraisal has been traditionally linked to rewards and punishments in the organization. In recent times however, the concept of developing employee based on the appraisal ratings, has gained popularity in IT and various other sectors. This article studies the various performance appraisal methods followed in IT Industry with special focus given on TCS in which the performance appraisal system of TCS is discussed.

Performance Appraisal – An Introduction :

The history of performance appraisal is quite brief. Its roots in the early 20th century can be traced to Taylor's pioneering Time and Motion studies. But this is not very helpful, for the same may be said about almost everything in the field of modern human resource management. Yet in a broader sense, the particles of appraisal is a very ancient art. In the scale of things historical, it might well lay claim to being one of the world's oldest profession.[1]

Performance Appraisal can be defined as "the process of evaluating the performance of an employee and communicating the results of the

evaluation to him for the purpose of rewarding or developing the employee"[2]. It is mainly concerned with the process of valuing an employee's worth to an organization, with a view of increasing it. The major objectives in the performance appraisal process[3] includes.

- Determination of standards of performance based on the organizational objectives and job description.

- Measurement of employee performance against the pre-d etermined goals and standards and evaluating the performance through a continuous process.

- Communicating the results of appraisal to the employee concerned and put into effective use by linking it to the reward system.

The various stages involved in performance appraisal is clearly mentioned in the picture[1] below.

STAGE 1
Achieving clarity about the job to be done

STAGE 2
Setting goals

STAGE 3
Reviewing performance in the job

STAGE 4
preparing for the performance discussion

STAGE 5
Conducting the performance discussion
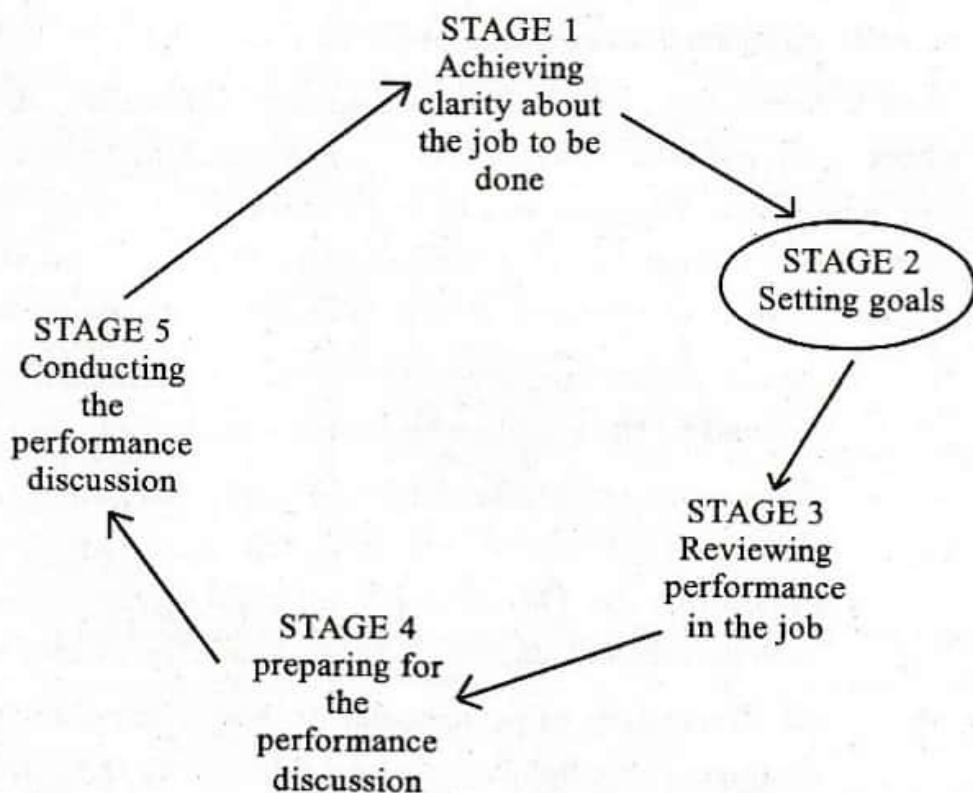
Traditionally, appraisal has been the job of the supervisor with the employee himself having no role to play in the process. However, the whole concept has changed in many of the IT industry today and the appraiser has an important role in the process. He/She, in coordination with his/her superior, determines the performance objectives and standards. In many IT industry the appraisers include the employee him/herself in which they do self appraisal. Their supervisors, peers, customers, clients and sub ordinates also appraise the employee in the appraisal process.

Modern Performance Appraisal Methods :

The performance appraisal methods that are basically followed in IT industry are

- Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS)
- 360 degree performance appraisal
- Team appraisal
- Balanced scorecard method

Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) :

BARS, sometimes called behavioural expectation scales, are rating scales whose scale points are determined by statements of effective and ineffective behaviours. They are said to be behaviorally anchored in that the scales represent a range of descriptive statements of behavior varying from the least to the most effective. BARS have the following features[4] :

- Areas of performance to be evaluated are identified and defined by the people who will use the scales.

- The scales are anchored by descriptions of actual job behavior that, supervisors agree, represent specific levels of peformance. The result is a set of rating scales in which both dimensions and anchors are precisely defined.

- All dimensions of performance to be evaluated are based on observable behaviours and relevant to the job being evaluated since BARS are tailor-made for the job.

- Since the rates who will actually use the scales are actively involved in the development process, they are more likely to be committed to the final product.

The main advantage of BARS is that both manager and the employee are actively involved in the appraisal process. This increases the relevance of the system and also improves the acceptance by the employees. However, BARS is time consuming.

360 degree Performance Appraisal :

The 360-degree approach does not rely solely on the superior to provide feeback to the employee. Instead, it enlists multiple constituencies to provide feedback to selected organizational members. These constituencies include superiors, peers, and co-workers in support areas, subordinates, internal customers of the unit's work and external customers of the organization's products. In this process the feedback receipient is expected to evaluate his or her own performance on the selected behavioral dimensions. This self-evaluation is then compared with that provided by the other feedback providers. The recipient is encouraged to use the feedback to improve performance and to make a great effort to blend his or her contributions with the needs of the group. This linking of individual performance with feedback from all relevant constituencies fits well into the emerging team-based workplace[5]. Many IT companies like Wipro, HCL Infosystems, Tata Infotech etc; has gone in for this type of appraisal.

Apart from 360 degree appraisal now 540, 720 and 1440 degree appraisals also came into existence in recent years, in which even suppliers, customers and also family members give their feedback regarding the employee's performance.

Team Appraisal :

Team work forms a major aspect, for people working in IT industry. Hence Team appraisala have emerged as one of the best tools for performance management. Here, the individual team mates evaluate their colleagues in the team based on their interpersonal skills, coordination in the team and their contribution to the team, and provide feedback. This

helps in synergizing individual efforts and taking the group performance to higher levels. Digital Equipment Corporation uses this kind of appraisal system.

Balanced Scorecard :

This method channelizes the efforts of people to achieve organizational goals. The implementation of balanced scorecard involves formulating a strategy, and deciding what each employee needs to do to achieve the objectives based on the strategy. The HR Scorecard is a part of the balanced scorecard. Individual responsibilities are assigned based on the strategy. This assigning of responsibilities to individuals and tracking for achievement of objectives is called HR scorecard.

The balanced scorecard can be used to evaluate the alignment of compensation and benefit plans with the strategic needs of employers and employees. Many top IT companies like Infosys, IT technologies, GTL, ITC Ltd. and automobile companies like Mahindra and Mahindra are using this method of peformance management.

The Appraisal System in TCS :

About the Company

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is one of the leading information technology companies in the world. With a workforce of over 74,000 professinals spread across more than 50 global delivery centers, it helps organizations stay ahead with new technology. TCS products are services help companies in various sectors effectively meet their business challenges. With technical expertise and employing a flexible approach to client relationships. TCS offers its clients, counsulting, IT services, business process outsorceing, infrastructure outsoureing, and engineering and industrial services, methodology[6].

The Performance Appraisal System :

In TCS performance appraisal system is automated and it is named as **GLOBALSPEED**. Every employee is allocated a separate user space in the TCS intranet and they can acces the global SPEED via that intranet

space. The appraisal period varies between Quarterly (Q1 to Q4 and Half-Yearly (H1 & H2) in a year. The Quarterly appraisal takes place for employees in their probation period. (Usualy the first one year) and Half-yearly appraisal takes place after their confirmation. Each employee is appraised by two people; The Appraiser, generally the Project Leader or Team Leader and the Reviewer, generally the Project Manager.

The Process :

The Employee must initiate the appraisal process in the system via global SPEED. A unit tag test is done by the employee before initiation in which the employee verifies all the details specified about him/her in the system is correct. In case of any discrepancies, it is indicated to the superiors and the details are corrected.

After initiation, the appraiser sends a Goal Sheet to the employee during the appraisal period. The goal sheet consists of various attributes like customer satisfaction, Certification done, Training attended etc; and weight age (maximum 5) for each attribute. Self appraisal is done with the help of goal sheet by the employee (sometimes comments are written) and he/she sends it back to the appraiser. The appraiser along with the reviewer evaluates the goal sheet.

Then, one to one interview is held with the employee by the appraiser. Based on his performance in the interview & his overall performance during the appraisal period, a rating is recommended by the appraiser to the reviewer. The reviewer analyses the rating based on Curve fitting technique. This technique is helpful in accommodating all the employees in the project under the specified rating of 1 to 5. This is similar to that of control charters. The reviewer can either accept the rating given by the appraiser or modify it and the reviewer's rating is final.

The final rating is sent to the employee via global SPEED. If the employee rejects that rating given to him by his superiors, once again the one to one interview is conducted and the rating can be revised. Generally many employees don't go for rejection.

Ratings and Rewards :

The Appraisal ratings given in TCS varies from E1 to E5, traveling from Low performance to high performance respectively. The Rewards include Promotion (One Cadre above) for an Employee who gets consecutive, two E5 rating in a year. For an employee who gets consecutive two E4 rating in a year gets additional incentive and perks in his salary. For an employee who gets consecutive two E1 rating in a year is sent out of the organization for his consistent low performance. This is clearly shown in the Ratings and Rewards flow chart below. Recently (6th February 2008) 500 employees (nearly) of TCS where made to "*voluntarily retire*" their job for their low performance in the organization[7]. This clearly indicates how much value this performance appraisal and the above mentioned ratings add to ones job. Thus, the rating system is clearly defined in TCS and it helps in quantitative evaluation of an employee's performance and awards him accordingly.
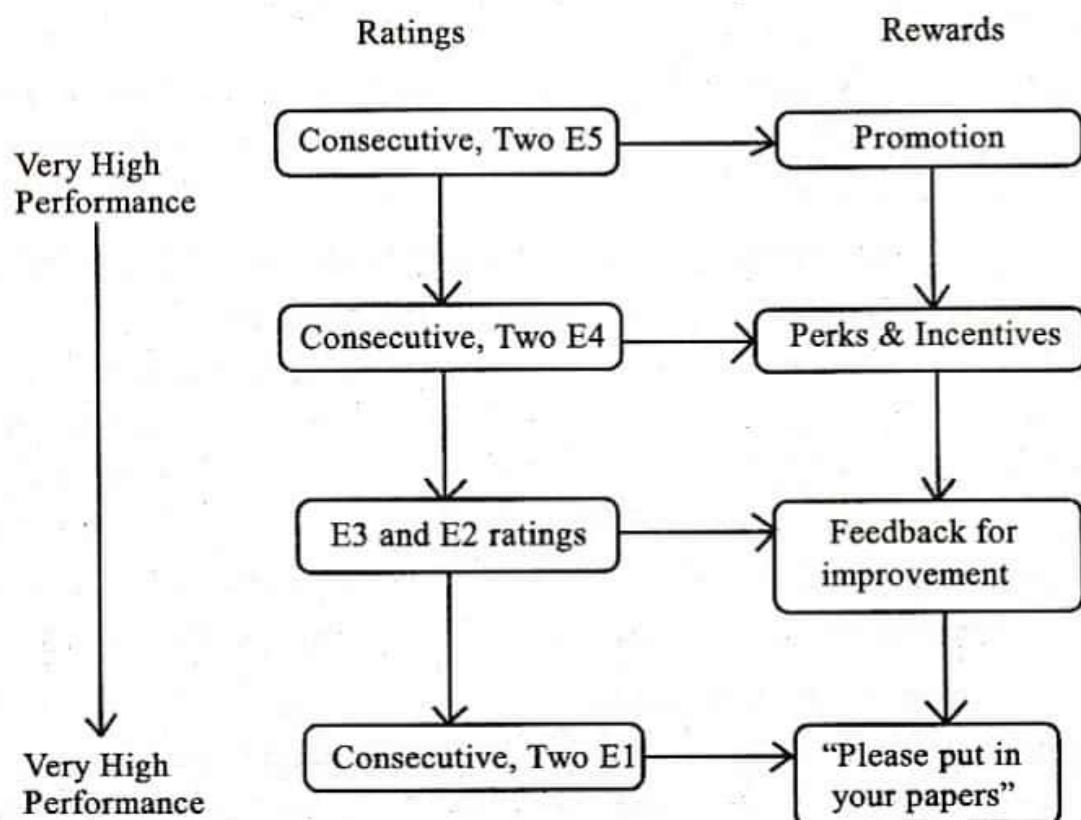
Conclusion :

Thus the performance appraisal system in many IT companies measures the qualitative as well as the quantitative aspects of job performance. The appraisal evaluates not only the employee's performance but also his potential for development. It also helps the organizations to identify the low performer in the team and reward them accordingly. The performance appraisal system in IT industry also acts as an audit for the employee and also helps in revamping HR processes and systems for improved performance and continuous growth of both the organization and the employee.

Reference :

1.   htt://www.performance-appraisal.com/home.htm/Introduction to PAS.htm.

2.   Performance Appraisal, *"Introduction to HRM"*, ICFAI Business Reader for Human Resource Management.

3.   ICFAI Center for management research.

4.   http://www.rocw.raifoundation.org/management/bba/hrm.

5.   Rakesh Kumar Sharma & R.K. Yadav, *"A Study of 360-Degree Feedback Appraisal System"*, www.Indian MBA.com.

6.   www.tata.com/tcs.

7.   http://www/thehindubusinessline.com/blnus/15051505.htm.

***

RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION: LEGAL CONSTRAINS AND MORAL IMPERATIVES

Rubul Patgiri

The talk of self-determination, particularly in the context of multi ethnic societies, immediately evokes a picture of contradiction. On the one hand more and more ethno-national groups are aspiring for self-determination status and on the other hand there has been growing indigestion towards the claims of self-determination. This dichotomy has much to do with the link that has come to be established between self-determination and secession. Self-determination is quite often interpreted as right to secede and sovereign statehood and therefore claim of self-determination is often seen as politics of disintegration. True to this kind of interpretation many claimant groups insist on sovereign statehood, because of its instrumental and intrinsic value, as expression of their self-determination right. However their very insistence on statehood has worked against the realization of their demands. Over the years sovereign state has come to be recognized as most desirable and effective principle of political and social organization. Therefore, there is strong resistance to any attempt that threaten the integrity of sovereign state and thereby stability of the state system. This explains why the principle of self-determination defined as independent statehood for every ethno-national group has been meted with so much of opposition. In this sense self-determination no longer remains an exercisable principle and has reached an dead-end and there are serious objections to such interpretation of self-determination. However such tendency of judging every case against some common standards or criterion is of not much use as such approach may fail to acknowledge the legitimate aspirations and grievances of people

behind those demands. Instead of such liberal approach people have now come to favor some sort of communitarian approach which would judge each case on its merits. More importantly there has been a growing recognition of the need to examine the ethics or morality of such claim in the contexts of the specific situation in which such demands come up. Against this background this paper will seek to highlight the main objections against the secessionist self-determination claim. This paper then goes on to focus on the evolving moral theories as a basis for evaluating the rationality of self-determination claim. In the concluding section this paper questions the rationality of present territorial form of expression of self-determination particularly in the context of multi-ethnic society of third world and insists on the need to move away from territorial form of self-determination to other from of self-determination.

Part-I

Self-determination has been accepted principle of international law and state practices. Over the years there has been recognition and materialization of numbers of self-determination demands, thereby making it basis of dissolution of older states and formation of new states. For instances, during the decolonization period number of territorial political units have been granted independence on the basis of this principle. However, soon afterwards the world has witnessed an increasing reluctance on the part of states to recognize claim for self-determination, particularly in its ethno-national version. In order to understand the change in the attitude towards the principle of self-determination, one must understand the context in which such cynicism crept in. As the decolonization process was closing in, people were writing epitaph about self-determination under the impression that with the decolonization the days of self determination is over. Contrary to this general expectation, the post colonial phase witnessed growing proliferation of self-determination claims and this time the flag bearers of these demands are not the people of accepted political unit but the different ethno-national groups of established states. These changed nature of claimant groups created serious difficulties for acceptance and recognition of self-determination demand in this version. The difficulties were attributed to two important facts-first, the multi ethnic

character of most of the post colonial states and secondly, the fluid and flexible character of ethnic identity. In such scenario the fusion of self-determination and malleable ethnic identity has changed the character of the principle self-determination, which has for quite a long period of time, been a source of liberation for oppressed nationalities, in to a potentially destabilizing force now threatening the stability of those very states that once owed their origin to this very principle. Against this background it would be pertinent now to look at some of the major objections that are made against the demand of self-determination in its ethno-national version today.

The first major objection against national self-determination comes from the problem of indeterminacy. While the principle insists on the right of people, but there is no clear cut definition to decide on the people who are legitimately entitled to this right. The principle insists on group right without defining the group, the people who are legitimately entitled to this right. Referring about this problem Ivor Jennings once observed: 'Nearly forty years ago a professor of political science who was also president of the United States, President Wilson, enunciated a doctrine which was ridiculous but was widely accepted as a sensible proposition, the doctrine of self-determination. On the surface it seemed reasonable. Let the people decide. It was in fact ridiculous because the people can not decide until somebody decides who the people are'. All the texts including Covenants on Human Rights 1966, Declaration on Friendly Relation 1970, have reposted the right on 'the people' but none of them elaborates the meaning of the people. As a result the meaning of the 'self' of self-determination has remained contested concept and so far has eluded any consensus. In fact the term has assumed different meaning at different times. So far we can observe two distinct concept of the people. While the first concept defines it in ethnic term, the second concept has a civic connotation. Under the first definition, all the ethnic and national groups of the world have the right to self-determination. This interpretation of 'self' of self-determination remained dominant up to the First World War. Such idea was also at the core of Wilsonian notion of self-determination and formed the basis of redrawn of European boundaries after the First

World War. It is interesting to note here that even during the period when the people was conceived in ethnic lines, it had European ethnocentric bias implying ethnic and national groups of Europe only. And it was put in to practice in even more restricted manner to secure liberation only for East European nationalities. However the world could not continue for long with this interpretation of the term and the changing scenario of the world, precipitated by decolonization process warranted some modification in the meaning of the term. By this time the colonial liberation movement was under way. During the period of freedom struggle, the people of colonies fought collectively for the independence of the political and administrative unit under which they were living. So the liberation of colonial world meant independent statehood for those political-administrative units which were constructed by the colonial masters. This had a serious implication on the meaning of the 'self' of self-determination. As the colonial powers drew the boundaries of the territory under their occupation simply for their administrative convenience without any regard for cultural distribution of people, when they retreated these territories emerged as independent countries with heterogeneous people and overlapping cultural and political boundaries. Moreover immediately after independence, these post colonial states have undertaken homogenization projects as a part of their state building process under which they have tried to forge national identity among its citizens irrespective of their cultural differences. In such scenario, continuation with the ethnic interpretation of the 'subjects' of this right would have spelled disastrous for the legitimacy and state building process of these infant states. After the decolonization it became almost impossible, in view of the emerging post colonial reality to sustain with the ethnic connotation of the term and soon in accordance with the post colonial reality, there was a sift from ethnic to civic interpretation of the term. Now the 'peoples' in question was reinterpreted not as a ethnic or national groups, but rather, multi-ethnic people under colonial rule. Self-determination has been conceived in international law as the 'right of the majority within an accepted political unit to exercise power' and boundaries have been drawn without regard for the linguistic or cultural composition of the state.

The second major criticism against the principle of self-determination is its demonstration effect. The general apprehension is that acknowledgement of this principle may encourage similar demands on the part of others also and thus jeopardize the stability of the state system. Thus the concern about the principle is that this could license a secessionist free- for- all and lead to the breakup of most of the world's states. Ernest Gellner echoing this view argues that the principle of national self-determination is impractical because there are many potential nations but only room for a small number of political units. There are two distinct type of demonstration effect- One type has been in relation to the impact that the self-determination of one colony had on other colonies particularly in the decolonization period. The other type is regarding minorities within secessionist regions. Here the self-determination of one group is viewed as compromising the self-determination of another group in the same territory. In this case, the minority within the seceding region demands self-determination on the ground that they are 'self', or a nation, similar to the nation that has achieved or is striving to achieve, self-determination for itself". with the completion of decolonization process the demonstration effect in the first sense has lost its relevance and in the present context the second form of demonstration which remains as valid concern. In order to appreciate this concern, one should keep in mind the nature of the societies which are facing these demands. Barring some exception, most of the region with the claims for self-determination, because of their multi-ethnic nature, contains minorities. In such situations the exercise of right to self-determination in its secessionist form would result in trapped minorities. The minority groups in those cases, taking encouragement from the national group which has successfully exercised the right may also come out with similar demand. In this regard it is also important to keep in mind the fact that majorities of such claims are coming out of states which are still in the midst of nation building or state building process. As most of these states are of recent origin they still have not completed their state building process in terms of territorial satiation, social cohesion and political stability.Because of this fact the danger of the demonstration effect in these countries are much more serious. This probably also explain the security

approach that these states have adopted while dealing with such claims as they view such demand as security threat to them.

The third major objection against the principle of self-determination relates to problem of overlapping nationalities. This of course is a problem typical of multi national societies. Multi national societies can be defined as those societies which are with group of people having historical claim to the territory they live in. The exercise of self-determination in ethno-national form is most problematic in those societies. The problem pertains to two issues-first regarding the territory over which such right can be exercised and second how to ensure similar right for those national groups which occupy the same territory but do not share the claim of the claimant group. Regarding the first issue, if the territory is determined on the basis of the people, then this would mean encroachment on the similar right of others in such situation where members of claimant groups are not territorially concentrated. And pertaining to the second issue, the right to self-determination can not be exercised in favor of any group in those cases where people of different nationalities intermingled without denying the same for other unless they do not object to such claim by any of that group. If each nation has the right to self-determination then it can not be at the cost of other. Therefore exercise of self-determination can be non problematic only on those situation where the aspiring nations are territorially concentrated. But in reality this has rarely been the case. And in most instances the claimant group shares territory with other national groups. In other words in those multi national societies where different national groups with equal historical claim to same territory, right to self-determination cannot be exercised in favor any group without denying the same for the other groups.

Part –II

So far we have discussed about the legality of self-determination claim in terms of existing international norms and practices but have not examined the justifiability or morality of those claims. This is important because the two may not always coincide. The international legal norms and practices governing the recognition of self-determination claims so

far are state centric and have been developed keeping in mind the interest of states and state system. The assumption behind these norms and practices is that territorial integrity of states is inviolable and stability of the state system should be preserved at all cost. While territorial integrity of states and stability of the state systems are important values, rigid adherence to them may result in neglect of legitimate aspiration and demand of some groups of people. Thus the liberal approach of framing general standard and judging every case against these general standards may not be always helpful. Instead a communitarian approach which would see such demands in their specific contexts and ready to show more flexibility in addressing such claims seems to be more effective. Recognizing this reality the world is already moving in this direction and the post cold war period has witnessed fresh attempt to formulate new standards and norms which are more flexible and accommodative. More importantly there seems to be a shift in focus-from legality to justifiability. People are now focusing on the morality and ethics of self-determination claims and are trying to develop arguments from this perspective to examine morality of these claims. We can broadly classify these arguments that have so far been developed in to three categories —national self-determination theories, choice theories and just cause theories.

According to national self-determination theory the entire mankind is divided in to different nations and each nation is entitled for self-determination right. The theory insists that political and cultural boundaries must, as a matter of right, coincide. Here self-determination is seen as political expression of cultural identity. The political expression of nationalistic sentiments are seen as crucial for two accounts -it has its own intrinsic ethical significance and it is seen as having instrumentalist utility as a means to achieve other means. The extreme version of national self-determination theory argues that each nation has a right for self-determination including a right to state in which the members of the nation form majority. For minority nations in a multinational state this implies a right to secede and form their own state. The moderate version of this theory however does not recognizes a right of secession for such groups

but insists on some form political autonomy as a means to protect their distinct language and culture. The underlying assumption for denial of right of secession is that such kind of political autonomy can be accommodated within a federal structure and secession can be exercised only when such federal accommodation is not available.

On the other hand the choice theory emphasizes that if a majority of people in a region express their desire for self-determination which include right to self-determination and hence right to secede, they should be granted with the right. According to choice theory, demand for self-determination in order to be legitimate, even in its secessionist form does not have to prove that the people in question is a distinct nation or they have been victim of injustice or they have a special claim to the territory they intend to take away. The expression of mere choice is sufficient to have such right. The supporters of such theory base their claim on principles of individual autonomy and democracy. The logic of individual autonomy and democracy automatically qualifies a group for such right.

The third theory, just cause theory, in contrast to the other two theory, sees the right to self-determination not as a general right but as a remedial right to be exercised as a means to end injustice. According to this theory a group can exercise this right only in situation where the subject group is victim of injustice like illegal occupation of territory, gross human rights violations and exploitation and situation is unlikely to change without the exercise of such right. In this sense the right to self-determination is like right to revolt.

All these theories that we have discussed above have their own limitations and not without critiques. For example, the nationalist theory in its extreme version is dangerous as it may lead to proliferation of self-determination demands. And, more importantly this theory either by grounding the right of self-determination on inscriptive criterion or by associating national community with certain territory, neglects the importance of national and cultural identity of the members of minority residing in the same territory. Similarly the just cause theory fails to

acknowledge the fact that self-determination movements are not all about justice and hence ignore the dynamics that are behind the origin of such claims. The choice theory, of all these, seems to be most handicapped. The choice theory grounds the right to self-determination on choice of people but without discussing the reasons like national sentiment or sense injustice which at first place will lead to formation such choice. In other words choice theory is simplified version of other two theories but without the explanation of the two. The only thing it does best is to relieve the claimant group of the burden of establishing the claim. Thus the arguments contained in these theories are not conclusive and can not be mechanically applied to examine the morality of each self-determination claims. Nevertheless it gives us new perspectives for looking at these demands.

Part-III

The idea of national self-determination was initially developed in Europe. Thus essentially it was a European idea. In Europe this has served important purpose. It led to the political liberation of number of nation. In Europe the implementation of this national self-determination was relatively easy because of the homogenous character of their society. In most part of Europe therefore the political boundary has come to match the cultural boundary. In the subsequent times, this idea travel across the Europe to reach third world. Soon the different ethno-national groups of third world countries have started defining their national aspiration in terms of the idea of self-determination implying sovereign independent state.

However while discussing about the issue of self-determination we generally tend to ignore the discussion about its utility. While there was no denying of the fact that national self-determination was not all about utility and has an emotional content, such discussion may help us to assess the value of such claim. The principle of self-determination no doubt is a significant value, but can we term it as absolute value which must be upheld at any cost? Such question is important in the context of difficulty of exercise of this right in multi national society. The exercise of this right in multi ethnic state is with serious problems. In fact if we assume national

self-determination in terms of sovereign independent status, then the principle has come to dead end.

Certainly the demand for national self-determination is not about utility and it has much more serious dynamics. The principle of national self-determination has both emotional and material appeal. The emotive appeal refers to the intrinsic value because it secures the cultural identity of people. As communitarians argue the identity and very personality of individual are embedded in the culture. Thus the national self-determination is the recognition of identity of members of that nation. Besides, the principle of national self-determination is seen as having some instrumental value also. It is considered as a means for some other ends like better distribution of resources, utilization of resources of that community exclusively for their well being, avoiding of political and economic oppression etc.

If the rational appeal of national self-determination rests on its ability to deliver the cultural and material values, then the next question that needs to be asked is what is the most appropriate way for exercise of this principle to achieve these values? So far the answer has been sovereign independent states. The appeal of sovereign independent state as appropriate form for exercise of this right lies in two factors: the historical attachment of people to a definite territory or homeland and ability of states to deliver goods. People historically living in a territory develop attachment for that territory and that, it is argued, also entitled them to the territory. However the problem with this line of argument is that it is very difficult to establish the historical claim of a group of people in the situation of contested claim over the same territory. Besides, such attachment is bound to loose its intensity in these days of de-territorialisation of people. People are now increasingly getting uprooted from their home territory out of socio- economic compulsion of globalized world. Such association of people and a particular territory may not sustain in future. The appeal of territorial form self-determination on the basis of material ability of

states to deliver benefits also needs scrutiny. States are considered as epitome of political experience and its legitimacy rests on the facts that it establishes, maintains and defends basic social condition and values like security, freedom, justice, order and welfare. But this is not true about all the states. There are substantial numbers of states, mostly belonging to third world, which have failed to deliver these basic values. Therefore it would be wrong to assume that mere acquiring of state status would automatically guarantee the benefits associated with the states. The benefits that generally accrue from the state are product of political and economic evolution of states or function of state building process. If the demand for self-determination in the form of a separate independent state by any national group is the result of frustration of absence of these values in the existing states, then such claim may work other way by further derailing the process of state making.

If the exercise of territorial form of self-determination is problematic and may not necessarily bring about the benefits associated with states, then can there be other form of expression of this right. If we interpret right to self-determination as a cultural and political right or ability of group of people to control their cultural and political right then there is certainly space for some other form of expression of this right. Any such form of manifestation of self-determination, true to its meaning must able to ensure these cultural and political spaces of the aspiring group of people. Iris Marion Young has talked about non domination as such possible alternative form of expression self-determination. He has argued that the existing interpretation of self-determination as sovereign independent state or non interference as neither essential nor sufficient and instead offers an alternative interpretation of self-determination as non domination which will ensure political, cultural and economic space for group of people in the context of their mutual relation through some institutional arrangement.

References :

1. Spencer, Philip and Wollman, Howard, ed. Nation and Nationalism: A Reader (Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press, 2005).

2. Moore, Margaret ed., National Self-Determination and Secession (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

3. Day, Graham and Thompson, Andrew, *Theorizing Nationalism*, (Pal grave Macmillan Press, 2004).

4. Duursma, Jorri, Fragmentation and the International Relations of Micro States: Self-Determination and Statehood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

5. May, Stephen, Modood, Tariq and Squires, Judith ed., Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Minority Rights (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

6. Williamson, Robert and Clark, Donald, Self-Determination: International Perspectives (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

7. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Community*, (London: Verso, 1983).

8. Buchheit, L.C., Secession: *The Legitimacy of Self-Determination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

9. Casseese, Antonio, *Self-Determination of People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

10. Halparin, Morton H., Scheffer, David, and Small Patricia L. D., *Self-Determination in the New World Order* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1992).

11. Hannum, Hurst, *Autonomy, Sovereignty and Self-Determination: The Accommodation of Conflicting Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

12. Heraclides, Alexis, *The Self-Determination of Minorities in International Politics* (London: Frank Cass, 1991).

13. Ronen, Dov, *The Quest for Self-Determination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

14. ———— *The Challenge of Ethnic Conflict, Democracy and Self-Determination in Central Europe* (London: frank cass, 1997).

15. Hutchinson, John and Smith, Anthony D. ed., *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

16. Guibernau, Montserrat and Hutchinson, John ed., *Understanding Nationalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001).

17. Connor, W. *Ethnonationalism*(Princeton University Press,1994).

18. Amstrong, J. *Nations Before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

19. Barth, F. ed. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little Brown, 1996).

20. Buchanan, Allen, "Self-Determination and Right to Secede", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.45, Winter 1992, pp.345-367.

21. Etzioni, Amitai, "The Evils of Self-Determination", *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1992/93, pp.21-35.

22. Freeman, Michael, "Democracy and Dynamite: The Peoples Right to Self-Determination", *Political Studies*, 1996, Vol.XLIV, pp.746-761.

23. Hannum, Hurst, "The Specter of Secession: Responding to the Claims for Ethnic Self-Determination", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.77, No.2, 1998, pp.13-18.

24. Heraclides, Alexis, "Secession, Self-Determination and Non-Intervention: In Quest for a Normative Symbiosis", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.45, winter 1992, pp.339-420.

25. Philpott, Daniel, "In Defense of Self-Determination", *Ethics*, Vol.105, Jan 1999, pp.352-85.

26. Stavenhagen, Rodolfo, "Self-determination: Right or Demon?" in Clarke, Donald and Williamson, Robert, ed. *Self-Determination: International Perspectives* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp.1-11.

27. Streamlau, John, "Antidote to Anarchy", *Washington Quarterly*, Vol.18, winter 1995, pp.29-44.

***

EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN: QUESTIONING WOMEN'S ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION

Dolly Phukon

The UN Human Development Report for 2004, while noting the progress made in the status of women, notes that considerable work still needs to be done by the government and the community for raising the status of women. The human development status of women reveals a decline in women's status despite recent advances in women's education and economic status. More importantly, at the grassroots level, much needs to be done to emancipate women and children and give them access to education, health-care and employment. The economic and social status of women in India varies widely in different parts of the country due to the heterogeneous nature of our society. Though women as a whole are being exploited, suppressed under patriarchal norms of the society, the degree of suppression and development of women differs from society to society and also among different classes i.e. the poor and the rich section. The women of well to do family and elite sections are deriving the benefit of the modern society. But more than half of women's population resides in the rural areas. So only when the rural women are emancipated, the status of women would rise. The rural women could be regarded as the backbone of India's economy because basically India is an agricultural country and women are the main labour force working in the agricultural fields besides doing their daily household duties. But due to some hurdles

on their way for empowerment, women couldn't achieve the desired status. The reasons may be due to the practiced patriarchal norms in the society. Women since time immemorial has been suppressed, exploited, underrepresented, underpaid and are systematically denied of all rights she deserves. Here comes the question of empowerment! Empowerment is the process that enables women to gain access to and control of material, intellectual and human resources. Empowerment is the redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and male dominance[1]. Women play a very important role in the development of a country's economy. If lasting progress is to be achieved, both women and men must have equal access to the resources needed for development and to the benefits it produces. In view of this background, this paper tries to question women's access to communication and productive resources in Assam.

During the 1980s and 1990s there was a path-breaking development in technology and communication system but it has not reduced the poverty and inequality in the society instead it had aggravated a wide disparity between the rich and poor and between man and women. Though technological advancement has led to dramatic economic growth in many countries, over the same period many developing countries have low productivity and inability to include marginalized groups in the process of sustainable development. Among the marginalized groups, women belong to the lowest category as even poverty, illiteracy etc. have a gender bias. Women belong to the most of the unpaid labour of production and reproduction. They in particular have lower levels of illiteracy and limited access to non-traditional skills in comparison to man. Thus for the empowerment of women they need some proper conditions in the social set-up. According to Whitehead (1985), to properly fit women's issues into a model of technological change based on employment, productivity and income-distribution paradigm, there is a urgent need of incorporating

---

1. Devi Syamala ,Lakshmi G, Political Empowerment of Women in Indian Legislature : A Study in *The Indian Journal Of Political Science*,VOL LXVI, No 1, Jan-March 2005.

sociological and economic aspects of intra-and inter- household relations in the analysis[2]. The capacity of women to be independent producers which would make them empowered, depends on a number of factors, including access to productive resources (e.g., land), which is often mediated by their dependent position in the household, and to publicly provided inputs (e.g., credit facilities, technical-skills training, basic social infrastructures, etc.). Women's limited access to resources and their insufficient purchasing power are products of a series of interrelated social, economic and cultural factors that force them into a subordinate role, to the detriment of their own development and that of society as a whole. Despite their role as the backbone of rural economy in developing countries, women remain limited in their access to critical resources and services. While in most developing countries, both men and women farmers do not have access to adequate resources, women's access is even more limited due to cultural, traditional and sociological factors.

Women's Access to Technology :

The Northeast region was well known for its food self-sufficiency and its rich natural resources. The natural resources of the region were harnessed sustainably by the indigenous people. Wood gathering, livestock and animal husbandry, handicrafts, handlooms, fishing and agricultural activities such as sowing, weeding, transplanting, harvesting and post harvesting activities like thrashing, husking, grinding etc. were undertaken by our rural women. Women's work in rural areas is strenuous and time consuming. Besides farm activities, they are also responsible for household chores. Women farmers are responsible for more than 50 per cent of global food production. In developing countries, women produce between 60 and 80 per cent of the food. In Asia, between 50 and 90 per cent of the work in the rice fields are done by women. After the harvest, rural women in developing countries are almost entirely responsible for storage, handling,

---

2. Whitehead, A., 1985: Effects of Technological Change on Rural Women: A
    Review of Analysis and Concepts. - **In** : Ahmed, I. (ed). 1985: Technology
    and Rural Women: Conceptual and Empirical Issues. - Allen & Unwin.
    London: UK. 27–62.

stocking, marketing and processing. After the liberalization of economy and in the new circumstances created by SAP for globalization, the traditional role of women is being undermined whereas mechanization and automation is becoming prevalent in the market based economy which has adversely affected the village based traditional economy. The opening of markets led to the commercialization of agriculture and new technologies penetrated into our agricultural lands. But in this context too regarding up gradation of agricultural development tools women were neglected. The transmission of knowledge about the new technologies like use of tractors, high quality fertilizers, selection of HYV seeds, pesticides etc. became man-to-man affair. Men were increasingly drawn into the modernizing agriculture sectors while women stayed in subsistence agriculture with no access to credits, training and technologies. The agricultural development has normally and almost entirely been manned by men right from the decision making to implementation. Again women have also been excluded from owning or controlling land, the most crucial productive resource in agricultural economies. Earlier women and men were equal partners in agriculture. Their knowledge and contribution and participation in decision making were more or less the same. But with the commercialization of agriculture, women's job is taken up by men and mechanization has displaced a large segment of agricultural workforce which performed the traditional agricultural work. Within this context, it may be referred that women don't belonged to a homogeneous category so the impact of new technology were different among different segments of women. The women of upper middle class agrarian family, tasks like preparation of food for farm labour, caring for livestock, post harvest tasks and supervision of labour from within the household have increased significantly. This led to the extra-mural agricultural work participation of women which are more invisible works and are not accounted. Revolution of agriculture has also had its effect on the most marginalized segment of women who have lost a large number of their specialized tasks and uses from agricultural waste which provide them subsistence. Process of shaving off already beaten rice, to glean the grains etc. were the specialized tasks performed by these

women were replaced by masculinisation of modern chemical intensive and mechanized capital-intensive agriculture and feminization of traditional subsistence food production which feeds the bulk of the rural poor.

Thus it could be seen that commercialization of agriculture was encouraged with the use of new technologies for more production. But the process were not properly planned to offer "Gender friendly" work environment. Traditionally, most extension services have been devoted to those farmers who own land and can obtain credit and invest in inputs and technological innovations. Since, women often have no or very limited access to land or to other collateral to obtain credit, extension services unintentionally bypass women. Furthermore extension services are also little oriented towards improving female tasks[3]. According to a research conducted by **FAO on WOMEN AND FOOD SECURITY** "Two-thirds of the one billion illiterate in the world are women and girls. Available figures show that only 5 percent of extension services have been addressed to rural women, while no more than 15 percent of the world's extension agents are women. In addition, most of the extension services are focused on cash crops rather than food and subsistence crops, which are the primary concern of women farmers and the key to food security"[4]. The new technologies favoured the men for it opened their horizons and interactions into a wider world. It means a close interaction with the market in relation to the buying and selling of produce, the purchase of fertilizers, pesticides etc., interaction with government personnel for loans, hiring of tractors, threshers, combines, payment of electricity bills etc. - all making the entire process male-centered, thus leading to a certain extent to the withdrawal of women from agricultural process in general[5] (Gill Rajesh, 2005).

3. Upadhyay, B, Gender aspects of smallholder irrigation technology: Insights from Nepal In Journal of Applied Irrigation Science, Vol. 39. No 2/2004, pp. 315-327.
4. FAO FOCUS: Women and Food Security, http://www.fao.org/focus/e/women/sustin-e.htm.
5. Abbi Kumool, *State, Market and Gender in India* in Gill Rajesh (ed.), State, Market and civil Society: Issues and Interface, Rawat Publication, New Delhi, 2005.

Moreover women's access to technological inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers and pesticides is limited as they are frequently not reached by extension services and are rarely members of cooperatives, which often distribute government-subsidized inputs to small farmers. In addition, they often lack the cash income needed to purchase inputs even when they are subsidized[6]. Moreover according to the NFHS-II, in Assam only 35% of women have access to money which is the lowest among all India figures. Women have little access to the benefits of research and innovation. In addition, women farmers' roles and needs are often ignored when devising technology that may cause labour displacement or increased workload. The non-access technology for women is a great hurdle towards women's empowerment. Within this context women's access to communication is of upmost importance so as to enable women to gather required information for their empowerment.

Women's access to Communication :

Communication as an instrument of empowerment is the most important agent through which sustainable empowerment could be achieved. It is through communication, women comes to know the issues affecting them as well as gives a complete view of their life situation. The different media of communication helps the women to build solidarity among them and fosters to bring gender equality. Though our society is developing, in order to bring an all-round development, there must be a parallel attitude change, imbuing of new values and progressive action that must be communicated to each and every citizen at an early age if the coming generation of women to be empowered. Consciousness and awareness are pre-requisites for empowerment and it could be generated only through the means of communication. Communication is a powerful source for empowerment in the process of rural development with enormous potentialities to enhance people's quality of life and to create knowledge based society, which is more responsive to change, and development. Communication is that medium through which the voices of the rural women could be heard and also help them to improve their living conditions. The government of India has introduced a large number of empowerment generation schemes like the Self-help-group policy, funds

6. FAO FOCUS: Women and Food Security, http://www.fao.org/focus/e/women/sustin-e.htm

for development, banking facilities, legislation for reservation in Panchayat, Hindu Succession Amendment Act 2005, giving equal rights to women regarding joint family property and so on. But without a good gender friendly communication system, mass mobilization about these schemes couldn't be achieved. Disseminating the information to the needed rural women should penetrate awareness about these schemes. The important aspect in success of these programmes is effective communication strategy whether it is between beneficiaries and organizations, funding agencies etc[7]. If the projects and programmes for the advancement of rural women are to be effective, the planning phase should include a communication component, designed to reflect their perceived needs and special conditions and taking into account women's active participation in traditional communication networks. The development planners should try to listen to the inner voice of rural women, their needs, their traditional knowledge and experience for involving the rural communities into the planning process and not just enforcing the mainstream plan upon them so that they feel a sense of belongingness and not alienation from the development process. The rural women's organizations and groups must be motivated to join the training programmes for women so that they could disseminate the knowledge and information to the other section of their community to bring overall empowerment[8].

Communication systems could be divided into two types :

    (a)   Traditional communication techniques

    (b)   Modern communication techniques.

At present though the modern communication technologies for networking such as T.V, Radio, Computers, Electronic Lobbying are advancing, still they has an inbuilt limitation of reaching out to only a small section of literate mass. In that case, the traditional communication medium such as speech, meeting, demonstration, exhibition, door to door visits, interpersonal counseling, poster, pamphlets and booklets covering overall development of women and fighting the oppression of women are of more importance which reaches out to the poor. The modern technologies

7. Prasan Kiran, Women's Movement and Media Action: Paradoxes and Promises in Prasad Kiran (ed.), *Women in Media: Challenging Feminist Discourse,* The Women Press, New Delhi, 2005.

8. FAO Corporate Document Repository available at www.fao.org

like computers, T.V., Video etc. couldn't be used in the rural areas due to frequent interpretations caused by electricity and moreover technology like money, knowledge and power are concentrated in the hands of economically and politically powerful people and hence out of reach of common people. Thus in order to bring real women empowerment in rural areas the traditional communication techniques must be used and modern media must be reformed, made accessible and gender friendly so as to expand one's horizon.

Recommendation and Conclusion :

From the above discussion it could be concluded that a nation's ability to achieve its development goals, gain global competitiveness and increase the well-being of its peoples partially depend on the extent to which its communications sector is developed. With advances in technology, communications and access to information, increased economic liberalization and the intensification of international flows of goods, services and capital serve to both deepen interdependence between nation states and widen the scope of economic globalization. These transformations are influencing the socio-economic scenario of high-middle- and low-wage countries, as well as relations between women and men, and their positions in the labour market, their communities, and the larger society. The world is witnessing a widening of the gap between the rich and the poor as more and more women and men experience increased economic and social insecurity, including unemployment, loss of savings, and decreased access to affordable health care. Within this context, information and communication technologies are assumed to be essential tools for slowing down and reversing this trend. Countries, multilateral institutions and nongovernmental organizations are increasingly promoting the development, introduction and use of ICTs as a means of promoting development[9]. In view of this the following recommendations are needed to follow to empower rural women and pacify the development of rural economy:

---

9. Towards a More Equitable Information Society: How and Why of Gender Mainstreaming, **Report of the Third Meeting Group of the Working Group on Gender Issues**, Prepared by, Sabiti Bishnath, youth and Gender Unit (BDT) Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), Geneva, June 2004.

1. A holistic and gender friendly approach must be adopted by both the traditional and modern communication system and must cover all the multifaceted aspects of life in rural areas affecting women, including agriculture, the environment, health, sanitation, family planning, education and literacy for emancipating and empowering rural women.

2. The use of gender friendly communication for development and empowerment of rural women must be placed in the agenda of government, planners, and policy formulators so that they could promote an active and visible policy for the requirement of women's voice in rural communication policies and programmes. The policy makers must take rural women's specific needs into account and involve them in decisions regarding application of such technologies.

3. Necessary steps should be taken by the policy makers, government and non-government agencies to ensure that women have the same opportunities as men to own land.

4. Gender Sensitization training programmes should be imparted to policy makers, educational institutions, NGOs, Media persons etc with the help of Women Studies Centres which are established by the UGC for the purpose of dissemination.

5. Conducting a situation analysis is a key starting point. Acquiring knowledge of the realities, Constraints and opportunities faced by women and men will enable the policy makers to develop and implement projects that address gender gaps in accessing to the fruits of technology and communication. Reliable data according to sex and qualitative informations on priority areas and areas of interests of women, the barriers they face needed to be highlighted by the researchers working in this area so as to enable the policy makers to formulate policies in these areas.

References :

1. Devi Syamala ,Lakshmi G, Political Empowerment of Women in Indian Legislature: A Study. in *The Indian Journal of Political Science*,VOL LXVI, No 1, Jan-March 2005

2. Whitehead, A., 1985: Effects of Technological Change on Rural Women: A Review of Analysis and Concepts. - **In**: Ahmed, I. (ed). 1985: Technology and Rural Women: Conceptual and Empirical Issues. - Allen & Unwin. London: UK. 27–62.

3. Upadhyay, B, Gender aspects of smallholder irrigation technology: Insights from Nepal **In** Journal of Applied Irrigation Science, Vol. 39. No 2/2004, pp. 315-327.

4. FAO FOCUS: Women and Food Security, http://www.fao.org/focus/e/women/sustin-e.htm

5. Prasan Kiran, Women's Movement and Media Action: Paradoxes and Promises **in** Prasad Kiran (ed.), *Women in Media: Challenging Feminist Discourse,* The Women Press, New Delhi, 2005.

6. FAO Corporate Document Repository available at www.fao.org.

7. Abbi Kumool, *State, Market and Gender in India* **in** Gill Rajesh (ed.), State, Market and civil Society: Issues and Interface, Rawat Publication, New Delhi, 2005.

8. Towards a More Equitable Information Society: How and Why of Gender Mainstreaming, **Report of the Third Meeting Group of the Working Group on Gender Issues**, Prepared by, Sabiti Bishnath, youth and Gender Unit (BDT) Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), Geneva, June 2004.

***

DEVELOPMENT & FREEDOM : AN INTERPRETATION OF GANDHI & AMARTYA SEN'S PHILOSOPHY

Seema Roy Kurmi

The concept of development & freedom are complementary aspects in the present trend of liberalism. These concepts have been revolutionizing the psycho-analytical mindset of each individual and each individual is trying to adjust himself or herself in the power structure of the contemporary world. Current trend of developmental thinking, through which an individual attains self realization, self perfection & self purification, has been dominated by the concept of Human Development. School *HDS). This HDS provides importance to the concept of freedom and development at a time. Hence it can be treated as freedom centred view of development[1]. It is to be noted that Human Development Index for India *HDI) is 0.611 which gives India a rank of 126th out of 1772. In a democracy like India, it essential that idea model of development must be followed. Such models help in the formulation of sound policies their proper implementation. Several debates took place in the Indian political and business circles, about the time of independence and constitution making in India, on the future course of development of India. Infact the very concern of India's survival as a single entity was for most in the mind of its founders. The purpose of evolving an ideal pattern was not only to safeguard the democratic principles but also create necessary social and political conditions to ensure an overall development. Gandhian view and their feasibility, mostly influenced the framers of the Indian constitution. Howerver, a group of scholars wanted to bring capitalistic mode of development through the process of indistralisation. In these

process of debates individual and his or her economic stand was the bone of contention. Proverty, as a big problem, was the principal point of discussion. In order to eradicate it there was the need of a serious effort on the part of layman, politicians, scholars and intellectuals.

The above data and its analysis shows that at the conceptual level, development must aimed at eradication of poverty. This eradication would enable one to achieve real freedom in one's life. Gandhi also tried hard to eradicate economic hurdles from the life of each individual. He struggled for that, so that each individual could attain self-satisfaction and could be successful in testing the taste of *Swarajya*. Gandhi's concept of *Swarajya* had two dimensions, i.e., individual *Swarajya*. Social Swarajya had several dimensions like social, political, economic, spiritual etc. In the sphere of political and economic *Swarajya* Gandhi highlighted several principles. There were laid down by Gandhi on January 30, 1930 in *Young India*. These were also treated as substance of independence. These principles of *Swarajya* were as followed :

1. Total prohibition.

2. Reduction of pound-rupee exchange ratio from 1 Shilling 6 pence to 1 shilling 4 pence.

3. Reduction of land revenue by at least 50% and making it subject legislative control.

4. Abolition of salt tax.

5. Reduction of military expenditure by at-least 50% to begin with.

6. Reduction of salaries of the highest grade services by half of less, so as to suit the reduced revenue.

7. Protective tariff on foreign clothes.

8. Passage of the Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill.

9. Discharge of all political prisioners save these condemned for murder or attempt to murder, or trial by ordinary judicial tribunals, and withdrawal of all political prosecutions.

10. Abolution of the CID or its popular control.

11. Issue of lisence to use fire arms for self-defence, subject to popular control.

Through these demands Gandhi hoped participation of each individual in the political and economic process of the country. In his words, he wanted to establish poorman's *Swarajya*. Therefore, he always supported the concept of poor men's *Swarajya*. In order to achieve it Gandhi wanted that individual must satisfy oneself within traditional economic force and traditional economic force must be supplemented by self sufficient economy. Such economy brought the concept of *Swadeshi*. And he regarded *Khadi* as the livery of freedom. His indigeneous means to provide individual development and freedom was eco-friendly and self-sustainable in nature.[3]

He tried to limit the economic greed of individual through the strict principle of 'reason'[4] and 'contentment'[5]. He opined that individual's happiness really lies contentment. It must be related to the satisfaction of reason. The appeal of reason must be to the conscience of human being. Such tendencies, according to Gandhi, makes individual self consciousness and one develops the area of thinking and ultimately it results in the achievement of freedom through self realization. However, in the present trend of multi-nationalism, globalization and materialism such ideas of rationalism & self contentment have been loosing importance and Gandhi's concept of **poor man** are restless to achieve maximum economic strength by hook or by crook. This is again creating a huge gap among them. The society has been divided between rich, poor and suffering middle-class. The society is no more content with Gandhian philosophy of self contentment, self suffering, self realization and self purification. This is giving birth to economic imbalances at national and global levels. It has given birth to economic imbalances at national and global levels. It has given birth to New International Economic under (NIEO) and North-South Dialogue process. Every effort has been made to remove economic hurdles from the life of each individual. Therefore, writers like D.R. Gadgil, B.S.

Mina has an Indian and Julies Nyerene in Tanzania are concerned with the problem of poverty. For this purpose the Government of Tanzania (1967) asked for collective self-reliance and a complementary relation was tried to establish between growth and poverty. In India also in order to remove poverty the process of globalization & privatization was followed. Dr. Manmohan Singh as the Finance Minister and the Prime Minister did excellent effort in this regard. The following chart shows declining rate of poverty after beginning of the process of economic reform. The following data shows the phasases of economic reform in India.

Between	All India Per cent	Rural per cent	Urban Per cent
1973 & 78	3.6	3.1	4.2
1978 & 83	6.8	7.4	4.4
1983 & 88	5.6	6.6	2.6
1988 & 93	2.9	1.8	5.8
1993 & 99	9.9	9.4	8.78

Sources : Economic Survey 2000-2001

However, after independence the economist, social scientists and intellectuals supported Gandhian concepts of development. In this concept of development it was desired that new fundamental and different approach were required at the international level to complement the efforts of many poor countries to increase the participation of their entire populations in the process of development. It demanded equitable distribution of benefits. On the Gandhian line concept of self-reliance was popularized. This self-reliance demands refashioning of economic policies of developing countries according to needs, problems and experiences of their own economic force[6]. It wants to transfer the benefits of wealthiest minority to the poorest majority and wants to create economic balance in the global economic order. On this line of thinking the conference of Dakar (February, 1975) highlighted on **Action Programme** and this programme stressed on co-operation among the developing nations in the field of raw materials. In 1975 a symposium of International Economic order organized at Hague

pointed out that eradication of absolute poverty must be guiding philosophy of developing countries to provide a new way of life to each individual in the present world order. The Hammarskjold Foundation, also provided importance to this idea and stressed on the satisfaction of basic human needs of each individual. Simultaneously World Employment Conference, World Bank, Federal Committee for Economic co-operation with Developing countries and Institute for the Developing countries based in Lagherb also emphasized similar demands. They all emphasized the concept of self-reliance and it needs that both developed and developing countries must have a self-sustainable economy. It needs maximum decentralization in the economic front and it would help in solving the problems like violence, poverty, repression, environmental degradation[7]. Each individual and each country will have to learn to face the truth as Gandhi experimented it in every step of his life. For this, it needs that one individual should never try to exploit other and in the same line on nation should never try to exploit others. There should be self-sufficient and self sustainable economic performance of each individual and such individual (according to oceanic theory of Gandhi) would help in eradicating poverty at local, national and international levels. Such development would, in reality, compassionate the individual concept of freedom. A freedom, where one can live according to his/her own conscience, consent, choice and will.

Amratya Sen, the winner of Nobel Prize analyzed the concept of freedom from the point of view of development. In his book **commodities and capabilities** he highlights **capability approach**. This capability approach resembles to western concept of liberalism. This approach enables one to do one's utmost development according to one's choice and to accept easily one's inability to achieve something. In this approach, like western concept, the concept of possessive individualism has been accepted. The concept of possessive individualism has been discussed by C.B. Macpherson in his noted book, **Political Theory of Possessive** Individual. According to Macpherson, this concept of individualism provides moral strength to the character of person. It encourages individual to use and

develop their unique human capacities as doer, decider, creator and enjoyer of human attributes.[8] Like western thinking Sen emphasizes on the concept of the utilization of opportunity and to achieve success in one's life. According to him, the enjoying of opportunity, specially in the economic field, helps in the eradication of poverty and this eradication actually helps in the real enjoyment of freedom.

Sen's capability approach, highlights that one should adjust oneself in the process of common good of the society. Here, his approach reminds us Gandhi's concept of organic relationship between individual and society. In this relationship human being and society play compensatory & complementary role. For Gandhi, society should never curb individual freedom and at the same time one should be ready to sacrifice one's self desires in order to establish common good of the society. According to Gandhi, the relation between individual a society can be evaluated in this way, "Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual alaways ready to perish for the village; the latter ready to perish for the circule of the villages, till at last the whole beomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units."[9]

Like Gandhi, Sen also regards individual as the **ego of the** wheel or important element of society. The capacity building of an individual would help in strengthening the concept of common good of the society. According to Sen, as a result of this common good cocept of together ness would develop within the society. This togetherness would result in providing one the confidence to do the role of doer and decider. It would enable one to do active role in the process of political participaton. This participation would enrich one's sense of responsibility and Mill's concept of 'self-regarding' and 'others-regarding' can acquire a new meaning in the frame of responsibility. This concept of responsibility would enforce one to accept some value spontaneously to lead one's and others' path also in the right direction. It, in the Sen's attitude would enrich the concepts of self-evaluation open discussion and critical secrutiny and individual

value with the concept of responsibility would help in fixing the social responsibility of a person. To quote Sen, "If a traditional way of life has to be scarified to escape grinding poverty or minuscule longevity, then it is the people directly involved who must have the opportunity to participate in deciding what should be chosen"[10].

In order to realize individual freedom, economic self-sufficiency is essential. Economic self-suffering, according to Sen can be created through capacity building. Capacity building must be compensated with freedom of choice and opportunity and choice and opportunity must help in the process of active political participation. This participation must have sense of social and political responsibility. This social and political responsibility would result in strengthening possessive concept of individual. Then, only development would be possible. This development would result in achieving the realization of freedom.

In order to strengthen this concept of freedom, the huge economic gap found within the society, must be tried to be removed. Those who are under privileged, they should try to organize themselves through political platforms. These platforms would enable one to achieve near to Sen's sense of collective well-being. And, this concept of well being would bring one nearer to freedom.

If we compare Gandhi & Sen we find that Gandhi's attitude regarding individuals is anarchical. He has dislike for state. Only critical situation enforces him to accept the concept of state. He always asks for spiritual realization of Individual and it does not match with the concept of Individual imagined by Sen. Sen's concept of freedom and development provides a sound footing to poor population of present world order. Whereas, Gandhian concept of spiritual realization in the present trend is the matter of self regarding zone of J.S. Mill. It can not be attached as the subject matter of practical material real would. However, both want to develop individual personality through the concept of freedom. However, Gandhian values provide a self analyzing outlook to each value oriented individual. Thus, both Gandhian & Sen's concept of individual, development and freedom can play complementary role for each other.

References :

1. *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. 29, July–September, 2007, p.1.

2. Ibid., P.2.

3. M.K. Gandhi, *The Village Reconstruction*, Anand T. Hingorani (ed) Bhantiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, 1966, P.3.

4. See, Bikhu Parekh, Gandhis' *Political Philosophy : A Critical Examination*, London: Macmilan Press, 1989, P.146.

5. *Harijan*, Febraury 1, 1942.

6. S.P. Verma : *Modern Political Theory*, Vani Educational Books New Delhi, 1975 P.395.

7. *Ibid.* P. 398.

8. C.B. Merephers *On The Political Theory Of Possessive Individual*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1962 P.2.

9. Dennis Gilmore Dalton, *Indian Idea of Freedom*, The Academic Press, Haryana, p.p.142-43.

10. *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. 29, July – September, 2007, p.123.

***

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BASES OF THE BODO AUTONOMY MOVEMENT

Khema Sonowal

The Bodos are the descendents of the Mongoloid race. They form a subsection of the Bodo-Naga section under Assam-Burma, a group of Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan family.[1] Numerically and Sociologically, they are one of the most important tribes of north-east India, particularly of Assam. They are spread all over Assam with main concentration in the north bank of the river Brahmaputra right up to the foothills along the northern boundary of Assam adjoining Bhutan and Arunchal Pradesh. Their population also found in the contiguous areas of North Bengal. According to the Census Report of 1991, the Bodo population was 11,84, 569.[2] The most concentrated areas of the Bodo population is found in Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Goalpara, Nowgaon, Darrang, Nalbari, Kamrup, Sonitpur, Barpeta, Bongaigaon and Dhemaji districts of Assam.

II

In order to have a better understanding of the socio-economic causes leading to autonomy movement to maintain distinct identity of the Bodos is necessary to have an idea of their historical and socio-economic background. Once in the North –East, but it extended up to Bay of Bengal in the south and up to Bihar in the west. They take pride in the glory of their past. A reminiscence of their glorious past has contributed in arousing identity consciousness among them. In their attempt to revive the past glory, they asserted themselves by launching a strident movement. Thus, the historical factor was one of the causes of their identity assertion.

Social reformation was another important factor of creating identity consciousness among the Bodos. The period between the Nineteenth

Century and early part of the Twentieth Century was a period of chaos and confusion in their way of life. At that time, socially and economically, the Bodo society was very backward and an unhappy state of affairs was prevalent among them, as the age –old ties in the society had been losing its strength day to day. Due to the wretched condition of the social system, anarchism was at large in the society. In the matter of religion, there emerged some differences among the Bodos. Some of them had been converted into Islam, Christiantity and Vaishnavism. The Bodo people of the Panbari area under the sub-division of Dhubri of Goalpara district had become Muslim after embracing Islam.[3] Many Bodos had become Saraniya by accepting Hinduism and had assumed the titles like Koch, Rajbanshi, Chaudhury, Das, Deka, Saiba, Mondol, Karji etc. with a view to getting their social status raised. But, the conversion to Saraniya cult by accepting Hinduism was not possible for each and every Bodo because it was a costly affair. It is said that one Raisahb Jagat Chandra Mosahary, the Mouzadar of Patakata had on his initiation into the Hindu fold was required to pay Rs. 6000.[4] Besides, Christianity was slowly but steadily taking its roots in the Bodo communities in various parts of Assam and North Bengal. In Goalpara district of Assam, the Santhal Mission of the Lutheran Churches and the American Baptist Mission had absorbed a number of Bodos,[5] in Darang and Kamrup districts, the Anglican and the Baptist Mission have drawn a sizable number of the Bodos into their fold. The Scottish Mission had swept over a large number of the Bodos of Mahakalguri area of Jalpaiguri district of North Bengal. The Bodos were thus breaking up as a community and the total extinction of the people as a distinct tribal group was feared to be imminent.

Although a section of the Bodos converted to other religions, a large number of them contined to profess their own religion i.e. the tribal religion.[7] They worshipped their original God *Bathou*, performed pujas with sacrifices of animals, birds and used rice-beer. No ceremony could be held without rice-beer. Obviously, the division of the Bodo people in the name of different religion and use of rice-beer and sacrificing birds, animals were badly affected their society. At such a critical moment, a

strong man of uncommon caliber appeared among the Bodos who was known as Srimoti Kalicharan Mech, popularly known as *Gurudev Kalicharan*. He did not like division of the Bodo society into so many groups in the name of faith and religion. Kalicharan Mech deeply studied the rites and rituals of the *Brahma Dharma* or *Brahma religion*[8] and finally came to the conclusion that the teachings of the Brahma religion would be highly appropriate for the Bodos. He found in Brahma religion the thing which wanted for the Bodos to lead them form darkness to the light with the help of the Brahma religion. He opined that, their traditional religious practice led to the looking down or casting of the Bodo community by the Hindu neighbours. Kalicharan Mech perturbed by the all above circumstances, felt the need of preserving the unity and the true identity of the Bodo people. He thought it was possible only through a change in the Bodo society and religion. In 1906, after being initiated, he set his mission of propagating his new religion among the Bodos on foot by burning *Jagya Ahuti* (Home Jagya) at Bannya Guri village for the first time. Since then Kalicharan Mech performed annually community *Jagyahuti* in Bodo predominated areas in Assam and North Bengal. Thousands of Bodo people attended the Jagyahuti and adopted *Brahma Dharma*. In 1911, he petitioned of A.J. Lainey, the then Deputy commissioner of Goalpara district, for permission to use "Brahma" as surname and the petition granted. Henceforth, the converted Bodos were known by the title Brahma. He visited different villages of Assam. West Bengal and preached *Brahma Dharma* in different times. He also encouraged them to be educated, changed the mode of living and gave a clarion call to the Bodo people. Along with the propagation of the *Brahma Dharma*, Kalicharan launched campaigns for social reforms. He called upon the people to give up the traditional practices of rearing pigs and poultry birds. Brewing and consumption of liquor were to be totally stopped. He encouraged trade, business, weaving, carpentry etc. He also established Middle school-cum weaving and carpentry centre at Tipkai in 1913 which was subsequently shifted to Sapatgram near Fakiragram in the present district of Kokrajhar and was upgraded to Saptgram

Amalgamated Academy. To facilitate the schooling of the Bodo children, he established a Brahma Boarding house at Dhuburi.[9] In 1916 he submitted a memorandum to the Education Commissioner through the Deputy Commissioner Mr. A.J. Lainey to upgrade the M.E. School of Tipkai into a high school and introduced Assamese language at the school.[10] As a result, the Bodos gradually became conscious and started to organize themselves. In 1918 the All Bodo Chatra Sanmilan was formed, which was the first organization of the Bodos and in 1924 the Bodo Maha Sabha came into existence. Thus, it appears that through the social reformation initially the Bodos became conscious of their backwardness and tried to make the Bodos educated. It may be noted that till then their sense of self-establishment was limited only to the socio-economic upliftment. But later they came forward with the political demands too. In 1929 Kalilcharan Brahma submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission at Shillong, accompanied by Sardar B.R. Kachari, Jadav Chandra Khaklary and few others, demanding protection of the tribals of Assam. In the subsequent period, the first political organization of the *tribals, the Assam Plains Tribal League* was formed in 1933. As demanded by the Tribal League, the Bodos along with other tribals got reservation of five seats in the Legislative Assembly of Assam in 1937 election.[11]

III

Another important factor that also contributed to the identity assertion of the Bodos is the economic factor. The Bodos are originally cultivators and they cultivated rice of different varieties, cash crops like mustard send, cotton and sugarcane. They had also expertise in sericulture. They reared both *Muga* and *Endi* silk worm and produced various types of clothes in their handlooms. Besides these activities, the Bodos did engaged in border trade activities also. Having migrated from the Sino-Tibetan border regions the Bodo settling in the northern foothill regions of Bengal and Assam had maintained trade links with the bordering hill tribes on the north. And through them the Bodos kept further business transaction with the Tibetans and the Chinese traders. Several trade routes through these passes existed throughout the ages between Tibet and northeast India. These

passes opened up to the Indian plains were and are still known as Kachari-Dooar, the gateway opening to the Kacharis. Several such Dooars existed on the northern foothills of Jalpaiguri in North Bengal and Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darrang and Sonitpur districts of Assam. The most famous trade route among them was the Lhasa- Tawang-Udalguri route which saw a considerable volume of barter trade between the Tawang Hill tribes and the Bodo tribes of Udalguri Region. The Trade link even extended to the interior of Tibet and China.[12] The items imported through this route into India were Chinese silk, ponies, musk-wax, rubber and gold dust, whereas the items exported were rice, cotton yarn and cloth, silk yarn, dried fish etc. The Bhootias [13] used to come down during the winter season through these route and barter trade in the commodities mentioned above used to take place between these hill tribes and the Bodos. The barter trade did help the Bodo economy substantially.

But unfortunately, after annexation of Assam with the British India, the Company Government started exploring the way to open up an overlapped trade route from north-east India to the Western China. It became a hindrance for the Bodo traditional barter trade. With the increase in the volume of trade, monetary transaction started replacing the barter trade. But the Bodo traders hardly had much of capital with them and their transactions remained more or less confined to barter trade of small volume only. The bigger volumes of trading transaction were now being done with new arrivals of Marwari traders who also monopolized the entire wholesale trade. Later on the monetary transactions almost totally replaced the barter trade. The Bodo traders could not cope with the requirement too because they were always averse to savings. Thus, as a result of the Colonial rule the Bodos were pushed out of their long traditional barter trade and had to be dependent exclusively on agriculture. It may be noted that, their way of life had little scope for formation of capital. The usual tribal insularity kept them away from the fresh ideas and fresh way of life that the British brought to this country and which had already enthused, the Assamese elite to venture into the threshold of the modern age. Therefore, ultimately land become main bread-earning source of life of the Bodos.

On the other hand, the flourishing trade at Udalguri attracted a section of Assamese traders from Barpeta sub-division (now district) of Kamrup District, popularly known as *Barpetiahs* [14] all over Assam. The *Barpetiahs* came to Udalguri as mustard seed traders and they used to export mustard seeds outside Asssm for oil extractions. In order to maximize their profit these *Barpetiah* traders often practiced forward trading in mustard seeds and grains locally produced by the Bodos. This actually meant advancing the price money at a lower rate for the crop when it is still standing on the fields of the cultivators and collecting the crops after harvesting whereby the price goes invariably much higher. The poor Bodo cultivators readily accepted this system, there were a lot of risk factors like climate, rainfall and host of other elements that effect the production of the crops. As insurance for this uncertainty the *Barpetiahs* not only assessed the expected quantity of harvest at the lowest possible average but also adjusted the output as a measure of extra guarantee used to execute a non-judicial deed on ordinary paper. They kept the land or a part thereof mortgaged as compensation for non-fulfillment of the forward contact. The Bodo farmers were mostly illiterate and stranger to all paper work and thus were practically at the mercy of the scheming *Barpetiah* traders. On the other hand, much of cultivable lands in the Bodo areas were covered by annual *patta* (land ownership record) or *no patta* land at all. This factor combined with the corrupt practices of the lower level revenue official was more convenient for the *Barpetiahs* to grab land from the Bodos illegally. Thus, that was the first phase of the land alienation process of the Bodos.

Secondly, imposition of the New Land Revenue System by the British Government was another problem in the economic field of the Bodos. It may be noted that, before the advent of the British, no revenue of any kind was required to be paid to the state for their land. As a result of the New Land Revenue system, a huge number of the poor Bodos and other tribal peasants were appointed in military forces and also in the tea gardens opened by the British, just earn money for paying land revenue.

Another aspect of the colonization of Assam was the British Government's policy of wasteland development and its cultivation, which had far –reaching adverse repercussions on the Assamese people in general, and the Bodo people in particular. To implement this policy the British Government encouraged immigration of landless peasants from the densely populated East Bengal to the sparsely populated districts of Assam. The policy opened a floodgate for immigration of landless peasants from East Bengal to Assam. It may be noted that 90% of these immigrants were Muslims. Naturally, the lower Assam districts had to bear the brunt of the pressure of immigration in Assam from Bengal.[15] It is worth mentioning that the lower Assam districts were already having a large Bodo population.

In fact, to run the colonial administration, British had further thrown open the doors of Assam for free flow of people from rest of India and neighbouring countries, which posed a sseroius socio-cultural and economic threat to the indigenous community like the Bodos. All the higher posts and facilities were enjoyed by the outsiders and a class of dominant Assamese elite who were of Aryan origin. Like other tribals, the Bodos also failed to occupy any prominent position due to lack of education and they became backward economically and socially. But later in the second decade of the twentieth century there emerged an educated section among the Bodos and other tribal communities. This educated section gradually began to feel that they were being deprived of their *legitimate privileges* and are exploited by the outsiders as by the dominant section of the Assamese. After being conscious about their due privilege, the Bodos placed various demands and memoranda before the British authority. But due to lack of political power, Bodo elite felt, they were deprived of *legitimate share* of administrative jobs and other benefits. Hence they felt the necessity to organize their community on the basis of distinct lingo-cultural traits so as to remove socio-economic backwardness and to maintain their distinct identity. This culminated in the formation of different organizations. Similarly other tribal communities also organized under different banner. They also felt the need of a common platform to fight for the redressal of their grievances. Consequent to their effort, a common

political organization named *All Assam Plains Tribal League* formed which already noted. The league played a crucial role during the period since 1933 to 1954 in safeguarding the interest of tribal people. For example, under the pressure of the Tribal League during the period 1930-1940, the British authority introduced some imaginary lines known as *Line System* by amending the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886 for the protection of tribal land. Under the Line System, the Government drew imaginary lines in the districts under immigration pressure to segregate the settlements of the indigenous population from the immigrant population and the new arrivals of immigrants were thereafter allowed to be settled only outside this line. But it is reported that corrupt revenue officials and other interested parties helped settlement even new arrivals inside the *line*. In course of time, pressed by both *Barpetiah* traders and the immigrant Muslims, the poor peasants moved into the reserved forest areas all along the northern belt of Assam to acquire new land. Faced by occasional droughts and chased by periodical eviction operation launched by the Government Forest Staff, the poor Bodo peasants often moved from on reserve forest area to another all over Assam. Thus, they spread over in the reserve forest areas of Sibsagar, Golaghat and Karbi Anglong districts besides increasing their unauthorized settlements in North Lakhimpur district. [16]

In 1946, Gopinath Bordoloi led Congress Government amended the Asssam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886 by passing an Amendment in the Legislative Council vide Assam Act XV, 1947 and added Chapter X to it. Under this provision the Government of Assam constituted Tribal Belt and Blocks in the localities predominantly inhabited by the Tribal and Backward classes. Initially, the following six classes were notified- (i) Plains Tribals, (ii) Hills Tribals, (iii) Tea Gardens Tribes, (iv) Santhals, (v) Scheduled Castes and (vi) Nepalese cultivator –glaziers. Subsequently, in 1969 the last named class was de-notified and excluded. This chapter provided that no land within these Belts and Blocks would henceforth be settled with any non-notified persons who had by then encroached on any unsettled land within these Belts and Bolcks would forthwith be evicted

from there. It also provided that no transfer of lands in these Belts and Blocks be given to any non-notified person by way of sale, lease, mortgage etc. Initially, total 33 Belts and Blocks were created in the undivided districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Nowgaon, Darrang and Lakhimpur. Subsequently, more were added and a few old ones were again de-notified. The Bodo people with other tribals hoped that these Belts and Blocks would protect their land from non-tribals and outsiders. But in reality all their expectations remained mere a dream, because there appeared a big gap between that the Government intended to do and what was actually done. What was more surprising was that the Act was not enforceable in the court of law. Rampant malpractices and manipulations ensured large scale illegal transfer of lands from tribals to non-tribals. Therefore, the Bodo leadrs have termed this amended Act as a complete farce on the above grounds. *The All Bodo Students' Union* (ABSU), which formed on 1967, has alleged that as a result of illegal transfer of land from tribal's to non-tribal people, the tribals have become minority in their so called *protected land*. Moreover, the Government also de-constituted these Belts and Blocks when it felt necessary. In a memorandum the Bodo leaders stated that, tribals villages of the South Kamrup, Lakhimpur, Bijini, Tamulpur, Baska tribal Belts and Blocks have been de-reserved by the Assam Government at different times.[17]

Thus, it appears that, though the Government of Assam provided legal safeguards for the protection of the tribal lands, the Government did not strictly followed the rules and regulations. Under such circumstances, the Bodos and many other tribals of Assam are determined to have Government of their own, which they feel, will ensure enactment of proper and effective legislation in their own land. Therefore, the ABSU expressed.[18]

> Now only on account that, the earlier as well as present Government failed to protect the tribal areas and if they fail to free the Tribal areas from encroachers, tribals are entitled to get as separate state. Non-tribal encroachers such as non-indigenous people have formed majority in tribal areas, oppressed the tribal and thus interests of

tribals are not protected. As such for the protection of the interest of tribals are not protected. As such for the protection of the interest of the tribals and ethnic identity of the Bodos, they are entitled to get Separate State.

Whether such demand are justified or not are a different matter but the fact remains that the Bodo leaders want to develop their community. They have become conscious and do not like to remain as a second class citizen in their own *homeland*. They fell that they are continuously being neglected and dominated by the advance sections of the Assamese society. They also believed that the Government of Assam intentionally alienating them from their own land. It is a fact that, officially though there are a number of tribal Belts and Blocks in Assam but practically, not a single Belt or Block in Assam is being maintained in the true spirit of the term. Even still continue these Belts and Blocks are being allowed to be encroached and occupied by the non-tribal people. This factor has forced them to feel that the Government of Assam has failed to give due attention to protect their lands.

III

Educational, employment, language and script problems are other factors responsible for socio-economic backwardness of the Bodo people. The backwardness of the Bodos in all parameters can be linked to their lack of education coupled with mass illiteracy and ignorance. They were almost exclusively engaged in agricultural occupation in which with their primitive method did not require any theoretical knowledge. For the Bodo peasants sending a boy to the school meant losing a working hand on the agricultural land. On the other hand, the language they had, itself was exclusively a spoken dialect ignorant of the Assamese alphabet and written Assamese language. For their children, Assamese was as much a foreign language as English. On the other hand, Assamese was the only available medium of instruction in the schools and colleges and the Bodo students were thus initially handicapped. The extent of non-availability of educational facility to the Bodos can be gauged from the fact that till 1910

there was not a single school in the entire Dooars region. But after the religious and social reformation led by Kalicharan Mech, the Bodos could realized that they were really falling far backward than their Assamese and Bengal neighbours in the case of earning decent livelihood as well as all round progress in life. Thereafter formation of various socio-political and literary organizations followed. But their efforts to establish their position and make all-round development were hindered by various factors. In the sphere of education and employment also the Bodos had to fight against the discriminatory policies and practices of the Government dominated by high caste people. Domination of the Caste-Hindu over other tribals in the filed of education and employment provided ample ground for Bodo Autonomy movement.

In may be noted that, the Bodo leaders felt that, the Bodos along with other tribal people were untouchable for the Caste-Hindus, which was all pervasive. The Bodos had to suffer a lot in the field of education and employment because of this caste feeling among the Caste-Hindu. They did not get equal treatment in the educational institutions. The tribal students studying at Cotton College, the only institution of higher education at that time in Assam, were not allowed to dine together with other Caste-Hindu students in the hostels. They felt socially so neglected that in a memorandum submitted to the Simon Commission the Kachari Youth Sanmilan complained[19]

> Socially tribals are regarded as untouchable. To call them Hindus will be a misname in as much the Hindus do not receive them into their society, do not dine with them and are mostly unsympathetic with their ideals and aspirations..... As the students of their community are not allowed to mess together with those of the Hindus they naturally look for provision of separate messing in all the schools and colleges of Assam.

Similar was the employment scenario. During the British days till even 1950, Assam Government imposed a condition, while advertising for Government jobs, that the candidate must come from respectable family

of the state. The Caste –Hindus exploited this clause to their advantage. One of the few most respected Assamese writer Benudhar Sharma sarcastically wrote.[20]

Anybody whoever knows somehow to write his name in English, by dint of his family's respectability, could be a Seristadar, Mohurri, Apprentice, Collector, Peon, Mauzadar, Chaudhary, Patgiri etc. Youngmen with good family backgrounds only were chosen for high office.

It appears that the family respectability or good family background was determined in most cases on the basis of purity of caste. So the Caste-Hindu Assamese reaped the benefit of this clause to the exclusion of the tribal people. Thus, the Bodos did not sit idle and they actively fought with other tribal organizations for the right of the tribal people.

However, the socio-religious and economic consciousness among the Bodos transformed into the political consciousness by their language and script problems. It can be ascertained that at one time the Bodo language was spoken by a large number of population spread over the area stretching from Sadiya in the east, to north Bengal, south-eastern Nepal and a portion of the North Bihar in the west and then, down towards south covering Sylhet, Mymensing, Cachar and Tripura.[21] Since time immemorial, the Bodos have been maintaining their language and this Bodo language is still their mother tongue. They regard their language as the *symbol* of identity. They want ot maintain and preserve it. As a result, in 1952 the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* (BSS), a literary organization formed and has been working seriously to promote Bodo language and literature. In 1953 BSS submitted memorandum to Assam Government demanding the introduction of the Bodo language in the Primary School in the Bodo concentrated areas. On the contrary, in 1960, the Government of Assam passed the Assam Official Language Act, 1960 which made Assamese language as the official language. Like other hills and plains tribals, the Bodo also felt it as imposition of the Assamese language by the Assam Government on non-Assamese people. The Bodos had to launch movement for Bodo medium

of instruction in the Primary, Secondary and High School level for long period. In 1972, on the demand of All Assam Students' Union (AASU), the Universities of Guwahati and Dibrugarh made Assamese language as the medium of Instruction in place of English in colleges. The Bodo students who had passed Matriculation in Bodo medium had been directly obstructed in receiving college education because of this change. Moreover, the language problem of the Bodos become more complicated when they demanded Roman Script for the Bodo language in 1974. The Bodos had no script of their own. Therefore, the writers of this language had to depend upon different scripts in different periods. However, till 1974, the Bodos had been using Assamese scripts for their language. But as a measure of protesting the hegemony of the Assamese Chauvinism, the Bodos started demanding Roman Script for Bodo language. On the other hand, the Government of Assam refused to concede their demand for Roman Script. Ultimately, Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India imposed *Devnagari* script to be accepted for Bodo language I 1977. Of course, a section of the Boods still advocating for Roman Script. Therefore, the Government's language policy posed a challenge to the Bodo students. The ABSU accused in a memorandum that the Assamese people and the Assam Government want to Assamize and assimilate the non-Assamese through the imposition of Assamese language and culture. The Assamese people and the Assam Government have not yet realized the mistake.[22]

Whether such type of statements are right or wrong is a different matter. But fact is that the denial of Bodo language infused a sense of suspicion in the minds of the Bodos. It appeared to the Bodos that the Government of Assam dominated by the advance section of Assamese people do not like that the Bodo should progress on the basis of their own language. All these problems discussed above made the Bodos feel insecure in the composite Assamese society. Thus, a sense of alienation from the mainstream Assamese society began in the mind of the Bodos. And ultimately the movement became totally political which led to the formation of the Autonomous Council.

Notes and References :

1. G.A. Grierson, Linguistic Survey Of India, Vol. III, part II Indian Reprint, New Delhi, 1967, pp. 1-17.

2. Census of India 1991, Assam State District Profile 1991 by M.Vijayanunni, Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India.

3. K. Brahma, A study of Socio-Religious Beliefs Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos, Calcutta, 1992, p. 194.

4. K.S. Singh (ed.) Tribal Movement in India, Vol. 1, New Delhi, 1982, p. 242.

5. O. Hodne, The Seed Bore Fruit (A short History of the Santhal Mission of the Northern Churches, 1867-1967), Santhal Paraganas, 1967, pp. 31-32 and F.S. Downs, Mighty Works of God: A Brief History of the Council of Baptist Churches in North-East India (1836-1950), 1st edn., Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati, 1911, pp. 84-90.

6. S. Basumatery, "50 Bochor Goalpara Bodo Baptist Church Union (1927-77)", Souvenir, 1977, p. 2 and R.N. Mosahary, *Origin* and *Growth of Christianity among the Boros of Assam* in the proceedings of 7th session of NEIHA, Pasighat, 1986, p. 279.

7. Tribal religious practices are animistic in nature. It has its own distinct character. The Bodos followed religious system of their own and which is free from influence by other religious system. They worship *Bathou Borai* in the form of a cactus of the Euphorbia splendid, which is called Sijau in Bodo. It is equated with Lord Shiva. They also have a number of gods and goddesses whom they worship in own custom.

8. It is important to note that the *Brahma Dharma* is a monotheistic religion, based on the belief in the existence of a supreme being called Brahma, a collection of Upanishadic Brahman. The basic tenet of this religion is that Brahma is the only God and manifests himself in *Light* that emanates the emanates the Sun and the Moon.

Hom Yogya, meaning burning and worship of fire, known to the Bodos as *Ahuti Shaoni*, is the symbolic adoration of the light on Brahma, and that is all what is required to lead one to Brahma. In its rituals the Brahma Dharma is *Vedic* and its philosophy, it is *Upanishadic*.

9. S. Basumatary, Ibid, p. 2.

10. R.N. Mosahary, "Brahma Religion and social change among the Boros" an article presented in the proceedings 6th session of the NEIHA, Agartala, 1985, pp. 347-351.

11. See the Souvenir of All Assam Tribal Sangha Silver Jubilee Session, Tipkai, 1986.

12. A. Roy, The Boro Imbroglio, Guwahati, 1955, p. 22.

13. A Collective name applied to all the tribes residing in the Bhutan Hills and the western Arunachal Pradesh hills.

14. These Assamese Caste-Hindu traders hail from Barpeta, hence they are popularly known as *Barpetiah*.

15. For details see H. Goswami's "An amalgamated reproduction of Table 5.4 and Table 6.19" *in population Trends in the Brahmaputra Valley*, 1881-1931, pp. 104 and 154.

16. A.Roy, Ibid, p. 34.

17. See the Memorandum *Three Member Expert Committee on Bodo Issues* submitted by BPAC and ABSU, Kokrajhar, 8 April, 1991.

18. See the Memorandum to the *President, Prime Minister and Home Minister of India* submitted by the ABSU, Kokrajhar, November 10, 1987.

19. See the Memorandum of the *Kachari Jubak Sanmilan* submitted to the Simon Commission on September 14, 1928 at New Delhi.

20. M. Chaudhury, "Nemesis of Insensitivity- The Bodoland Movement", an unpublished Manuscript.

21. B.L. Brahmaachaudhury, Bodo (*Kacharis*) *at a Glance*, New Delhi, 1993, p. 24.

22. See the Memorandum, Why separate state? To the President, The prime Minister and the Home Minister of India, submitted by ABSU, Kokrajhar, 10-11-1987.

***

THE ASSAM ASSOCIATION AND DEMAND FOR PROVINCIAL STATUS FOR ASSAM

Chandana Goswami

It is often argued that Indian nationalism in the nineteenth century is a product of the British *raj*. The growth of modern political ideas such as nationalism, nationality and political and constitutional rights were all results of the introduction of western culture in India[1]. The Revolt of 1857 was a turning point in the history of Indian nationalism, and after this epoch making event Indian nationalism received momentum, giving rise to widespread popular movements through a number of associations[2].

In 1843 an association of the name of British Indian Society was founded and in 1851 the name was changed into British Indian Association. Rajendralal Mitra, Ramgopal Ghose and Krishnada Pal were its leaders. In Madras (Chennai) the Madras Native Association and in Bombay (Mumbai) the Bombay Association were established in 1852. Justice M.G. Ranade and others organised the Poona *Sarvajanik Sabha* in 1870. In 1881 the Madras *Mahajan Sabha* was formed. Though regional in character, these organisations had a popular base among the people of those areas and they were often seen criticizing governmental policies and programmes. In 1876 Surendranath Banerjee and others founded an association named Indian Association. This association aimed at creating a strong public opinion all over the country on political matters. It organised agitation against Lord Lytton's Arms Act and the Vernacular Press Act. It also protested Surendranath Banerjee's removal from the Indian Civil Service and asked for reform in the Civil Service. In December 1883 the Indian Association sponsored an all India National Conference at Calcutta which was attended by several prominent political leaders of Bengal and outside. This conference was, in the words of Blunt, "The first stage towards a national parliament"[3].

In Assam, following the establishment of the Jorhat Sarbojanik Sabha in 1884 a number of public associations were born one after another. By 1886 the Shillong Association, the Nagaon *Ryot Sabha*, and the Upper Assam Association came into being in the Brahmaputra valley and the Sylhet Association and the Habiganj Peoples' Association were formed in the Barak valley. The activities of these associations, however, did not extend beyond regional boundaries, nor did they survive long to lead popular movements on political and socio-economic questions. Some of the representatives of these bodies, of course, took part in the annual sessions of the Congress during the initial period[4].

The death of Jagannath Barooah in April, 1907 and the subsequent division among its members practically brought to an end the activities of the Jorhat *Sarbojanik Sabha*. The need was now felt by the Assamese intelligentsia for a board based provincial organistion to represent to the government the wishes and aspirations of the people. The opportunity to form such an association came to Manik Chandra Barooah and a few others in early 1903 when about forty leading persons gathered at Guwahati to meet Denzil ibbetson, member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, who was on an official visit to Assam[5]. The ground was thus prepared for the organisation of the Assam Association which had played a significant part in the political advancement of the province prior to the emergence of the Assam Provincial Congress in 1921[6].

The zeal of the newly emerging Assamese educated middle class to get itself organised was the result of the two-fold currents of western education and national awareness. While western education initially inspired the intellectuals through debates and discussions, the national awareness that gradually developed among the educated sections of the people inspired them to get organised in order to assert their identity which had been temporarily eclipsed by the aura of western education[7].

During the first two decades of the twentieth century the Assam Association served as the mouthpiece of the people of Assam. Manik Chandra Barooah who was the soul of the new awakening in Assam, was its first General Secretary[8]. Prabhat Chandra Baruah of Gauripur and Jagannath Barooah of

Jorhat were its founder President and Vice-President respectively[9]. Men of moderate political views were generally associated with this Association and petitions and memorials within constitutional limits for redressal of grievances of concession of demands constituted its *modus operandi*. The Association proved its worth by forging a national forum for the people of this province as against sectarian and communal organisations, giving them a voice of unity and strength. It reached to the political thought and movements of the time on the Indian scene and saw that Assam did not lag behind India's march to progress in the political sphere[10]. The Assam Association was organised by Manik Chandra Barooah on the basis of the Indian Association founded in Calcutta. Apart from Manik Chandra Barooah, people like Mathurammohan Baruah, Radhanath Changkakati and Prasanna Chandra Ghose also contributed towards the foundation of the Assam Association[11]. Very little is known about the constitution of the Association but from its available proceedings and its manner of functioning, it can be said that the Association had a strong executive body consisting of the office bearers and representatives of its units scattered over different towns in Assam[12]. The financial position of the Association is also not known but taking into consideration the higher status of its leading members, who generally contributed to the fund of the Association, it can be presumed that its financial condition was more or less sound[13]. In the words of Manik Chandra Barooah himself, the Association "represents the landed and industrial interests of the poor", and that, "it contains as its office-bearers and members, men of light and leading of the province"[14]. The Association's central office was at Guwahati till 1915 and its President Prabhat Chandra Baruah used to function from Gauripur and Calcutta so long he continued in that office[15]. Resolutions on burning questions of the day which were adopted in general sessions after due deliberations were forwarded to the government for consideration. Since its leading members - Manik Chandra Barooah, Ghanashyam Baruah, Phanidhar Chaliha, Nabin Chandra Bardoloi, Tarun Ram Phukan etc. were also legislators of the time, they could also draw the attention of the government through their speeches and debates in the floor of the Council to the resolutions of the Association passed from time to time[16]. The Association was mainly concerned with demands like progressive councils and their extension to new areas and equality of the Indians with the Europeans.

Consequently, the interest of the rural population or the tea garden labourers received lesser attention[17].

The Assam Association as the leading political organisation of the time sent a strong deputation of members consisting of Ghanashyam Baruah, Ganga Gobinda Phukan, Tarun Ram Phukan, Nabin Chandra Bardoloi, Padmanath Gohain Baruah, Chandradhar Baruah and Prasanna Kumar Baruah to give evidence before Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India at Calcutta during his visit to India in 1917 to ascertain the Indian political view just on the eve of granting some amount of self government as promised by him in August, 1917[18]. The delegation demanded political advancement of Assam at par with other Indian provinces; but their efforts proved to be futile as in 1918 it appeared that the authorities intended to keep Assam outside the purview of the new reforms. Beatson Bell, the then Chief Commissioner of the province suggested that Assam should be treated separately on account of its peculiar geographical position[19]. The Surma valley branch of Indian Tea Association demanded exclusion of Assam from the reform scheme on the ground that there was no "intelligentsia" in Assam. Several organisations and groups like the Surma valley Muhammadan Association, *Mahisya Samity* of Sunamganj, *Ahom* Association and Assam Muhammadan Association pressed their respective claims for communal representation in case Assam was included in the new scheme[20].

The position of the Assam Association became very embarrassing when Prabhat Chandra Baruah, the first President of the Association, espoused the cause of the Zamindari Association of Goalpara and demanded amalgamation of this district with Bengal[21]. In its meeting held at Goalpara the Assam Association staunchly opposed the secessionists and deprecated the move of the Chief Commissioner Beatson Bell and the European tea planters to keep Assam outside the sphere of the forthcoming reforms[22]. In a lengthy memorial to the Secretary of State, the General Secretary of the Assam Association, Ghanashyam Baruah refuted all points raised by Bell. Earlier in a meeting held at Jorhat, the Association decided to send a one man delegation to represent Assam's case before the Parliamentary Committee in Calcutta. Nabin Chandra Bardoloi, an active member of the Association was chosen to be sent to

Calcutta[23], where he asserted that Assam was much more favourably situated for representative government than any other province of India.

On 22 May, 1919 the proposed Bill was introduced in the British Parliament and a Select committee of both the Houses under the leadership of Lord Selbourne was formed to scrutinize the Bill and to make suggestions wherever necessary. This enabled the Indian leaders to present their respective points of view for consideration of the Parliamentary Committee. The Assam Association also sent a two member delegation consisting of Nabin Chandra Bardoloi and Prasanna Kumar Baruah to London[24]. Submitting the views of the Assam Association Bardoloi argued :

> In the present Despatch, I find that the reason assigned is that it is backward socially and politically. That is why the Government of India thinks that the same treatment (inclusion in the Reformed Bill) cannot be meted. As a matter of fact, I feel difficulty in understanding the word backward as applied of Assam. I have considered over it very carefully. If it means that the people have not enough education. I beg to submit that the figures show that it is not so. If the proportion of educated men to the population is taken, Assam I think comes third or fourth in India. Socially, I do not know how Assam is considered to be backward. On the other hand, I believe, it is more forward in many respects than all of the provinces in India .... the recommendation that Assam should be included among the major provinces of India ought to be followed and it ought to have the same treatment as the other major provinces of India[25].

In London the members of the Assam Association contacted a number of Indian political leaders who were then there including Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sankaran Nayar and Sarojini Naidu and also attended the meetings and receptions organised by the British Congress Party and Labour Party which enabled them to win their sympathy and support for the legitimate demands of Assam. When the delegation met Ontagu in his

office after giving evidence, the members were indirectly told that they had almost won the case, but it must be supported by a representation with strong and valid grounds, which the delegation successfully did on the reopening of the session[26].

The personal endeavours made by the members of the delegation and the persistent attempts on the part of the Assam Association finally enabled Assam to occupy her rightful place as a major province in the new political set-up[27].

Popular grievances, injustices and vagaries of the government received the fullest attention of the Assam Association. Protests were always made within and outside the legislature against imposition of new taxes or enhancement of the existing ones. The Association continued to have regular executive meetings but till 1915 its annual sessions were very few and far between. Manik Chandra Barooah continued to be the General Secretary till the time of his death in September 1915 when the office fell upon the shoulders of Ghanashyam Baruah of Jorhat. During this period, inspite of his poor health Manik Chandra Barooah shouldered all the responsibilities of the Association and turned it into a "one man's show"[28]. Barooah worked day and night and his mature opinions not only carried weight but also earned appreciation from all concerned[29].

Thus, a new awakening marked the close of the century and the beginning of the next. Under British administration there were over all changes in the province due to the spread of English education. The emergence of a group of Assamese elite, through small, imbued with advanced political ideas produced a radical change in Assam politics. The political advancement of the people was however rather slow. The yet incipient and unconsolidated Assamese middle class was neutralised by Fuller by his promised of a favourable treatment to the indigenous youth in the matter of public services and also for the promotion of the linguistic interests of the province.

Notes & References :

1. Bose, N.S., *The Indian National Movement*, P.2., Calcutta, 1965.

2. Hazarika, B.B., *Political Life in Assam during the Nineteenth Century*, P.427, Delhi, 1987.

3. Blunt, W.S., *India under Ripon*, P. 116, London, 1909.

4. *Royal Commission on Opium, Minute of Evidence*, Vol. II, P.305, see evidence of Radhanath Changkakati, 28 December, 1893.

5. Barthakur, K., Deb Sarmah, S., and Borah, M.C., Manik, P.26; Sharma, A.K., 'An Account of Assam Association' in Baruah, P.(ed), *Commemorative Volume, Golden Jubilee*, Handique Girls' College, 1939-1989, PP. 115-117.

6. Barpujari, H.K. (ed), *Political History of Assam*, 1826-1919, Vol. I, P.172, Guwahati, 1977.

7. *The Calcutta Review*, Vol.XVI, No. 32, PP. 483-500.

8. Dutt, K.N., *Landmarks of the Freedom Struggle in Assam*, P. 41, Guwahati, 1969.

9. Guha, A., *Planter-Raj to Swaraj : Freedom Struggle and Electoral Politics in Assam*, 1826-1947, P. 63, New Delhi, 1988.

10. Dutt, K.N., *op.cit.*, PP. 41-42.

11. Goswami, P.D., *Manik Chandra Barooah Aru Teor Yug*, P. 54., Guwahati, 1970.

12. Barpujari, S.K., 'History of the Assam Association (1903-1921)', paper presented at the XVI annual conference of the Institute of Historical Studies held at Dibrugarh University on October 25-28, 1978.

13. Devi, L., 'The Assam Association' in Ray, N.R. (ed), *Public Associations in India*, P. 116, Calcutta, 1984.

14. Barpujari, S.K., 'History of the Assam Association (1903-1921)', *op.cit.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Eastern Bengal and Assam Gazette* (Part IV), 21 April, 1909, PP. 57 - 62.

17. Baruah, S.L., *A Comprehensive History of Assam*, PP. 515 - 516, New Delhi, 1985.

18. E.S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, had declared in the House of Commons on 20 August 1917 : "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of the responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire". Singh, G.N., Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development, 1600 - 1919, Vol. I, P. 293.

19. Bhagavati, B.C., *Bharotor Swadhinata Andolonar Ruprekha*, P. 9, Jorhat, 1976.

20. Barupujari, H.K. (ed), *op.cit.*, Vol. I, PP. 217 - 218.

21. Assam Police Abstract of Intelligence, 18 January 1919.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Proceedings of extra-ordinary general meeting of Assam Association, Jorhat, 11 November, 1918.

24. Barpujari, H.K. (ed), *op.cit.*, Vol. I, P. 219.

25. Quoted in Bhagawati, B.C., *op.cit.*, PP 9 - 11.

26. Saikia, C.P. (ed), *Karmabir Nabin Chandra Bardoloi*, PP. 14 - 15, Guwahati, 1975.

27. Baruah, P.K., The Assam Delegation to the Joint Parliamentary Committee Presided by Lord Selbourne, 1919, PP. 74 - 85.

28. Barpujari, S.K., '*History of the Assam Association*, 1903 - 2921', *op.cit.*

29. Barthakur, L., Deb Sarmah, K. and Bora, M.C., *op.cit.*, P. 27.

***

CONTINUITY OF TRADITIONAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AMONG THE RURAL TIWAS OF ASSAM

Arifur Zaman

Abstract

Health is a pre-requisite for human development and is essentially concerned with the wellbeing of humankind. The overall health status of the tribal community is the outcome of the several interacting factors. The socio-cultural dimensions integral to the health care of a community, effects of environment in which they inhabits, behavioural pattern and life style, traditional system prevalent among them, and the impinging factors to that system, compulsions in accepting modem health care, etc., are the main components of the health care system of a particular society. Each community has its self ideas and opinions about health and has multifarious knacks to overcome from the diseases, which is generally referred to as 'health culture'. The Tiwa is an important schedule tribe of Assam distributed over hills and plains of the state. Although a section of the Tiwas have imbibed many cultural traits from the neighbouring Assamese Hindus, yet one can see the conspicuous presence of the traditional cultural traits among them. Among the Tiwas of Assam pristine preventive and curative measures are found till today. In this paper a humble attempt has been made to examine the continuity and change of the health care system of the Tiwas of No.1 Manipur village, district Marigaon, Assam.

Introduction :

'Diseases and death are universal experiences of each and every society. Disease is a disvalued process which has obstacled the proper functioning of a person and may lead to death. In every culture a substantial and integral set of beliefs, knowledge, techniques and practices are related to the major life

experiences of health and diseases. Medical history of man can only be understood through an in-depth study of the different socio-cultural system of human beings.

The concept of health and diseases are basically biological. But traits like beliefs, religion, philosophy, education, socio-economic condition, etc., also determine people's attitude towards health and illness. When we consider the environmental factors of the diseases, these cultural traits become more evident. Every society has a theory of disease and provides an efficacious for the treatment. The medical system prevalent in a society is a combination of traditions, beliefs, techniques, ecological adaptation, etc. This system is an integral part of the culture of the society. It provides the means to the members of the society for maintaining health and preventing and curing diseases' (Medhi, 1995:61).

In traditional societies people believe in different demon and deities as one of the agency of disease and illness. The rural people also believe that evil eye, breach of taboo, black magic, etc., also caused hindrance to the good health. To cope with the situation the people of unadvanced societies depend on ethnomedicine, village medicineman, etc. Health care system of the unadvanced communities is the focal point of interest of many anthropologist and sociologist. Rivers (1924), Clement (1932), Field (1937), Spencer (1941), Ackerknecht (1942-47), Elwin (1964), Lieban (1973), Choudhuri (1986,1990), Medhi (1994-95), Medhi, Saikia, and Zaman (2004-05), has studied the traditional health care system in different societies of the world.

The study of indigenous medical system is generally referred to as popular medicine, ethnodiatry, folk medicine, ethnomedicine, and so on. The Tiwas of Assam also have a pristine system of medical care. The system among the Tiwa is a very complicated one, and has components like beliefs, practices, rituals, herbal medicine, spell, amulate, appeasing of deities, village medicineman, etc. In respect of the idiosyncrasy towards the continuation of traditional health care system, an effort has been made to assess the use of herbal medicine, its continuity and change, in the health culture of a scheduled tribe village, i.e, No.1 Manipur village, District Marigaon of Assam. Data has

been collected during the first three months of 2007 and in data collection some of the methods and techniques generally adopted by the anthropologists are used.

The Tiwas :

The Tiwas are one of the important schedule tribe of Assam. They are principally concentrated in Nagaon district of Assam. They are found both in the hills and in the plains. In the plains they are found mainly in Dhemaji, Jorhat, Kamrup, Lakhimpur, and Sibasagar district, and in the hills they are basically found in Karbi Anglong district and Jaintia hills of Meghalaya. The topography and ecology of the plains and hills have influnced the Tiwas considerably so much so that certain espects of socio-cultural life of Hill Tiwas became distinct from that of the Plain Tiwas. The Tiwa villages are surrounded by the caste communities of Assam, due to which some traits of Assamese culture have percolated into the Tiwa culture. Inspite of that they have been able to maintain some of the traits of their traditional culture.

The original home of the Tiwas from where they have migrated to the present abode is believed to be the Jaintia hills of Meghalaya. In respect of socio-culture dimension, they are akin to the Jaintias of Meghalaya. The Tiwa society in the plain area is patrilineal and in the hills they may either patrilineal or matrimonial. Agriculture is their mainstay. The Tiwas are generally divided into number of exogamous clans (wali or kul), and a number of sub-clans called dhan bangha. Lord Mahadeo is their supreme god and almost all rituals begin with a prayer to Lord Mahadeo. They worship many deities, and the deities should be regularly propitiated by offerings and sacrifices. At present considerable changes have been taken place in their religion due to the influence of Assamese Vaishnavisim, and thus there are two broad religious division, viz., the traditionalist and the Vaishnavities.They have abandoned their traditional language, and have adopted Assamese as their mother tongue.

The Setting :

The No.1 Manipur is a revenue village located in the Marigaon district of Assam. The village is a homogeneous one inhabited by the Tiwas. It is a

medium size village composed of 81 households. Their traditional occupation is agriculture, and most of the Tiwas of the village are peasants. A few of them are petty traders, and some of them have been pursuing various government and semi-government services. The total population of the village is 446, of which 231 are male and 215 are female. Literacy rate in the village is very low. The males of the village are found to be more literate compared to the female. The Tiwas living in the No.1 Manipur village is surrounded by the Assamese caste villages. Therefore, their culture has imbibed many elements of Assamese Hindu culture. A section of Tiwas has abandoned their traditional animistic religion and has adopted Vaishnavisim preached by the great saint of Assam, Srimanta Sankaradeva. Many of the Tiwas have discarded the tribal identity by rejecting their traditional surnames and adopting Assamese Hindu surnames and by that placing themselves into the arena of Koch caste. From the above mention cursory accounts it is evident that the Tiwas of the villages are going through a transitional phase.

Ethnomedicinal System of the Tiwas :

'From time immemorial plants have provided man real and supposed means of healing. The ethnic populations inhabiting different parts of the world, particularly the rural communities, have indispensable relation with the vast resources of natural vegetation and have their pristine medical systems' (Medhi et al., 2004-05:119-120). Plants are the natural and traditional source of medicine and the use of plants has been occupied vital place in therapeutics. Till today, a large section of the populations of the world as the natural source combat with the disease and death.

'Human beings have been in close interactions with nature from the very early period of their existence. With many different kinds of pursuits man has to look forward to nature even today. The reciprocal relationship between plants and human beings of various levels of culture is not only an age old feature but it also provides us an easy understanding of socio-economic and cultural bondage that exists between them. Man has been using plants since time immemorial, the importance and uses of plants, however varied from

time to time as also from human society to society as the knowledge about plants, their parts and contents varies' (Medhi et al., 2005:25).

The Tiwas of the study village have an elaborate knowledge of ethnomedicinal plants handed over from generation to generation. It should be noted here that 'The floristic composition of Assam is unique of India. During 1974-75 the area under forest of Assam was 28,9241,00, which has reduced to 22,175, 85 during 1993-94. The total area under forest of the state is rapidly declining. However, almost all types of plant found in different climatic conditions grow luxuriously in the remaining forest of Assam. Many plants of the region have been identified, though many more are left unidentified till to date. Medicinal value of the plants of Assam forms one of the most important aspects of the state's flora' (Medhi et al., 2004-05:119-120).

The Tiwas have traditional knowledge about the medicinal value of the plants and use that knowledge to control sufferings and eliminate diseases. The following table shall give an idea about the use of medicinal plants among the Tiwas of No.1 Manipur village to combat with the disease and illness.

Table 1 : Medicinal use of plants among the Tiwas of No. 1 Manipur Village

Sl. No.	Name of Plant		Plant part used	Form of medicine	Integral disease
	Assamese	Botanical			
I	II	III	IV	V	VI
1	Ada	Zingibar officinalies	Rhizome	(a) Paste	(a) Headache
				(b) Juice extracted mixed with honey	(b) Cough
2	Amara	Spondia spinnata	Fruit and bark	(a) Curry prepared from the fruit	(a) Indigestion
				(b) Paste of the bark consume with water	(b) Typhoid
				(c) Paste of the bark	(c) Excess bleeding in woman after child birth
				(d) Raw juice extracted from the paste of the bark	(d) Woman suffer from puerperal fever
3	Amita	Carica papaya	Fruit	(a) Ripe fruit and boiled tender fruit	(a) constipation
				(b) Latex	(b) Ringworm

4.	Amlakhi	Phyllanthus Embilica	Fruit	(a) Raw juice (b) Fruit	(a) Hair loss or alopecia (b) Indigestion
5.	Athiakal	Musa balbisinia	Fruit and Inflorence	(a) Ripe fruit (b) Curry of inflorence	(a) Dysentery (b) Iron deficiency
6	Bahka (a) White flower (b) Red Flower	(a)Adhatoda vasica (b)Evantheum indicum	Flower and leaf	(a) Curry of dried or fresh flower of red variety (b) Juice extracted from leaves of white variety	(a) Acidity and worm (b) Acidity, blood vomiting, cough, and whooping cough
7	Bel	Aegle marmelos	Fruit, leaf and root	(a) Ripe fruit (b) Dried tender fruit (c) Paste of leaves (d) Root	(a) Constipation (b) Dysentery (c) Delirium, cough and chest pain (d) pulpilation of heart
8	Bhedailata	Paderia scandens	Leaf	(a) Curry of leaf	(a) Chronic dysentery joint pain, piles, sluggish liver
9	Chengeri' tenga	Oxalis cornicalata	Whole plant	(a) Extracted juice	(a) Blood dysentery, Prolapsed of rectum
10	Chirata	Swertia chirata	Leaf	(a) Extracted juice	(a) Worm infecting intestine
11	Haladhi	Curcuma longa	Rhizomes	(a) Raw juice (b) Raw paste mixed with honey (c) Hot paste	(a) Worms (b) Soreness of tongue in children (c) Affected area in sprain
12	Jaluk	Piper nigrum	Seeds	(a) Seeds boiled with water (b) Paste with water (c) Seven seeds dried and grounded to powder and boiled with water (d) Seeds	(a) Cough (b) Cough (c) Tuberculosis (d) Attack by spirit
13.	Jarmaniban	Eichhorosia crassipes	Leaf	(a) Mashed leaves	(a) Cut and bruises
14	Kanchkal/ Purakal	Musa Sapientum	Fruit	(a) Boiled or curry of fruit	(a) Dysentery
15	Kolakashu	Colocasia asculenta	Stem	(a) Extracted juice from stem	(a) Goiter, night blindness, piles, tonsilytes (b) Pain of insects sting
16	Machandari	Houttyunia cordata	Whole plant except root	(a) Baked or curry of leaves	(a) Blood dysentery
17	Madhuri	Psidium gujava	Tender leaves	(a) Paste of leaves with honey, tender leaves	(b) Bruiser or ulcer, blood dysentery
18	Mahaneem	Azadirachata indica	Bark, leaf, and twig	(a) Powdered dried leaves, or water extracted after boiling leaves (b) Fresh and dried leaves (c) Twig	(a) Skin diseases, piles, and pox (b) Worm (c) Infection of teeth
19	Manimuni	Centella asiatica	Entire plant	a. Juice extracted from paste of the plant b. Paste of the plant	(a) Indigestion, diarrhoea and droplets in eye disease (b) Headache
20	Matikathal	Ananas comosus	Tender leaves	(a) Decoction of extracted juice (b) Juice extracted from paste of the leave	(a) Upset stomach (b) Worm infection, and vomiting in children

23	Silikha	Terminalia chebula	Fruit	(a) Powder of dried fruit	(a) Acidity, constipation, cough, fever, piles, stomach pain
24.	Thekera	Gracinia pedunculata	Fruit	(a) Pieces of dried fruit is soaked in water or curry	(a) Blood dysentery
25	Tita kerala	Momordica charantia	Fruit and leaf	(a) Curry of fruit and leaves	(a) Diabetes, distaste and worm
26	Tulasi	Osimum sanctum	Leaf	(a) Juice extracted from leaves	(a) Cough, fever, skin diseases

Conclusion :

The study reveals that the Tiwas of the study area have an elaborate knowledge of medicinal plant and their uses to treat disease and ailments. Most of the medicinal plants grow wild in the vicinity of the village; however sometimes they carefully planted a few of ethnomedicinal plants in their gardens. It is pertinent to note here that Marigaon town is situated only at a distance of 7 km from the No. 1 Manipur village. In the Marigaon Town a government hospital, one nourshing home and a few pharmacies are situated. The village people are accustomed to take help from the modern physician when the situation arises. However, at first they try to treat the disease indigenously. To treat a patient suffering from pox is invariably treated ethnomedically at home. Most of the deliveries are taken place in the residential units of the village. When a person suffering from a particular disease can not be identified or if a patient does not recovered after prolonged treatment locally, only then they seek for the help of allopathic system.

References :

1. Acherknecht, Erwin. 1942a. 'Problems of Primitive Medicine' in *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 11:503-21.

2. _____. 1942b. 'Primitive Medicine and Culture Pattern' in *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 12:545-74.

3. _____.1947. 'Primitive Surgery' in American Anthropologist, 49:25-45.

4. Choudhuri, Buddhadeb (ed.). 1986. *Tribal Health-Socio Cultural Dimensions,* New Delhi, Inter India Publications.

5. Choudhuri, Buddhadeb (ed.). 1990. *Cultural and Environmental Dimensions on Health,* New Delhi, Inter India Publications.

6. Clements, Forrest, E. 1932. 'Primitive Concepts of Disease' in *American Archaeology and Ethnology,* 32:185-252, University of California Publication.

7. Elwin, Verrier. 1964. *Philosophy for NEFA,* Shillong.
   Field, M.J. 1937. *Religion and Medicine of the Ga People,* London, Oxford University Press.

8. Lieban, R. W. 1973. 'Medical Anthropology' in *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology:* 1031-72, edited by J.J. Honigman, Chicago, Rand McNally College Publishing Company.

9. Medhi, Birinchi K. 1994. 'Health Culture in a Kaibarta Village' in the *Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology,* VIII: 39-45, Guwahati, Gauhati University.

10. _____. 1995. 'Ethnomedicine: A Study among the Mishings in a Rural Context' in the *Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology,* IX: 61-68, Guwahati, Gauhati University.

11. Medhi, Birinchi, K., Mahaswetta Saikia, and Arifuz Zaman. 2004-05. 'Use of Medicinal Plants in the Assamese Society' in the *Bulletin of the Department of Folklore Research,* Vol. & No. 6, Guwahati, Gauhati University.

12. Rivers, W.H.R. 1924. *Medicine, Magic and Religion,* New York, Harcourt, Brace.

13. Sharma Thakur, Dr. G.C. 1985. *The Lalungs (Tiwas),* Guwahati, Tribal Research Institute.

14. Spencer, D.M. 1941. *Disease, Religion and Society in the Fiji Island,* Monograph of the American Ethnological Society, New York.

***

CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE PRESENT ERA : AN ANALYSIS

Borun Dey

(I)

In the age of globalization, the state can not perform all of its functions and responsibilities properly due to a number of factors. There is also opinion that state has no role to play, because, the functions and responsibilities of the state have increased to such an extent and in such a way that it can't devote its time to deal with each and every of these responsibilities. Therefore, the state has no other option, but, to seek help from other stake-holders. The civil society institutions are the most important stake-holders to take up this responsibility given by the state. The term 'civil society', therefore, has assumed greater political and intellectual interest in recent years generating new and complex discourses of democracy and development which was in vague in the 18th and 19th century. Earlier, social scientists theorized the two-sector world, namely, the market or the economy on the one hand and state or government on the other. In the 1970s, as the Leninist regimes began to disintegrate in Eastern Europe, the intellectuals and political activists seized upon the vocabulary of civil society to mobilize citizens against repressive states. Asserting their rights to free speech and free association to carve out a social space for their activities, some even called for the virtual uncoupling of society from the state (Carolyn: 2003). In development theory, policy and practice, the resurgence of interest in civil society has contributed to a paradigmatic shift in thinking away from a dualistic, ideologically informed fixation with the state versus the market towards a new triadic paradigm embracing civil society, the state and the market. In this context, this paper is an attempt to analyze the various dimensions of civil society. In part II historical development of civil society and in part III some dominant theories of civil society have been dealt. Part III deals with the concluding remarks.

(II)

Civil society is composed of the totality of voluntary civic and social organizations and institutions that form the basis of a functioning society as opposed to the force-backed structures of a state (regardless of that state's political system) and commercial institutions of the market. There are myriad definitions of civil society in the post-modern sense. The working definition given by the Centre for Civil Society of London School of Economics is illustrative here :

Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.

The concept of civil society in its pre-modern classical republican understanding is usually connected to the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century. However, it has much older history in the realm of political thought.

In the classical period or in the pre-modern history, the concept was used as a synonym to good society, and seen as indistinguishable from the state. Generally, civil society has been referred to a political association governing social conflict through the imposition of rules that restrained citizens from harming one another. For instance, **Socrates** admonished that conflicts within society should be resolved through public argument using 'dialectic', a form of rational dialogue to uncover truth.

For **Plato**, the ideal state was a 'Just Society'. It was the duty of the 'Philosopher King' to look after people in civility. As far as **Aristotle** was

concerned, Polis was an 'Association of Associations' that enables citizens to share in the virtuous task of ruling and being ruled. If we analyze the political discourse in the classical period, we can see the importance of a 'Good Society' in ensuring peace and order among the people. The philosophers in the classical period did not make any distinction between state and society. By holding this view, we can say that the classical political thinkers had endorsed the genesis of civil society in its original sense.

The Thirty Years' War and the subsequent Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 heralded the birth of the Modern State System and paved the absolute nature of the state. Strongly influenced by the atrocities of Thirty Years' War, the political philosophers of the time held that social relations should be ordered in different way than in natural law conditions. Some of their attempts led to the emergence of Social Contract Theory that contested social relations existing in accordance with human nature.

Social Contract Theory of Thomas Hobbes set forth two types of relationship. One was vertical, between the Leviathan and the people; therefore, the latter submitted them to the former. The second system was the realm of horizontal relationship among the people. In that system, people, under the surveillance of Leviathan, were compelled to limit their natural rights in a way that it did not harm others' rights. The first system denotes the state and the second represents civil society in the present meaning. Hobbes' paradigm shows that the formation of the state conduced to the formation of civil society. Therefore, in his view, the state is imperative to sustain civility in society.

The struggle between the divine right of the crown and the political rights of parliament influenced Locke to forge a Social Contract Theory of a limited state and a powerful society. Locke advocated the primacy of society over the state. Lockean account of state of nature, basic rights, primacy of society and limits of the state were later conduced to the formation of liberal tradition that has a distinct notion about state-civil society relations. Both Hobbes and Locke considered civil society as a

sphere that maintained civil life, the realm where civic virtues and rights were derived from natural laws. However, they did not hold that civil society was a separate realm from the state.

With **G.W.F. Hegel**, who completely changed the meaning of the idea, modern liberal understanding of civil society as a form of market society appears. Apart from their ancestors, the leading thinker of the Romanticism considered civil society as a separate realm, "system of needs", that stood for the satisfaction of individual interests and private property. Conceiving this idea, Hegel held that civil society had emerged at the particular epoch of capitalism, therefore, it serves its interests: individual rights and private property. Hence, he used the German term *"bürgerliche Gesellschaft"* (Civilian Society) to denote civil society. For Hegel, civil society manifests contradictory behaviour. Hegel considered the state as the highest form of ethical life. Therefore, the political state has the capacity and authority to correct the fault points in civil society. Having compared the despotic France and democratic America, **Alexis de Tocqueville** contested Hegel putting weight age to the system of a limited state with voluntary associations as counterbalance to liberal individualism. However, Hegel's perception of social reality was followed in general by Tocqueville who distinguished political society and civil society.

This was the theme taken further by **Karl Marx**. For Marx, civil society was the 'base' where productive forces and social relations were taking place, whereas political society was the 'superstructure'. Agreeing with the link between capitalism and civil society, Marx held that the latter represents the interests of the bourgeoisie. He considered the state and civil society as the executive arms of the bourgeoisie; therefore, both should be withered away. This negative impression about civil society was rectified by **Antonio Gramsci**.

Departing greatly from Marx, Gramsci did not consider civil society as coterminous with the socio-economic base of the state. Rather, Gramsci located civil society in the political superstructure. He underlined the

crucial role of civil society as the contributor of the cultural and ideological capital for the survival of the hegemony of capitalism. He depicted civil society as the site for challenging the existing values and inculcating new ones in the counter-hegemonic struggle against capitalism. Gramsci's conception of civil society includes all social institutions that are non-production related, non-governmental, and non-familial that ranging from recreational groups to trade unions and political parties.

Gramsci viewed civil society as the site for problem-solving. Agreeing with this view, the New Left assigns civil society a key role in defending people against the state and market and in formulating democratic will to influence the state. At the same time, the Neo-liberals consider civil society as a site for struggle to subvert communist and authoritarian regimes. Thus, the term civil society appropriated an important place in the political discourses of the New Left and Neo-liberals.

Post-modern way of understanding civil society was first developed by political opposition in former Soviet block East European countries in 1980s. From that time stems a practice within political field of using the idea of civil society instead of political society. However, in 1990s with the emergence of the nongovernmental organizations and the New Social Movements (NSMs) on a global scale, civil society as a third sector became a key terrain of strategic action to construct 'an alternative social and world order.' Henceforth, postmodern usage of idea of civil society became divided into two main ways: as a political society and as the third sector - apart from plethora of definitions.

By the end of the 1990s, civil society was seen less as a panacea amid the growth of the anti-globalization movement and the transition of many countries to democracy; instead it was increasingly civil society that was called on to justify its legitimacy and democratic credentials, this led to the UN creating a high level panel on civil society. Post-modern civil society theory has now largely returned to a more neutral stance, but with marked differences between the studies of the phenomena in richer

societies as opposed to writing on civil society in developing states. Civil society in both areas is, however, often viewed in relation to the state, remaining counter-poise and complement rather than an alternative, or as Whaites stated in his 1996 article, *'the State is seen as a precondition of Civil Society'*.

The development and consolidation of civil society is related to processes oriented to the construction of democracy in modern societies. Democracy does not depend only on forms, laws, and juridical procedures, but, receives its substance and driving force from social movements and people's associations which act as political groups or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). These associations are the actors of the civil society.

The literature on links between civil society and democracy has their root in early liberal writings like those of Alexis de Tocqueville. However they were developed in significant ways in 20th century by theorists like **Gabriel Almond** and **Sidney Verba**, who identified the role of civil society in a democratic order as vital. More recently, **Robert D. Putnam** has argued that even non-political organizations in civil society are vital for democracy. This is because they build social capital, trust and shared values, which are transferred into the political sphere and help to hold society together, facilitating an understanding of the interconnectedness of society and interests within it.

Others, however, have questioned how democratic civil society actually is. Some have noted that the civil society actors have now obtained a remarkable amount of political power without anyone directly electing or appointing them. Finally, other scholars have argued that, since the concept of civil society is closely related to democracy and representation, it should in turn be linked with ideas of nationality and nationalism.

The term civil society is currently often used by critics and activists as a reference to sources of resistance to and the domain of social life which needs to be protected against globalization. This is because it is seen as acting beyond boundaries and across different territories. However, as civil society can, under many definitions, include and be funded and

directed by those businesses and institutions that support globalization, this is a contested use. On the other hand, others see globalization as a social phenomenon expanding the sphere of classical liberal values, which inevitably lead to a larger role for civil society at the expense of politically derived state institutions.

(III)

There are a number of theories of civil society. Here an attempt has been made to discuss some of the important theories of civil society.

1. Civil Society is the Third Sector: A Development View :

Some writers contend that civil society is identical with the Third Sector (or "independent sector"), as distinct from the government and business sectors. Voluntary associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) formed a prominent niche in the economy during the 20th century, and Third Sector theorists have come to see the state as one among many organizations that govern society. Lester Salamon and Helmut Anheir are among those who argue civil society as a special (third) sector of the larger society These theorists argue that government cannot solve all the problems that originate in society and that this sector is often better qualified for certain kinds of "public work." Government could justly and even wisely transfer some of its functions into this nongovernmental sector.

2. Civil Society is the Private Sector: The Nonstatist View :

Leaders who are more closely associated with business see civil society as the "private sector," or sometimes, broadly, the "voluntary order," and occasionally, the "independent sector." In this outlook, business is part of civil society. Predictably, these theorists tend to be conservative, but there are differences between them. Francis Fukuyama, a contemporary social scientist who shares the nonstatist view, sees civil society broadly as:

...a complex welter of intermediate institutions, including businesses, voluntary associations, educational institutions, clubs, unions, media, charities, and churches...a thriving civil society depends upon a

people's habits, customs, and ethics – attributes that can be shaped only indirectly through conscious political action and must otherwise be nourished through an increased awareness and respect for culture.

3. Civil Society is the Public Sphere : A Humanist View :

A shade of difference exists among philosophers of the public sphere. One set of philosophers would emphasize the private vs. the state; while another would emphasize the personal vs. impersonal spheres of life. Philosophers of the first binary oppose the growth of the state and its incursion of everyday life. Philosophers of the second binary celebrate personal life as opposed to the growth of the impersonal sphere, which could include corporations as well as the state. Some philosophers oppose the division of "public vs. private spheres." One of these theorists, Hannah Arendt, described these spheres as constantly flowing into each other. This view of civil society imagines the development of a new hybrid structure: the private/public composite, which becomes the center of meaning and change in the development of civil society. The public sphere is popularly identified with government and institutions under its control like public schools, but philosophers say the term has a much broader meaning.

4. Civil Society is a Polity : A Revised Socialist View :

When the idea of civil society was resurrected in Europe at the fall of the Soviet Union, everything was "political." To understand this revival, we turn to the notion of "polity." The notion of polity conveyed the idea that authority should be shared among members of a diverse community. In other words, the state is no longer the dominant institution even though it is crucial to the development of civil society. Political theorists are broadening the notion of authority and power beyond the state. They see a new set of beliefs, a new culture forming within society. They consider "power" to be central to the definition of civil society, but it is now forged through more democracy in the rest of society.

5. Civil Society is an Order of Associations : A Post-Capitalist View :

Some writers in this century have combined the work of Adam Smith and Karl Marx. Smith and Marx both opposed big corporations and

big governments, and these principles are incorporated into 21st century projections of the post-capitalist society. G.D.H. Cole, an English theorist, thought that political powers should be separated from economic powers and the differences should be mediated through a matrix of democratic organizations. No single state could fully represent the diverse wills of people in society. Cole thought the "state" should devolve into a multi-centered plural system of associations governed by a federal structure of quasi-public bodies. Cole foresaw a civil order of associations developing within the private sector during the early twentieth century.

6. Civil Society is a Symbolic Order : A Dynamic Opposition :

Scholars like Adam Seligman speak of a new society forged "in the tension of opposites." For example, a great tension exists between the "ideal" and the "real," "order and freedom," "community and individuality," "public and private," "universal and particular," "secular and sacred." Civil society develops in the resolution of contrary (universal) ideas that become concretely realized in a new set of institutions. In sum, these scholars suggest that society is evolving a new order of freedom and justice, indeed, a new order of community that enhances the life of individuals. Civil society grows out of a paradox of opposites.

(IV)

Civil society became a popular idea in the public mind during the last decades of the 20th century. Its emergence at that time can be traced to the failure of communist nations to achieve their ideals and the failure of capitalist nations to solve social problems. But there were, and continue to be, many different outlooks on the subject. Development experts define civil society as the "Third Sector." Business leaders define it as the whole "private sector." European leaders classify it as a "democratic polity." Social scientists describe it as the private sector becoming public without losing all proprietary rights and privacy. Philosophers see a new culture developing through the resolution of polarities like "public vs. private," and "individual vs. community." So differences are there regarding the

very outlook of civil society. But, regarding the importance of civil society, it may be said that it has become the sole of governance of the democratic countries of the world. At this present time, the state and civil society should work hand in hand for the proper development of people and the society as a whole. If "Democracy" is a universal claim today, the issues are (a) what kind of democracy and (b) how this is related to the sectors of bureaucrats, technocrats and the "political industry" which influence processes of decision-making. To affirm the claim for "government of the people, by the people and for the people", the people must be organized not only politically but also socially. The area of social reality where this organization is shaped is the civil society. Where civil society is strong, the possibility for wider democracy is also strong.

References :

1. Oommen, T.K. (2004) *Nation, Civil Society and Socia Movements.* (New Delhi: SAGE).

2. _____ (1990) *State and Civil Society in India.* (New Delhi: SAGE).

3. Bhargava, Rajeev, and Helmut Reifeld. (ed.) (2005) *Civil Society, Public Sphere and Citizenship: Dialogues and Perceptions.* (New Delhi: SAGE).

4. Elliot, Carolyn M, (ed.) (2003) *Civil Society and Democracy.* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press).

5. Gill, Rajesh, (ed.) (2005) *State, Market and Civil Society: Issues and Interface.* (New Delhi: Rawat Publication).

6. Chandoke, Neera. (1995) *State and Civil Society: Explorations in Political Theory.* (New Delhi: SAGE).

7. Keane, J. (1988b) *Democracy and Civil Society.* (London: Verso).

8. Uberoi, J. P. S. (1996) *Religion, Civil Society and the State.* (New Delhi : Oxford University Cohen, Jean and Andrew Arato. (1992) *Political Theory and Civil Society.* (Cambridge: MIT Press).

9. Rosenblum, Nancy and Robert C. Post (ed.) (2002) *Civil Society and Government*. (Princeton, NJ).

10. Tandon, Rajesh and Ranjita Mohanty. (ed.) (2003) *Does Civil Society Matter? Governance in Contemporary India*. (New Delhi: SAGE).

11. Jayaram, N. (ed.) (2005) *On Civil Society, Issues and Perspectives*. (New Delhi: SAGE).

12. Hall, John, (ed.) (1995) *Civil Society: Theory, History, comparison*. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

13. Xavier, Joe. "Changing Contours of Civil Society." *Social Action*, vol. 58, no. 4, pp. 353-367, October-December, 2008.

14. Heredia, Rudolf C. "The Democratic Space and Civil Society." *Social Action*, editorial, vol. 58, no. 4, October-December, 2008.

15. Taylor, Charles. "Modes of Civil Society." *Civil Society and Democracy: A Reader*, edited by Carolyn, M. Elliott, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 43-62, 2003.

16. Walzer, Michael. "The Civil Society Argument." *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*, edited by Chantal Mauffe, Verso, London, 1992.

17. Sales, A. "The private, the Public, and Civil Society .The Realms and Power Structures". *International political Science Review*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 295-312, 1991.

***

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION ; SOME ISSUES

Anita Sharma

"Women are not sufficiently represented in politics or government. If politics is the art of government and it is and if government is public housekeeping and it is then women's place is quite logical in politics."

— Mary Donlon

Political participation of women is an area of great importance. Participation of women in the electoral process is an indicator of their political consciousness as well as aspiration for status enhancement. Women can participate in politics in various forms and capacities like voters, candidates and in terms of participation in campaigning. But the amount of women's participation can be clearly measured by their number as electoral contestants and representatives.

It is a well known fact that in any political system right from the developed and developing countries women's participation in politics is marginal. They are still considered as the objects of policy decisions and are deprived from full participation. The absence of enough women in decision making and implementing levels have prevented the proper understanding of women issues and articulation of their interest. In India as well as Assam the participation of women in politics is quite unsatisfactory. Customs, traditions, sexual division of society and narrow and vested interest of political parties have been and continue to be the great obstacles in the way of their political participation and development.

However, the growing consciousness of women community leading to various women movements all over the world focused a light in the existing socio-political status of women. Consequently, a demand for re-structuring the existing 'male-female' relationship was made world wide.

But still, women's position in politics is always side-lined due to their minimum participation specifically in India. In the 14th Lok Sabha elections (From 1952-2004) women's participation was very minimal though the number of women representative increased to a certain amount. The percentage of women representatives was only 8.2 in the 14th Lok Sabha elections.

It is widely believed by the intellectual class and common mass that reservation provision for women will help to increase their participation in state as well as national politics. This has been proved by the implementation of reservation system in grassroots level politics which have dramatically changed the scenario by making a huge increament in women's participation and role.

Basically, the reservation provision for women in India owes its origin to two important factors i.e., the world wide stress on inclusion of women in political decision making specially in the Beijing platform of Action. It has categorically mentioned about educating women in civil, political and social rights emphasizing on quota system and secondly, the organized independent movements of women in India since late 1970 till date.

The passing of 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment Act have paved the way for the entry of women in Grass-root level politics and "ushered a social revolution". These two amendments had the persuasive influence in the demand for similar provision in the state and union legislature. Interestingly all the political parties contesting in the 1996 general elections committed to provide reservation for women in their election manifesto. However, practically the parties have failed to keep their words which have necessitated government intervention in this regard.

The 81st Amendment Bill to the constitution of India, 1996 incorporated reservation for women in the state and union legislatures (lower houses) 33% seats. The Bill survived animated debates in and outside the parliament. The male members of state and union legislature were not in favour of giving the states of 'Act' to the 'Bill'. It is important

to note here that the proposed Bill was in consonance with the UN Resolution of reserving 30% of seats for women in high political decision making bodies. The proposed amendment has restricted reservation of 33.3 per cent of total elected seats for women keeping itself within the stipulation of the supreme court verdict though it is not in proportion to women's population in the country (Balaji, 1965; Andhra Pradesh vs Vijya Kumar).

After the 81st Amendment Bill in 1996 the issue was re-introduced as the 84th Amendment Bill by the B.J.P. Government. But the amendment also suffered the same fate due to lack of political will. Again it was introduced in 1999-2000 but lack of seriousness among the members of parliament gave a set-back to the bill. In May 2008, the issue was re-introduced as the 108th (constitution Amendment) Bill. But it couldn't become an act due to various constraints.

Allotment of seats to the women candidates largely depends upon party preferences. Basically till today, most of the political parties, regional or national believes that women are less specialized in political activity comparing to their male counterparts and the chances of their victory is less. Though the political parties like congress and B.J.P. try to project themselves as more liberal in this context but practically the scenario doesn't change. Women as the most vulnerable group of society is still deprived in political rights and their voice is still unheard.

Though the Women's reservation Bill is not yet passed but the issue itself is enough to sensitize and influence the parliamentarians, policy makers, intellectuals, mass media and women politicians.

The factors like gender-division and patriarchy have prevented the acceptance of the bill to a large extent. Economic dependency of the women folk, party preferences, absence of adequate knowledge and education on the part of women contestants are other constraints. In the words of Dr. Malini Bhattacharya, Lok Sabha member of CPI(M) "There is a tendency in parliament... to push women into certain corner. Women as members are very often decorative and they lack adequate parliamentary skill." These factors may also be the cause of reluctancy for providing

women increased number of seats.

India is often termed as a 'Vibrating Democracy'. Thus, fulfiling the ideals of democracy and making a positive intervention in the long awaited agitation of women towards equality, the political parties should provide more seats to the women members. Such step will practically help to promote true constitutionalism. In this regard, women's assertive and conscious role can act as a strong factor to increase their participation. Moreover, the existing women politicians of the country can also contribute in political empowerment of their fellow partness.

Bibliography :

1. Bhasin Kamala, 'Understanding Gender' women unlimited, K-36, Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi, 2000.

2. Chandra Puran, 'Political Dynamics of Women' Akanṣha Publishing House, New Delhi-110059, India, 2005.

3. Chakravarti Manash- 'Women and Politics in India', The Associated Publishers, Amballa Catt 2006.

4. Chetna Kalbagh (ed.) 'Women and Development' Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi-110002, 1991.

5. 'Asomor Rajneetit Mohila Kiman Safal'- Article written by Lachit Barman Published in 'Sambhar', supplementary volume supplied with Pratidin. 18th Jan, 2009.

***

MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN SARTRE'S EXISTENTIALISM :AN ANALYSIS

Dreamsea Das

Jean-Paul-Sartre is one of the most important philosophers in modern time. He proclaimed the freedom of man to be *Absolute* and wanted to establish that man's life *existence precedes essence.*[1] His philosophy deals with the total aspects of human life, with an enquiry into the nature of human existence. "Being and Nothingness"[2] is an analysis on the ontology of human reality but Sartre felt that such ontology serves as the preface to morality and therefore, morality has a great importance for human life.[3] It is in this context the present paper intends to examine how Sartre viewed morality in Existentialism.

Jean-Paul-Sartre, the leading figure of the Existentialist movement in France came under the influence of German Existentialism as a student of Heidegger.[4] Sartre developed his Existentialism as a philosophical position in "Being and Nothingness", (L' Etre et Neant, 1943). In this work we find an idea of Sartre's view on morality. Besides this his *'Existentialism and Humanism'*, *'Saint Genet'*, *'Critique of Dialectical Reason'*, *'The idiot of the family'* etc. all deal with the question of morality in one way or other.

Existentialism is a philosophy, which proclaimed that man first exist then he realizes his essence. Holding this view tightly, Jean-Paul-Sartre forwarded his first step into the fertile ground of Existentialism. Sartre thinks that the world is divided into two parts, man and objects or consciousness and material world. Sartre said, 'Man can understand his own existence on the basis of difference between consciousness and material reality. When I know an object, I come to feel that I am not that object. Thus I know that my consciousness is something, which is not an object. The objective world has nothing to play in determining my essence. Thus it depends on my freedom how shall I determine my future. This freedom is my existence. It does not matter whether I like to be free or not, because freedom is my birthright.[5]

Here we can mention that the conception of freedom, which is the backbone of Sartre's existential philosophy, is the center of his thoughts on morality. According to general conception of morality, morality consists in man's action. Those actions, which are conducive to the man's and societies welfare and called moral acts. The determinist maintains that men are determined by the moral norms, man's acts are not indeterminate. Men are not free to choose their course of action. But for Sartre man has freedom to choose their course of action. It means whatever man chooses has no justification. Actually for Sartre man are condemned to be free. He has no other alternative to choose in respect to freedom.[6]

Sartre holds that, Man is a solitary being, thrown into the hostile world, to earn for himself and has to make way for others to earn. Man is, for Sartre, that solitary being who has to realize his own existence apart from this objective world, which in his every step creates problems for him. Man has to overcome these problems or obstacles by performing actions, which are in tune with morality.[7] Man will be what he will have planned to be. Thus the first principle of existentialism is to make everyman aware of what he is and to make the full responsibility of his existence rest on him.[8]

As said earlier, Man has freedom to action. But this freedom does not mean that the man is free to do whatever he likes arbitrarily. While realizing his freedom he has to take care of other man's welfare also. The existentialist accepts both the world and society but according to them there is an eternal hostility between them.[9] The individual has an experience of freedom in the choice of actions, but he can never realize complete freedom. The existentialists, complete freedom is the real nature of the individual. Here Sartre shows that when individuals perform their actions resisting the objects of the world there lies the value of his action. For Sartre morality and value, both these are not objective. Both emerge in the society as the by-product of man's actions. Sartre says that it is the human being who introduces value in the world.[10]

Though man is creator of morality and value yet being a creator he is always in a constant anguish. Sartre says that anguish arose in man because all values of the world depend upon man, not upon any God, nor upon any party.[11]

How man will select the value? What is more valuable between two actions? Is he the right person to select the value for himself and also for the whole society? These are some questions, which are seldom solved by individuals in day-to-day life. Because of these unavoidable questions man fall into anguish. But here we can mention a critical remark on Sartre regarding his conception on value. Sartre wants to say that the values are dependent on man's choice i.e., his choice of actions. But this view of Sartre seems to be little bit erroneous. If value like good or evil depends upon man's point of view, then the battle for establishing values become meaningless. Man will be the unmade creator of values and values will lose their meaning.[12]

Sartre tries to clean up this blame against him by saying that though man creates value yet they are always in conformity to other individual's actions also. In Sartre's existentialism we find that though man is a solitary being in this universe, yet he is thrown is to this hostile world and he can not but have to led his life by being a part of the society. In his 'Existentialism and Humanism', Sartre brought up this point. Here Sartre did not say that man is only for himself, but is responsible for the whole of mankind. When man decides for himself he also decides for the whole humanity. This existential thought of Sartre creates a problem in his moral philosophy[13]. Some even opines that this view makes his conception of morality weaker because what is good to an individual man may not be so for everyone. In this respect Sartre mentions the role of reason in man's action. Sartre says that though there is no rational justification for what man chooses; still what is chosen contains the reason for those actions, which are to be done. Thus the choices may be irrational, but the actions, which depend upon those choices, can be judged by them. Sartre wants to speak here of a rationality which is intra-choice. It has to be decided whether action is right or wrong by this rationality, which is internal to choice, not by any law, which is external to choice.[14]

However, Sartre said that when man performs an action, he should ask himself whether what he is doing could also be done by others? If he avoids this question, it gives rise to bad faith. Sartre says, "what we choose is always the better and nothing can be better for us unless it is better for all". He further stated that when a man commits himself to anything, fully realizing

that he is not choosing what he will be, but is thereby at the same time a legislator deciding for the whole of mankind-at such a moment a man can not escape from the sense of complete and profound responsibility. In such a situation man is in anguish, because there is no proof that I am the proper person to impose by my own choice my conception of man upon mankind. "Thus we have neither behind us nor before us in a humanious realm of values, any means of justification or excuse. But we are left alone, without excuse. That is what I am and when I say that man is condemned to be free. Condemned because he did not create himself, he is nevertheless at liberty and from the moment he is thrown into this world, he is responsible for everything he does". In this statement we find a scent of Sartre's existentialism mingle up with his Conception of morality. In his existentialism he says that man discovers not only himself in his thought, but also the existence of others. I do not get a true conception of my existence apart from the intervention of others. So others are necessary for my own existence and self-knowledge.[15]

It is said about his moral philosophy that it is not possible to judge the moral value of an action. But Sartre thinks that this charge is false. According to him such action is good as has harmony with one's freedom. Sartre stated that men who deprive themselves of full freedom are cowards and they have fallen from the ideal of morality[16]. This according to Sartre is the form of morality.

In 'Existentialism and Humanism', Sartre has taken his theory of morality to the level of the social theory. Here he realizes that not morality is possible which can be considered only as morality of the individual. He wants to say that likes to do such an action by his individual choice that it can be true of all individuals. But as there are no eternal and obligatory rules about action, so it is not possible to say what man should do. Man's existence, surrounded by his freedom chooses his own course of action.[17]

In his existential thought Sartre stated that many options for selecting the course of actions are open before us and among them we have to choose only one. But as we are not able to choose others opportunities, we are always under the shadow of anxiety. It is deeply related to our existence. Man's

existence dwells in between the choices he has to make in his life. He has to make his choice by himself. Other individuals cannot help him in choosing his course of action. According to Sartre action chosen in the intensity of the experience of freedom is moral and the action, which is not so chosen, is not moral. Sartre expresses such a view on morality in his existentialism.

In this respect Sartre refers to an incident, which happened in his life because it has significance in the perspective of Sartre's views on morality. At the time of Resistance Movement, a French young man went to Sartre for advice. The man was facing a dual situation. On the one hand if he did not join the movement in which his whole country was engaged, he would be regarded as a traitor. On the other hand, if he joined the movement, he would be neglecting his duties towards his ailing mother who was lying on bed and there was nobody else to look after her. Sartre told him that he could not give him any advice as to what he should do. If he were to accept some one else advice this means that he would also be choosing that advice. Because in choosing our advisor we know that what type of advice he may give us depending on his personality. So, as we are free to choose our advisor so that we are also free to choose our own course of action. This incident suggests that the question, which arises in ordinary morality as to what is right or wrong can also decided.

In Sartre's opinions action chosen in the intensity of the experience of freedom is moral and action, which is not so chosen, is not moral. By expressing such a view Sartre is just echoing the existentialist thought. It is found in the idea of Kierkegaard that when he speaks of moral existence he refers to such existence in which man freely chooses his particularly action. This fact of morality being extended to social theories leads us to Sartre's view of social and political philosophy.

An analysis of moral philosophy in Sartre's existentialism proves that the views of Sartre on moral philosophy in existentialism can be explained from the later section entitled moral perspectives of this work 'Being and Nothingness'. In this work Sartre discussed on human life from which one can get an idea of his views on moral philosophy in his existentialism. It can also be submitted that the views of Sartre on the question of morality differ from

other philosophers. It is because Sartre did not accept the objectivity of morality and value. Value, he thinks develops in the activities of human life. He said that it is the human being, which introduce value in the world. Sartre wanted to write another book dealing mainly with the question of morality. But he could not write the book since he actively involved in the political events of his country. He started thinking that moral questions are political questions. With this perception conceived by Sartre, if the book could have been written the views of Sartre on moral philosophy in existentialism might have been different from his views as we find in his works 'Being and Nothingness', 'Existentialism and Humanism' etc.

References :

1. The thesis that existence is prior to essence has been drawn by Sartre from his initial atheistic assumption.

2. Sartre developed existentialism as a philosophical position in 'Being and Nothingness', published in 1943.

3. The basic ontological premise of Sartre's existentialism is negative and atheistic; existentialism is nothing but an attempt to draw all the consequences from a constituent atheistic position.

4. Sartre like the teacher Hiedegger developed secular and atheistic existentialism rather then theological.

5. For detail concerning this, see, Sartre's 'Being and Nothingness' 1943.

6. In this connection see, Sartre's 'Existentialism and Humanism' translated from French into English by Bernard Frechtman, reproduced in Gill and Sherman, The Fabric of Existentialism, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1973, p. 520.

7. Ibid, p. 521.

8. Ibid, p. 522.

9. Ibid, p. 529.

10. Ibid.

11. For detail concerning this point see, R. N. Sharma, *History of Western Philosophy*, Kedar Nath Ram Nath.

12. M. K. Bhadra, *A Critical Survey of Phenomenalism and Existentialism*, ICPR, allied publishers, New Delhi, p. 375.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid*, p. 376.

16. *Ibid*, p. 377.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid*, p. 377.

***

DECLARATION

1. Name of the Journal	:	Journal of Politics
2. Language	:	English
3. Time of Publication	:	March, 2009
4. Name of the Publisher	:	Registrar, Dibrugarh University
(a) Nationality	:	Indian
(b) Address	:	Dibrugarh University Dibrugarh - 786 004 Assam
5. Place of Publication	:	Rajabheta, Dibrugarh
6. Name of the Printer	:	N. Chetia
(a) Nationality	:	Indian
(b) Address	:	Dibrugarh University Market Complex, Dibrugarh
7. Name of the Press	:	AC COMPUTER NETWORLD (ACCN PRINT)
8. Name of the Editor	:	Manjula Dowerah Bhuyan
(a) Nationality	:	Indian
(b) Address	:	Dibrugarh University Dibrugarh - 786 004 Assam
9. Owner of the Publication	:	Dibrugarh University Dibrugarh

The above declaration is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Editor