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Gram Sabha and Tribal Development: With Particular Reference to a Village in Scheduled Area of Madhya Pradesh

S.N. Chaudhary[*]

In the Scheduled area Gram Panchayat operates through the provision of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 popularly known as PESA. Through PESA power was transferred to Gram Sabha for overall development of concerned villages as per the collective wisdom of villagers. This development is termed as shift from representative democracy to direct democracy. From time to time number of provisions were made to actualise spirit of Gram Sabha into action. But case study of all meetings of one such Gram Sabha organised during 2005-09 and its minutes clearly denotes that because of number of historical and contextual reasons the nature and functioning of Gram Sabha and its achievements is not up to the mark. It is neither objective nor transparent. Also, it is neither autonomous nor accountable. It has worked in a half hearted manner. It is unable to be de-contextualise its functioning from the local level primordial under currents.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment in 1992 has mandated that resources, responsibility and decision-making power should be devolved from Gram Panchayat (Village Panchayat) to the lowest unit of democracy i.e., Gram Sabha or the Village Assembly. This is also known as shift from

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representative democracy at the village level to direct democracy. Before empowering Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat exercised significant power over number of government projects. It used to select beneficiaries for programmes and made decisions about the location of projects funded under earmarked schemes devised at higher level. All these powers are now vested in the Gram Sabha and eight permanent (and other temporary) elected committees to look into the issue of village development, public assets management, agriculture development, health, village security, infrastructure, education and social justice. Idea behind transfer of power from Gram Panchayat to Gram Sabha especially in Madhya Pradesh, was to abolish *Sarpanch Raj*, reduce the accountability of state and national leaders towards villages and empower common villagers to decide fate of their development. Fernandes (1999) rightly perceived it as the gateway to grassroots democracy, the base of Panchayat Raj, one of the most important institutions of the new direct democracy at the village level, a mechanism to bridge the gap between civil society and the state (Panchayats). It was also assumed that villagers may impose tax on themselves without any apprehension because no one will worry about not being re-elected because they will become unpopular.

The concept of Gram Sabha was also introduced in the Scheduled Areas. Scheduled Areas refer to those which are under the fifth schedule of the Constitution of India where the tribal population is in a numerically superior position.[1] In the scheduled area Gram Panchayat works through the provisions of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 popularly knows as PESA or the Tribal Self Rule.[2] PESA is supposed to work with the assumption that inhabitants of the area have managed themselves on the basis of their own customary practices and traditional beliefs and thus general laws (statutory laws) should not be imposed with their customary laws and ethos. Through PESA power was transferred to the Gram Sabha, particularly matters related to development planning, management of natural resources and disposal of disputes in accordance with prevalent traditions and customs. In addition to the powers and functions, as enumerated under Section 7 of the Madhya Pradesh Panchayat Raj (Dwitiya Sanshodhan) Act 1997, the Gram Sabha in the scheduled areas have special powers and functions. These are: (i) to safeguard and preserve the traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity and community resources and the customary mode of dispute resolution, (ii) to exercise control over institutions and functionaries in all social sectors transferred to the Gram Panchayat through that Panchayat, (iii) to manage natural resources

including land, water and forests within the areas of the village in accordance with its traditions and in harmony with the provisions of the constitution and with due regard to the spirit of other relevant laws in force; (iv) to advise the Gram Panchayat in the regulation and use of water bodies, to manage village markets and *melas* including cattle fairs; by whatever name called, through the Gram Panchayat; (v) to control local plans, resources and expenditure for such plans including tribal sub-plans, and (vi) to perform and exercise such other powers and functions as the state government may confront or entrust under any law for the time being in force (Sisodia: 2002). All the states having scheduled areas were given one year time to amend their respective Panchayat Acts to conform to the letter and spirits of PESA. Madhya Pradesh is one of the states which amended the Act accordingly.

As per the *Madhya Pradesh Panchayati-Raj and Gram Swaraj Adhiniyam*, 1993 each Gram Panchayat is supposed to organise Gram Sabha meeting during the month of January, April, July and October in the normal course and on other special occasions as required, with the permission of the Collector. This Adhiniyam was subsequently amended in 1997 to make Gram Sabha more fruitful and functional. The purpose of the meeting is to make villagers aware about powers and functions of Gram Panchayat. It is also organised to identify and discuss relevant issues which needs to be addressed by the Panchayat for overall development of the village. Villagers, on the basis of their experience, are supposed to identify those issues faced by family and community which need urgent intervention by the Panchayat. Any scheme sanctioned by the District and Block level Panchayat and government departments must be approved by the Gram Sabha. All the adult men and women of the village, whose names are in the voter list, are members of Gram Sabha. They are supposed to attend Gram Sabha meetings as and when it is organised. But there were some changes in the Adhiniyam 1993, mentioned above, from the point of view of Gram Sabha, particularly in the scheduled areas. As tribes live in scattered manner and their density is very low therefore, the *Madhya Pradesh Panchayat Raj (Dwitiya Sansodhan) Adhiniyam*, 1997 defines a village in the scheduled areas as that "which shall ordinarily consist of a habitation or a group of habitations or a hamlet or a group of hamlets comprising a community and managing its affairs in accordance with (its) traditions and customs."

In normal case every village shall have a Gram Sabha, but if members of Gram Sabha desire, more than one Gram Sabha may be formed in a single village looking into the habitation pattern of tribes. However, not

less than one-third of the total number of members of the Gram Sabha shall constitute the quorum for a meeting, and of this number not less than one third should be women member. The meeting must be presided over by an elected tribal member from the Gram Sabha.

Gram Sabha in Pathai: A Case Study

The study was conducted to know frequency and number of meetings organised and number of persons who attended the meeting as per the norm, decisions taken in the meetings and relevance of decisions from the point of view of main concerns/challenges in the village and overall functioning of Gram Sabha in the management of ongoing development schemes in the village. The study was conducted in Pathai village of Betul district of Madhya Pradesh. There are 61 per cent tribal population in Sahpur Block to which the study villages belong. As per 2001 Census 91 per cent households in the village are of Gond tribe. Gond tribe is numerically the second highest in the state of Madhya Pradesh. Panchayat register having minutes of Gram Sabha meeting was the main source of information, although on some issues discussion was held with Panchayat representatives and villagers. There are three villages in Pathai Panchayat viz. Pathai, Nishana and Bhaktandhana. All villages are tribal dominated. Gond is the main tribe inhabitating these villages. The study covers the tenure of Rajni Dhurve Sarpanch (2005-09) who was a Gond. During the period all the 21 members of village Panchayat were tribal. Their educational and economic status was low. The paper is restricted to the functioning of Gram Sabha in Pathai village. There was a single Gram Sabha in each studied village. All the meetings of Gram Sabha during 2005-09 were for namesake (because Rajni Dhurve's husband decided the course of action in Panchayat activities) presided over by Rajni Dhurve. Panchayat is directly responsible for holding Gram Sabha meeting. Rajni Dhurve and Mansa Ram, Sarpanch and Secretary of Gram Panchayat respectively were the key persons in the activities. Both of them belonged to Pathai village. Secretary was a clever person. He knew how to manage officials and keep records complete. Sarpanch was totally dependent on her teacher husband and the smart secretary to run the Panchayat. This state of affair and style of functioning of Panchayat have also impacted organisation of Gram Sabha in the village. The above description clearly reflects that even after several years of the functioning of New Panchayat Raj actual empowerment of Gram Sabha could not be achieved to the desired extent.

During the tenure of Rajni Dhurve, altogether 21 Gram Sabha meetings were organised. Seventeen meetings were convened but four meetings were cancelled due to lack of quorum.[3] Low attendance was witnessed in Gram Sabha meetings. In most meetings, villagers were not present. Only the office bearers such as Sarpanch, Up-Sarpanch and couple of Panchs participated in the meeting.[4] The data reveal that out of 17 meetings, attendance was good only in five meetings. It is also revealed that many meetings were formally not called upon but all formalities were completed on paper, by Sarpanch and Secretary of the Panchayat and some like minded Panchs were persuaded to put their signature.[5] Hence, it is difficult to say that all the agendas presented in the so-called meetings and its approval by committee was really based on members participation.[6] During the course of study it was observed that villagers do not know about importance of Gram Sabha and its meetings. They only assemble in large number at the Panchayat Bhavan (Office of Panchayat) as and when they are directed by the Sarpanch/Secretary especially at the time of visit of some officials from the state.[7]

Details of all these meetings along with the number of members present, type of agenda put up and its approval by the Gram Sabha are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Agenda and Decisions of Gram Sabha Meetings Organised during the Tenure of Rajni Dhurve (2005-2009), Sarpanch, Pathai

S. No.	Meeting Date	Attendance	Agenda presented and approved by Gram Sabha
1	09/01/06	No signature of participants	1. Land transfer from deceased to the descendent
2	26/01/06	Sarpanch, Up-Sarpanch and 4 ward Members (Panch)	1. Circulation of BPL list
			2. Action agenda for MNREGS
			3. Annual Action Plan for other schemes
			4. Identification of beneficiaries under IAY
			5. Identification of beneficiaries under Balika Samridhi Yojna
			6. Decision on application received under maternity benefit scheme
			7. Encourage Panchs to attend Gram Sabha meeting
			8. Amount distribution under old age pension/social security scheme
			9. Land to landless
			10. Second installment to beneficiaries under IAY
3	02/02/06	Lack of quorum led to cancellation of meeting	

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S. No.	Meeting Date	Attendance	Agenda presented and approved by Gram Sabha
4	03/02/06	Sarpanch and Up-Sarpanch and 5 panch participated	1. To share information relating to preparation of Job Card under MNREGS
			2. To obtain stationery
5	13/02/06	Sarpanch, Up-Sarpanch, Panch and Patwari participated	1. Up-gradation of land related paper.
6	19/02/06	Sarpanch	1. Job card preparation under MGNREGS
			2. Account opening for social security/senior citizen pension holders
			3. Formation of Infrastructural Development committee
			4. Identification of villagers for the construction of *Khet Talab*
7	12/04/06	Sarpanch, Up-Sarpanch and 4 Panchs participated	1. Preparation of AAY card
			2. Construction of percolation tank
			3. Road construction from Pathai to Nishana
8	12/08/06	Sarpanch, Up-Sarpanch and 3 Panchs participated	1. Plantation
			2. Identification of persons to extend benefit under IAY
			3. Identification of persons for AAY
			4. Proposal for rapta/stop dam preparation
			5. Construction of roof of temple
			6. Road Construction
			7. Stop dam Construction
			8. Stop dam Construction
9	11/12/06	Sarpanch, Up-Sarpanch and 3 Panchs participated	1. Identification of families for well allotment.
			2. Well construction under MNREGS
			3. Rapta cum stop dam construction
			4. Payment of old age pensions/Social security amount
			5. Well construction for irrigation in plantation field
10	06/01/07	Sarpanch, Up-Sarpanch and 7 Panchs participated	1. Rapta cum stop dam construction
			2. Rapta cum stop dam construction on Aam river
			3. Honorarium to *Kotwar* for informing villagers about Gram Sabha meeting
			4. Payment of old age pension/social security benefit
			5. Installation of hand pump
			6. Renewal of family register
			7. Stop dam construction
			8. Stop dam construction
			9. Stop dam construction
			10. Stop dam construction
			11. Stop dam construction
			12. Toilet in Anganwadi Bhawan
			13. Boundary wall of Anganwadi Kendra
			14. Reminder to panchs for attending meeting
			15. Economic assistance for land up-gradation

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S. No.	Meeting Date	Attendance	Agenda presented and approved by Gram Sabha
11	14/04/07	Sarpanch, Up-Sarpanch and 7 Panchs participated	1. Identification of beneficiaries under old age pension/social security scheme
			2. Distribution of BPL card/verification of AAY card
			3. Rapta construction
			4. Stop dam construction
			5. Tank construction
			6. Road Construction
			7. Identification of houses for repair under IAY
			8. Well construction
			9. Stop dam under MNREGS
			10. Stop dam under MNREGS
12	15/08/07	Lack of quorum led to cancellation of meeting	
13	19/08/07	Sarpanch and 54 members participated	1. Plantation of 17320 Jatropa seedling
			2. Identification of beneficiaries for well facility
			3. identification of households for AAY benefit
			4. Distribution of old age pension/social security benefit
			5. Construction of Choupal near Panchayat and Anganwadi Bhawan
14	23/01/08	Sarpanch, Up-Sarpanch and 5 Panchs participated	1. Information given to villagers for the Badi Project
15	26/01/08	Sarpanch and Up-Sarpanch	1. Formation of standing committee for Total Sanitation Programme, drinking water
			2. Formation of committee under Forest Rights Bill-2006
			3. Social auditing of works under MNREGS
			4. Identification of new beneficiaries under Kapil Dhara scheme
			5. Identification of beneficiaries under Bhumi Shilpa Yojna (Up-gradation)
			6. Identification of beneficiaries under Nandan Phalodyan
			7. Repair and light facility in two temples
			8. Up-gradation/modernisation of Panchayat Bhawan
			9. Connecting road up-gradation
			10. Updating of household list of village
16	13/08/08	Sarpanch and 41 members participated	1. Identification fo family and community development centric projects for 2009-10
			2. Identification of beneficiaries for Kapil Dhara scheme
			3. Construction of boundary of agricultural land
			4. Construction of percolation tank
			5. Social auditing works under MNREGS
			6. Formation of vigilance/monitoring committee under MNREGS
			7. Up-gradation of household list of the village

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S. No.	Meeting Date	Attendance	Agenda presented and approved by Gram Sabha
			8. Popularisation of charter prepared by the core committee formed under Panchayat Raj Adhiniyam
			9. Share of information relating to developmental works going on, total expenditure and total man days employment generated.
			10. Sharing information related to work under MNREGS, Backward Area Development Scheme, SSA, Total Sanitation campaign and MDM
			11. Action programme for Nursery establishment by one SHG
			12. Construction of bracket (speed breaker) in *Pardhan Dhana*
			13. Percolation tank in private farm.
			14. Establishment of kanji house
			15. Construction of cemented road in the *Bada Dhana*
17	26/01/09	Lack of quorum led to cancellation of meeting	
18	27/01/09	Sarpanch and 75 members participated	1. Identification of family and community development centric projects for 2009-10
			2. Construction of boundary of agricultural land
			3. Construction of Community well
			4. Identification of beneficiaries under old age pension scheme
			5. Updating of household list of village
			6. Share of information relating to ongoing development scheme
19	02/05/09	Lack of quorum led to cancellation of meeting	
20	15/08/09	Sarpanch and 43 members participated	1. Identification of households under AAY
			2. Identification of beneficiaries under old age pension scheme/social security scheme
			3. Allotment of water reservoir (8.75 hectare) for fishing
			4. Establishment of Anganwadi Centre in one of the *mohallas*
21	23/08/09	Sarpanch and 55 members participated	1. Social audit of work done during 2006-07, 2007-8, 2008-09 and 2009-10.
			2. To share financial information related to MIS (Income-expenditure statement)
			3. To share information relating to income/expenditure of MNREGS

Note: Total Meetings of Gram Sabha organised – 21, Meeting actually held – 17 and Meeting Postponed due to lack of quorum – 04.

Source: Gram Sabha meetings related register available at Pathai Panchayat office.

Needless to mention that total 103 individual issues were presented in the meetings for discussion and approval. The record made available by

Panchayat secretary clearly reveals that none of these 103 agendas were either revised or rejected.

So far as nature of issues presented in the meeting and its approval are concerned, of the total 103 issues raised, large number of them were related to surface water management, identification of households for different types of government benefits and overall functioning of MNREGS. Social security benefit related issues, land up-gradation issue, village road construction, construction of small stop dam etc. were discussed and approved. Meeting also approved construction and repair of temple, purchase of stationery, instruction to Panchs to attend Gram Sabha meeting and so on.

Table 2
Issue-wise Agenda Discussed and Approved in Gram Sabha Meetings

S.No.	Issues	No. of Agenda
1	Land Management/Up-gradation	6
2	Social Security Benefit/BPL related work	8
3	Water management	16
4	Road Construction	5
5	Forestry/Environmental management	4
6	Bridge construction	5
7	House/building construction and repair	2
8	Identification of Beneficiaries under different schemes	19
9	MNREGS related work/evaluation/road map preparation	12
10	Others*	27
	Total	103

*Encourage Panchs to attend Gram Sabha meeting, issue reminder letter to Panchs, purchase of stationery, formation of different types of committees, construction of roof of temple and electrification work, honorarium to Kotwar for informing villagers about Gram Sabha meeting, renewal or up-gradation of family register, establishment of kanji house and Anganwadi Kendra etc.
Source: Chaudhary (2012)

If one examines table 1 and table 2, two pertinent questions arise. Looking at the poor presence of villagers in the Gram Sabha meetings can we call it meeting in the real sense of the term? Looking at issues/resolutions passed in the meetings can we say that these issues are really closer to the heart of tribes? Are these issues were raised from bottom or imposed from the top. The answer is not encouraging if not frustrating. People at large do not attend meetings because they are indifferent, they do not wish to loose wage on the meeting day, there is over assertiveness on the part of Sarpanch Rajni Dhurve, her husband and Panchayat Secretary, they discourage villagers to attend meeting and the Gram Sabha does not have proper linkage with local level bureaucracy and change agents. During her tenure she herself never conducted meeting of Gram Sabha and presented proposal

on her own. She said, "My husband knows difference between right and wrong. The level of his wisdom is much higher than me. If I will do on my own I can commit mistake. Hence, most often whatever I do, I do it under the advice and guidance of my active and well informed husband" (Chaudhary, 2012: 163).

In most of the meetings only small number of villagers were present, and in none of these meetings any grave problem faced by villagers were discussed.[8] Some of the important problems which cover the entire area of the Pathai Gram Panchayat are consumption of locally made *Mahua* liquor at large scale, poor quality of teaching and learning at primary and middle schools, erosion of local forest, corruption and manipulation in different rural development schemes, improvement in the level of ground water table, capacity building of tribal youth, effective functioning of primary health centre, improvement in the functioning of PDS, Anganwadi Kendra and so on. No attention was paid to raise income of tribal farmers from their agriculture and wage work and management of their income. No effort was made to protect farmers from Sahpur based *Sahukars* who purchase some of their farm produce at cheap rate and also charge high interest rate in case villagers take loan from them. No discussion was made to protect tribals from indebtedness. Issues related to disputes were also not addressed properly. During past few years several self help groups (SHGs) were formed but except one, all of them became non-functional. Even members of SHGs do not know about functioning of their respective SHG. Why SHG could not succeed is a serious issue but the Gram Sabha meeting had nothing to do with such issues. Analysis of item wise agenda, presented and approved by Gram Sabha, it is evident that in meetings only discussions were held on the schemes and benefits which were supposed to be implemented and made available by the state. No effort was made for capacity building of villagers. No value addition in their occupation related issues were discussed. No discussion was also observed on community contribution for overall development of the village itself.[9]

During the period 2005-09, number of tasks were performed by the Pathai Panchayat. Activities like construction of khet talab (5), construction of percolation tank (1), gravel road construction (2), construction of well in plantation field (1), plantation work (2), construction of well under Kapil Dhara scheme (38), Nirmal Neer (1), tank construction (1) and construction of structure for water conservation (15) etc., were undertaken by the Panchayat. Pathai Gram Sabha only took decision relating to construction of these. But it had nothing to do with quality of construction, transparency in

construction, completion of construction in time and so on (Chaudhary, 2012: 175). Further, these projects were not sanctioned as per the demand rather it was done by the concerned departments on their own according to availabilitiy of funds. Villagers were merely informed through so-called Gram Sabha meetings. Gram Sabha has largely failed to ensure effective functioning of Public Distribution System (PDS), Anganwadi Kendra, SHGs, primary school and so on. It has also failed to stop manufacturing and marketing of *Mahua* liquor in an illegal manner. It has also failed to arrest illegal mining, logging and various types of crimes taking place in the village.

Conclusion

Hence, it can be said that Gram Sabha meeting is not organised as per the guidelines in the Pathai village and even if it is regularly held and not attended by larger number of villagers, it is neither self sustaining nor it can make villagers self reliant. Members are indifferent to collective issues of villages. They are ignorant and unassertive. The very purposes of Panchayat Raj to make villagers self reliant, cultivate feeling of cooperation have not witnessed in the villge. It has almost worked like a government department for the mere implementation of government initiated development projects with financial support in the light of terms and conditions laid down by the State. There is no people's involvement in Gram Sabha meetings and decisions taken by it. There is no transparency in the functioning of Gram Sabha. Gram Sabha is totally managed by Sarpanch and Panchayat Secretary. And they are not impartial and objective while deciding agenda, informing villagers, organising meetings of Gram Sabha and implementing decisions taken by the Gram Sabha and approved and sanctioned by the competent authority. They are unable to decontextualise themselves. And in many issues the context is primordial in nature. The process of social capital formation among villagers is very slow. Officials at the Block and district level are least interested in the functioning of Gram Sabha. Under the given situation it is very difficult to make comment on the future of Gram Sabha. Actually Gram Sabha meeting should be conditioned by the local context, which was missing in the functioning of Gram Sabha in the village and negating the spirit of PESA.

End Notes

1.   The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution refers to states with having large tribal population like, AP, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Rajasthan. There are four dictricts (Jhabua,

Barwani, Mandla and Dindori), 33 Tehsils and Six Development Blocks in the Scheduled Area in Madhya Pradesh. The study was conducted in Scheduled Block Sahpur of Betul Disctrict.

2. According to PESA, there are three partners in governance at the village level in the Scheduled areas viz., the community in the form of Gram Sabha (GS), Panchayat and the State. Panchayats and the state are expected to assist GS, behaving its stature and authority. This would require fine tuning between the powers and jurisdiction of different authorities.

3. As per the revised Adhiniyam (6) 2005, of the total voters of the Panchayat, who are members of Gram Sabha either 1/10 of them or 500 members, whichever is less, fulfil the quorum. But of 1154 inhabitants of Pathai about half of them (586) are above 20 years of age. 1/10 of them will be around 58. On this parameter, of 17 meetings organised by Pathai Panchayat only five meetings and its decisions may be perceived as valid.

4. Mander (1999) also observed that in most of the cases studied by him elsewhere meetings of Gram Sabha were called without prior and adequate notice. In most places, only a formality was observed, proxy meetings were at times convened and proceedings were written even without the knowledge of those who attended. Meetings if arranged, either proved to be abortive or unsuccessful because of this attendance.

5. However, it is said by Panchayat officials that all members of Gram Sabha are informed about agenda, thorough discussion is encouraged. Subsequently schemes are approved and mode of wage payment to labourers is decided. Once the work is complete, it is approved by the Gram Sabha as well as the vigilance committee. Ultimately the chapter is closed (Awaz, Newspaper, No. 1, 2008).

6. A study conducted on transparency in Panchayats in West Bengal has found very low attendance of the people in the Gram Sansad meetings. The main reason for low attendance is that the Panchayats are not interested (mostly) in making people interested in the activities of the Panchayats. Less involvement of common masses in the functioning of the local bodies certainly reduces the chances for being transparent in the eyes of the people. The public view is that these institutions are nothing but extension of the block level government offices (Buch: 2012).

7. Fernandes (1999) also experienced the same state of affair regarding the functioning of Gram Sabha. To him both the grassroots leadership and grassroots bureaucracy have not been able to strengthen the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha is dysfunctional due to lack of leverage of local leaders to initiate meaningful participation in the Sabha and their inability to persuade people to support local initiatives.

8. According to Narayan Swamy (1996) Gram Sabha is an institution approach to popular participation. It provides a base for the three-tier structure of the Panchayat Raj institutions. But the idea of Gram Sabha, by and large, has not struck roots in the minds of the people. It has so far reached the prominent persons in the village.

9. More or less similar observation was made by the R.R. Diwankar Committee. Kurekshetra (1999) covered the observation made by R.R. Diwakar who was a Chairman of the committee constituted to examine functioning of Gram Sabha, the team identified number of reasons for its unsatisfactory performance ranging from lack of time, lack of communication, unwillingness of the Pradhan, and lastly apathy of the villagers. Gram Sabha seldom made effort to discuss and find solutions for their needs and basic problems.

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Decentralised Governance and Women's Empowerment through Panchayati Raj Institutions in India

Bharti Chhiibber[*]

For democratic decentralisation it is pertinent that democracy is seen as a broad participatory process, in which citizens at the grassroot level take part directly in decisions affecting them, their community and their work. It calls for empowerment of the citizens and their involvement in the delivery of services at the local level. The crux of democracy lies with the people. Participation of the people grants legitimacy to the government. Though women form a sizeable part of any country's population, their political representation and participation is definitely below the mark as desired. With the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, India moved towards a big change in institutional framework of governance. With 33 per cent reservation for women at the local level i.e., Panchayats it was a new beginning for women empowerment. Through the participation in politics, women are making use of power and resources to bring about changes necessary for empowerment of women. The paper analyses whether women are truely able to exercise their rights in PRIs to improve their plights in the villages.

For democratic decentralisation it is pertinent that democracy is seen as a broad participatory process in which citizens at the grassroot level take part directly in decisions affecting them, their community and their work. It

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calls for empowerment of the citizens and their involvement in the delivery of services at the local level. Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen argue that the practice of local democracy is also form of wider political education. In the context of village politics, people are learning (if only at varying speed) to organise, to question established patterns of authority, to demand their rights, to resist corruption, and so on. This learning process enhances their preparedness not only for local democracy alone, but for political participation in general (Dreze and Sen, 2003).

The crux of democracy lies with the people. Participation of the people grants legitimacy to the government. Though women form a sizable part of any country's population, their political representation and participation is definitely below the mark. The 1985 New Delhi Document on Women in Development accepted that though there has been a rapid growth of informal political activity by women to advance their own interests and rights as citizens, their role in the formal political structures has remained virtually unchanged.[1] The issue of women's political empowerment further gained momentum in the global debate for women's rights at the time of the Fourth World Conference on Women held at Beijing in 1995.

After a brief understanding of democracy and decentralisation, and introduction of Panchayati Raj institutions the paper systematically examine the changes in the role of women while leading the Gram Panchayats in Indian states at the village level. The kind of issues and challenges they have to face while exercising their powers and the general perceptions among people are further explored. The paper analyses whether women are truly able to exercise this right in improving the village conditions for the betterment of people. These arguments are substantiated through case studies and analyses of data from some of the states in India.

In developing countries like India, political participation assumes a wider meaning. It cannot be confined to right to vote, campaign or be a part of administrative process. On the contrary any action which tries to influence public decisions denotes political participation. Political participation is not only a symbol of women's development, promoting women's interest but also creates further awareness and mobilise other women to be a part of the political arena.

Indian women have been associated with politics since pre-Independence period. They were part of the freedom movement both as volunteers and leaders. Social and religious reforms and women's education were contributory factors in this development. In 1909 women set up the *Prayag Mahila Samiti.* In 1928, Sarojini Naidu was elected President of Indian

National Congress. Ketki Bhatt opposed the Simon Commission and participated in the salt satyagraha. Of course, we had Annie Besant, Vijaylakshmi Pandit, Sucheta Kripalani and many others contributing in their own way. Organisations like Women's Indian Association (WIA) 1917, the National Council of Indian Women (NCIW) 1926 and All India Women's Conference (AIWC) 1927 began as voice against women oppression and developed strong nationalistic flavour. However, they remained elite based.

On Independence, Article 15 of the Indian Constitution guaranteed equality to women under law. Though Indian Constitution guarantees equal right to all citizens, women are still marginally represented in Indian political arena. Women have been given political rights without accompanying powers to exercise these rights. Women are underrepresented in central and state governments. At the societal level male dominance in parliament, bureaucracy, judiciary, army, police point towards lack of political power in the hands of women. Notwithstanding the fact that it is often argued that women's political leadership would bring about a more cooperative and less conflict-prone world (Fukuyama, 1998).

Background to Indian Panchayati Raj Institutions

- ❑ In India, the issue of women's participation in Panchayats gained momemtum with Balwantrai Mehta Commission Report in 1959. It pointed out that 'there can be no real progress if women of a country are not made partners in the process of development'.
- ❑ In 1974, the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women in India suggested setting up of women's Panchayats.
- ❑ The Ashok Mehta Commission Report in 1978 recommended a more radically decentralised structure of Panchayats with strong decision-making powers, as well as the inclusion of women and other disadvantaged groups like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

73rd Constitutional Amendment

With the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, India moved towards a big change in institutional framework of governance. With this amendment the system of democratic decentralisation came into focus which provided the authority for self-governance to the villages. The objective was to enable Panchayats to function as institutions of local self-government, planning and implementing schemes for economic development and social justice. With the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution of India (Article 243G) listing 29

subjects appropriate for devolution to Panchayats, the Constitutional Amendment Act directed all state governments to pass enabling Panchayati Raj legislation that devolved specific powers and responsibilities to these local bodies. These subjects for Panchayats included agriculture, land improvement, minor irrigation, animal husbandry, fisheries, social forestry, minor forest produce, small-scale industries, village and cottage industries, rural housing, drinking water, fuel and fodder, roads, electrification, non-conventional energy, poverty alleviation, education, technical training, adult education, libraries, cultural activities, markets and fairs, health and sanitation, family welfare, women and child development, social welfare, welfare of the weaker sections, public distribution system, and community assets.

The Act further provides for a three-tier structure of elected representation in Panchayats, which includes the village level, the block (intermediate) level composed of a group of villages, and the district level i.e., Zila Parishads, Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayats. At each level, at least one-third of the total seats are reserved for women.

Political Empowerment of Women

Democratic decentralisation indeed has the potential for participatory development. With 33 per cent reservation for women at the local level i.e., Panchayats, it was a new beginning for women empowerment. Through the participation in politics, women are making use of power and resources to bring about necessary changes. Water scarcity, education and prohibition of intoxication are some of the important issues that have been dealt with by women. Potable water through a common tap has been introduced in several villages. However, translating a legal measure into effective change at the grassroots level remains a key issue in empowering women as independent agents in the democratic social process.

Following tables highlight the number of Elected Women Representatives in Panchayats:

Table 1
State-wise Elected SC, ST and Women Representatives in Panchayats
as on 1 March 2013

States	SC	ST	Women	Total
Andhra Pradesh	46,755	21,078	85,154	2,54,487
Arunachal Pradesh	NA	9,356	3,889	9,356
Assam	1,344	886	9,903	26,844
Bihar	22,201	1,053	68,065	1,36,130
Chhattisgarh	19,753	63,864	86,538	1,58,776
Goa	NA	92	504	1,559
Gujarat	8,340	23,719	39,206	1,18,751
Haryana	14,684	NA	24,876	68,152
Himachal Pradesh	7,467	1,215	13,947	27,832
Jammu & Kashmir	NA	NA	NA	NA
Jharkhand	5,870	18,136	31,157	53,207
Karnataka	17,723	10,275	41,577	95,307
Kerala	867	120	9,907	19,107
Madhya Pradesh	59,537	1,07,167	1,98,459	3,93,209
Maharashtra	22,175	30,211	1,01,466	2,03,203
Manipur	21	38	836	1,723
Odisha	16,390	22,240	NA	1,00,863
Punjab	26,937	NA	29,389	84,138
Rajasthan	18,807	13,777	54,673	1,09,345
Sikkim	77	418	NA	1,099
Tamil Nadu	28,655	1,194	41,790	1,19,399
Tripura	1,508	309	2,044	5,676
Uttar Pradesh	1,85,159	NA	3,09,511	7,73,980
Uttarakhand	12,230	2,067	34,494	61,452
West Bengal	17,605	4,168	19,762	51,423
All-India	**5,68,181**	**3,42,157**	**13,64,154**	**29,21,381**

Notes: SC: Scheduled Caste; ST: Scheduled Tribe; NA: not available; All-India includes figures for UTs.

Sources: Strengthening of Panchayats in India: Comparing Devolution across States, Empirical Assessment: 2012–13, Indian Institute of Public Administration and Ministry of Panchayati Raj website (http://www.iipa.org.in/upload/Panchayat_devolution_Index_Report_2012-13.pdf, accessed on 8 September 2013; *Devolution to Panchayats in India: Ranking Functional Environment at Sub-National Level* [2012], Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi).

Table 2
State-wise Proportion of Elected SC, ST and Women Representatives
in Panchayats (per cent) as on 1 March 2013

States	SC	ST	Women
Andhra Pradesh	18.4	8.3	33.5
Arunachal Pradesh	NA	100.0	41.6
Assam	5.0	3.3	36.9
Bihar	16.3	0.8	50.0
Chhattisgarh	12.4	40.2	54.5
Goa	NA	5.9	32.3
Gujarat	7.0	20.0	33.0
Haryana	21.5	NA	36.5
Himachal Pradesh	26.8	4.4	50.1
Jammu & Kashmir	NA	NA	NA
Jharkhand	11.0	34.1	58.6
Karnataka	18.6	10.8	43.6
Kerala	4.5	0.6	51.9
Madhya Pradesh	15.1	27.3	50.5
Maharashtra	10.9	14.9	49.9
Manipur	1.2	2.2	48.5
Odisha	16.2	22.0	50.0
Punjab	32.0	NA	34.9
Rajasthan	17.2	12.6	50.0
Sikkim	7.0	38.0	50.0
Tamil Nadu	24.0	1.0	35.0
Tripura	26.6	5.4	36.0
Uttar Pradesh	23.9	NA	40.0
Uttarakhand	19.9	3.4	56.1
West Bengal	34.2	8.1	38.4
All-India	**19.4**	**11.7**	**46.7**

Notes: SC: Scheduled Caste; ST: Scheduled Tribe; NA: not available; All-India includes figures for UTs.

Sources: Strengthening of Panchayats in India: Comparing Devolution across States, Empirical Assessment, 2012–13, Indian Institute of Public Administration and Ministry of Panchayati Raj website (http://www.iipa.org.in/upload/Panchayat_devolution_Index_Report_2012-13.pdf, accessed on 8 September 2013).

Some Success Stories

❑ Demographically initially most of the women elected were from the dominant castes in their villages. The first all-women Panchayat, formed in 1963, was initiated by Kamlabai, a woman from a wealthy and influential family in village Nimbut Pune, Maharashtra. Next all women Panchayat got elected in 1984 in Mauje Rui, Kohlapur, Maharashtra. This included women also from backward sections of society. Padmavati was influenced by the community work of her father, a village policeman, and the desire to serve her village in a time of severe drought and chronic water scarcity. All were elected unopposed as the potential male candidates withdrew fearing embarrassment if defeated by female candidates. In Bitargaon, Maharashtra, the women's Panchayat was successful in banning liquor sales (Sekhon, 2006).

❑ It should also be noted that the very act of being elected to the Panchayat for many women is in itself a challenge to patriarchy. Women felt that they have gained recognition and respect within the community, as well as awareness, and more confidence. Many women also reported enhanced status and influence within the family. Nishika Sabitri who head a Panchayat in a remote tribal area of Orissa has taken initiatives to augment the income of a Panchayat by leasing out the ponds and mango orchards. She also ensured the basic needs of the rural people such as bathing and toilet facilities to be hygienically provided. She also took care of other social welfare schemes such as poverty eradication schemes, widow pension and old age pension (Kaushal, 2010).

❑ In many cases, women's participation in the Gram Sabha has increased, and they actually speak up for societal causes in the Gram Sabha. In Madhya Pradesh, women form part of vigilance committees, and it is reported that women are the most vocal among the members of the vigilance committee in some places (Khera and Nayak, 2009).

❑ Kamala Mahato is the elected head of the Panchayat in Bandoan, West Bengal. To overcome acute water scarcity in the village, Mahato had 10 tube wells dug in the village. She arranged loans under a government rural livelihood programme which enabled village women to start profitable poultry, dairy and livestock enterprise (Vaddiraju and Mehrotra, 2004).

❑ In another related development it has been noted that post National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), women benefitted from this scheme have shown reduced financial dependence. This has resulted in a positive development of increased women's

participation in Gram Sabha meetings. It seems that the organisation of Gram Sabha meeting itself has become a more regular phenomenon post-NREGS (Pankaj and Tankha, 2010). A large number of women have also started airing their views in the Gram Sabha meetings.

❑ Of late, in Bibipur village of district Jind in Haryana first *Khap Mahapanchayat* involving women was held. Village's women Gram Sabha invited 360 *Khap* leaders to seek their support for their campaign against female foeticide. Over 200 women attended the meeting and passed a resolution seeking slapping of murder charges against those encouraging female foeticide in the village. The Panchayat has also taken a decision to launch an awareness campaign against female foeticide which is termed a heinous crime.

Not So Successful Cases

❑ Likewise, Satiya, Panchayat president of a village in Tamil Nadu regularly attends the Panchayat office and conducts the meetings with the board there. She is also active in various schemes, like chairing one of the two watershed committees in the village. However, it is her husband who takes care of the development work and takes all the contracts. Satiya says that she is unable to prevent him taking over her functions (Lindberg, 2011).

❑ Yashoda Raigar is Sarpanch of a Gram Panchayat in Panchayat Samiti Bonli, Sawai Madhopur. After her election she has faced constant harassment which began with throwing of stones and abuses and this culminated in physical violence against her and her husband from the dominant caste of the village. The aggressors were not arrested by the police despite her registering a case.

❑ Krishnaveni, had contested the elections as an independent candidate in Thalaiyuthu Panchayat, Nellai district, when it was declared reserved for dalit woman candidates. She won by a margin of 700 votes and became the Sarpanch. She worked sincerely honestly and earned widespread respect. She managed the construction of roads, building of a library, and the development of infrastructure with amazing speed. In recognition of her work, she received the Sarojini Naidu Award for 2009 from the President for the best (among Panchayats in the district) implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. Apart from the caste prejudice, material interests of the old power elites were also

hampered by her as she would not allow Panchayat funds to be siphoned off. Krishnaveni filed more than 15 complaints against these people, including the vice-president and ward members, as they were variously causing obstruction in her work. However, the district administration and the police did not pay any heed. On 13 June 2011, some people murderously attacked her. She survived 15 stabs after remaining for days in the ICU but could not move the State administration (Teltumbde, 2011).

Challenges to Actual Implementation

❑ Though the decentralisation process has come into force, there are structural and procedural bottlenecks still to be taken care of. There are a number of obstacles which come in the way of participation and representation of women in politics. These include poverty, lack of education, patriarchal mode of society, lack of financial independence and lack of awareness of political rights which hampers women ability to take independent decisions. Women empowerment has not gone well with extreme gender- bias that is prevailing in Indian society.

❑ Actual devolution of power has not happened.

❑ Moreover, the Panchayats have moved very little towards achieving fiscal autonomy. Large number of transfers made to them in terms of finance commission recommendations are not substantial and whatever funds are received by them come with conditions attached.

❑ Another drawback is that most of ward members complain that they have either not been given any training or enough training to understand the workings of the Panchayat and the government system. Quite clearly, this leaves much to be desired in the way these women are prepared for their task as Panchayat ward members (Lindberg, 2011).

❑ Caste discrimination is another obstacle at the village Panchayat level.

❑ Criminalisation of politics had a negative impact on women participation in politics. Further, even if women are elected to the Panchayats, they have to face so many other problems including harassment and physical threats. It is apt to say that, 'freedom from the fear of violence and coercion is essential for the exercise of women's agency'.[2]

❑ Likewise as a study in the context of Tamil Nadu highlights, ward members had to spend considerable sums for their election, which

among other things make it almost impossible for poorer households to field a candidate and win. Further, party politics is legally banned in the local elections at the level of the Gram Panchayat but plays an indirect role, since many of the candidates are members or sympathisers of political parties and get unofficial backing from them and sometimes money for their campaigns (Lindberg, 2011).

❑ In some cases men want to retain power by proxy, thus they coax their womenfolk to fight elections on reserved seats. 'The ground reality is that in a substantial number of cases the candidates who have won the Panchayat elections are mere fronts for the old power holders. In case the reserved seat is for a woman, it is usually the wife or daughter-in-law of the old sarpanch who is usually made to sign papers while the husband or the father-in-law transacts all business' (Teltumbde, 2011).

❑ Another issue is gender based division of labour in the family where women are expected to do all household chores, look after the family, bring fuel, fodder and water, cook as well as rear the children. As Lindberg points out in the context of Tamil Nadu, elected women Panchayat members usually complain about the burden of their political participation in addition to being a wife, running the household, and working full time to support the family. They also claimed that since men did not do any work in the household, the men had much more time for politics. When encouraging women to enter the political system, one must also make provision for the time they need to participate. This means that other members of their households, including husbands and other males need to take more responsibility for the household chores including cooking and looking after the small children (Lindberg, 2011). Similar observation is noted in *And Who Will Make the Chapatis* edited by Bishaka Datta (1998). It highlights structural constraints that women have to face when they try to challenge stereotypes. The title reflects the expectation of patriarchal society if women go out and gets involved in the work of Panchayats, who will shoulder household responsibility which is considered women's domain as part of public-private divide.

❑ It is imperative to ensure that traditional groups like Caste Panchayats or newly created groups and co-operatives do not undermine the work of elected Panchayats.

Future Prospects

- Women's political participation and empowerment issue cannot be confined to mere political rights. Education, social awareness and economic power are its important and basic components. Economic and political power go hand in hand. To make inroads into male dominated institutions, they need equal level play field with men as they are financially disadvantaged and do not have access to economic resources. Even today women empowerment remains a distant dream. It has been repeatedly seen that only few women make it to the arena of political power. They are usually well-to-do people. Second, either they are the daughters or wives or widows of politicians. In order to make sure that money power is not used during elections, Report of the Working Group on Empowerment of Women suggested that electoral reforms should provide for state funding for women contesting for elections to Parliament, state assemblies, urban local bodies and PRIs.[3]

- Political parties only make promises in their manifestoes to work for the welfare of women, but in actual practice, they are not interested in the issue of equal participation of women in politics. Opposition of some parties to the 33 per cent reservation of women in Parliament has not only shown the patriarchal ideas of these male leaders but also made the women resolution and movement for increasing participation in Parliament and assemblies all the more strong.

- Moreover, as a study on Orissa shows how reservation has meant an important beginning for the entry of women on the local political map but also reminds us that the process has just begun and will take time to develop fully (Hust, 2004).

- In order to create conducive conditions and open avenues for women political participation we need a change in the social attitude and the mindset of civil society. Local administration also needs to be more gender sensitive.

- Political, social and economic rights are vital as in many cases women do not understand that they are being subjugated or oppressed and do not want to bring about a change in the situation. Even if women are conscious and aware of their rights including the political rights it needs another round of persuasion and mobilisation for them to exercise their right to vote let alone stand for elections. Thus issue of women's political participation cannot be

seen in isolation, we cannot divide issue of education, social awareness, economic power and political participation in watertight compartments. All these issues are related to each other. Women are able to take better advantage of new steps in areas where literacy rate is higher and where their social status is better. Literacy, health and other necessities are her basic rights and give her a chance to improve her position in social strata by changing her economic status. This will go a long way in claiming political power too.

- In order to address the empowerment of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) in a systematic, programmatic manner, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, has launched a new scheme with the approval of the competent authority during the 11th Five Year Plan. The objective of Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan (PMEYSA) is to knit the EWRs in a network and through group action, empower themselves, so that both their participation and representation on local governance issues, improves. PMEYSA aims at a sustained campaign to build the confidence and capacity of EWRs, so that they get over the institutional, societal and political constraints that prevent them from active participation in rural local self governments. It is a Central Sector Scheme. The entire amount is funded by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for organising the various activities under this scheme. Strengths of this programme include:

  (i) Building solidarity among EWRs

  (ii) Opportunity for EWRs to present their demands to the State and Central Governments.

  (iii) EWRs' overcoming shyness/hesitation while participating in public meetings.

  (iv) Capacity building of EWRs through training.

  Weaknesses of the scheme include politicisation of the programme at the local level and lack of coordination between State Governments and Convenors/Core Committee which need to be worked upon.[4]

- Networking of women village Panchayats is vital as this will lead to collective strength, a feeling of solidarity and a learning experience from each other. It is argued that networks among women's groups and NGOs allow for greater visibility that is necessary when working with state institutions and government officials (Purushothaman, 1998). Medha Kotwal and Vandana Kulkarni also

note in the Aalochana publication, 'Moving from Visibility to Effectivity', 'Strengthening the civil society we think is crucial to ensuring the future of democracy, if Panchayat Raj is to be made a success what is needed is the mobilisation of people as a whole, for them to become active participants in the decision-making process of the village. The Gram Sabhas had to be rejuvenated ... Thus, addressing the community as a whole, where both elected and non-elected, men as well as women, are involved in the process of learning, would ensure continuity'.[5]

- Role of community action, grassroots activism, NGOs, voluntary associations, cooperatives, and social activists is crucial as they can play a crucial role in enabling participatory politics at the local level. We have examples like Aalochana Centre for Documentation and Research on Women in Pune in Maharashtra, established in 1989 aims to collect and provide information on issues related to the social, political, economic and legal aspects of women's lives. Since 1994 they have worked primarily on women and Panchayati Raj. Another example is Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) in Andhra where in the process Gram Sabha mobilisations it uses methods like wall writings, distribution of pamphlets and *kala jatha* programmes (folk theatre and songs). Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra (SSK) has been working towards building a useful perspective on gender justice and increased space for the marginalised communities in the democratic functioning of the institutions of local self government. Sakhi in Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala and Singamma Srinivas Foundation in Bangaluru are other examples.

Conclusion

To sum up, it can be said that laws may not remove structural inequalities but they can definitely assist social change. We need to bring about an awareness work on the culture of non-violence and non-bias to achieve a just and equitable society. What we need are systemic corrections rather than limiting our success to individual cases. Political participation is not only a symbol of women's development and empowerment but it also creates further awareness and mobilises other women to be a part of the political arena to promote their and societal interests at large. Women must not only participate in the decision-making process but must also be able to influence the outcome of the deliberations for it to be called empowerment in the true sense.

End Notes

1. The New Delhi Document on Women in Development (1985) 'Conference of Nonaligned and other Developing Countries on the Role of Women in Development'.

2. UNDP (2005) Bureau of Development Policy: En Route to Equality: A Gender Review of National MDG Report.

3. For details see Ministry of Women and child Development, Government of India, Report of the Working Group on Empowerment of Women for the 11th Plan

4. Retrieved from http://Panchayat.gov.in/mopr/data/1243833933355~EWR%20% 20A%20note%20Mahila%20Shakti%20Abhiyan.pdf

5. For details see Aalochana, (2000-2003) Moving From Visibility to Effectivity: Report of the Project 'Towards Strengthening Networks of Women in Panchayati Raj in Pune District'

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Socio-Economic Impact of MGNREGS: Study in Six States

Balu I.[*]

This paper is based on a survey of 480 households participated in National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in six states. It provides evidence that MGNREGA has great impact on enhancement socio-economic status of households exposed to employment guarantee scheme. Among the studied state, Tamilnadu, Tripura, and Rajasthan were found the better performers in MGNREGS in terms of people participation and wage disbursement. Over the period the fluctuations were observed in all the states. Of the six study states, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Tripura got the first position in regard to the 11 components on which the impact of MGNREGS is examined in this paper.

Several wage employment programmes have been implemented in the past with a view to addressing the poverty issue in the rural areas. But Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is having its prime place in view of its avowed objective of providing guaranteed employment of 100 days in a financial year to every household in the rural areas whose adult members are willing to participate in unskilled manual work. MGNREGS also stands unique because of its specific features including demand driven, self selecting and rights based entitlements. The

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objective of the scheme is to generate employment by way of creating new infrastructure or strengthening the existing rural infrastructure.

Introduced in 200 select (backward) blocks in the country in February 2006, the scheme was subsequently extended to cover the entire (rural areas) country. Since then, the scheme has made rapid strides in terms of coverage of households, expenditure incurred and employment days generated. As per the statistics available with the Ministry of Rural Development, during the period 2006-07 to 2013-14 four crore man days were generated by spending Rs. 2,48,479 crore in the same period (for creating infrastructure also) benefiting 35.45 crore households (this is a cumulative figure where there is a overlap of households who got employment in different years during 2006-07 to 2013-14.

In view of its large scale of operation both in terms of physical and financial parameters and also its special features, many scholars (both internal and foreign) and private and Govt. institutions evinced keen interest in studying the scheme from different angles and came out with important findings. The researchers have begun to assess the impacts of MGNREGA works, focusing on environmental services, land and water resources availability. Studies also offered suggestions for improving the quality of implementation of the scheme. The common thread that passes through all the findings has been that the implementation of the scheme helped improve the rural infrastructure but many shortcomings have been reported as regards employment generation. Further, these studies either snap-shot studies or cross-sectional in character. Thus, with the help of these studies it is possible only to understand how a group of households as a whole fared in so far as employment generation is concerned at a particular time point but not how a given group of households fared over a given time period. Further, though these studies did throw some light on wages, incomes and migration issues, no attempt seems to have been made to examine the inter-relationships among these aspects. Secondly, studies covering the same group of workers (forming a panel) over time are hard to come by. The present study is a modest attempt to bridge this gap.

The following section outlines the approaches and methods used in this study, and it is followed by sections on participation in MGNREGS, Impact of MGNREGS. The last section summarise the findings.

Objective
- To examine the participation of people and wage benefits gained from MGNREGS.

- To assess the impact of MGNREGS on food security, health, nutrition and education of families exposed to employment guarantee scheme.

Methodology

The study is conducted in six states across the country, the criterion for their selection being the state has registered the highest person-days of employment under MGNREGS during the year 2014-15 in each zone. Following this criterion, the states identified for the study include Madhya Pradesh in Central Zone, West Bengal in Eastern Zone, Uttar Pradesh in Northern Zone, Tamil Nadu in Southern Zone, Rajasthan in Western Zone and Tripura in North Eastern Zone.

One district from each selected state and one block from each selected district following the same criterion of highest person-days of employment was selected. However, as regards selection of Gram Panchayats (GPs) from each selected block, two GPs are selected and they are the ones which registered the extremes in respect of person-days during the reference period.

Table 1
Study Area

S. No	Zone	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat	
					Highest Person Days	Lowest Person Days
1	Central	Madhya Pradesh	Balaghat	Lalbarra	Bandri	Kanki
2	Eastern	West Bengal	Burdwan	Mongolkote	Bhalugram	Paligram
3	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Sitapur	Phahala	Bilauli Bazaar	Balsinghpur
4	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Thiruvannamalai	Thiruvannamalai	Pavithram	Devanandal
5	Western	Rajasthan	Barmer	Bhadmer	Chaadi	Mahabar
6	North Eastern	Tripura	South Tripura	Satchand	Indiran Agar	Sukanta Palli

Selection of Households

In each selected village, sampling frame comprising all the households that participated in MGNREGS during 2014-15 is developed from which a sample of 40 households was drawn randomly for studying the objectives set for the study

Survey method was adopted for capturing information both on quantitative and qualitative parameters and for this purpose, interview schedules were developed with provision for direct data entry.

Socio-economic Profile of the Sample Households

This section presents the analysis and results of the data on socio-economic parameters of the respondent households and also of the household members.

The respondents are mostly middle aged with the average ranging between 37 (Rajasthan) and 45 (Tripura and West Bengal). For the overall group, the average age is 41 years. In the sample of 480 households for the study, OBCs is the major group with 44.4 per cent, distantly followed by SCs with 28.8 per cent. Further OCs constitute 13 per cent, minorities 8.5 per cent and STs 5.4 per cent only. But across states different trends emerge. In Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh, OBCs emerge as the dominant participating group with 75 per cent share in the number of sample households while 60 per cent of the sample households in Uttar Pradesh are from SC community. Other important observation concerning Madhya Pradesh is that the ST group is the next highest with 20 per cent, in Tripura OC group with 28.8 per cent occupies the second position. In West Bengal, SC is the largest group among the sample households, though magnitude wise it is slightly lower when compared to Uttar Pradesh and OC group is the second largest in this state (West Bengal) accounting for 34 per cent.

Principal Occupation of the Respondents

Cultivation, agricultural labour and non-agricultural labour are the three occupations which have more or less equal presence of about 25 per cent each in the entire sample of 480 respondent households. About 25 per cent reported business or services or artisan work as their primary occupation and this shows that respondents with non-labour occupations also participate in MGNREGS.

Economic Dependency Ratio

The dependency ratio (defined as the number of workers divided by the total number of members in the sample households) in the entire group works out to 47 per cent and across the study states, it moves in a range of (53.4 per cent in Tamil Nadu to 41.3 per cent in Uttar Pradesh). The state of West Bengal is slightly closer to Tamil Nadu with a dependency ratio of 50.4 per cent.[1]

Type of Household

Households classified as 'Above Poverty Line' (APL) also participated in MGNREGS and they form not less than two fifths in the entire sample. Variations in this figure do occur across states. In Rajasthan, the participation of APL group in MGNREGS is the highest at 71 per cent and as against this the participation of BPL households of Madhya Pradesh is the highest at 87 per cent. This shows that slightly better off sections (known as APL), also participate in the wage employment programme and out of every five sample households two households belong to APL group.

Participation in MGNREGS

The focus of this section is on studying the extent of employment generated from both MGNREGS and non-MGNREGS sources from 2010-11 to 2014-15 and also on assessing the contribution of MGNREGS in the total wage employment generated.

Participation in MGNREGS

During this year, more number of sample households (75 out of 80) in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh participated in MGNREGS and the average number of workers who participated ranged between 1.02 in Madhya Pradesh and 1.45 in Rajasthan. Among all the six states Tripura gets the first position in larger extent of employment the participating households. In this state, on an average, each participating household got about 86 days of employment while Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal registered lowest levels of employment of about 20 days and in line with this magnitude of employment, Tripura's wages earnings are also highest at Rs. 8621 per household.

Table 2
Households Participated in MGNREGS 2010-11 to 2014-15

State	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Madhya Pradesh	61	60	59	61	79
Rajasthan	75	72	69	69	80
Tamil Nadu	49	49	75	78	75
Tripura	66	66	77	79	80
Uttar Pradesh	76	71	69	69	80
West Bengal	56	68	76	79	76

Note: The figures shown in the table are out of a sample of 80 households in each state.

The number of days of employment the sample households got from MGNREGS during the period 2010-11 to 2014-15 is recorded and in Madhya Pradesh, the employment started with an average of 17 days and it has gone up to 21 days in the following year 2011-12 and kept increasing to 33 days in 2014-15 and this results in a percentage increase of 94 during the period 2010-11 to 2014-15 (this much of increase is possible due to the slender base of 17 days in 2010-11). But other states like Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu started with a moderately high level of about 67 days in 2010-11 and these two sates either could maintain the same level or increase it till 2013-14 but in 2014-15, there was a fall in either state and as a result the percentage increase registered a decline to the extent of 33 percentage in Rajasthan and 24 percentage in Tamil Nadu.

The state of Tripura presents a different picture. It started with a per-household - employment figure of 86 days in 2010-11, shot up to 88 days in 2011-12, further shot up to 91 days 2012-13 and to 93 days in 2013-14 but when it comes to 2014-15, the average figure fell by 20 per cent with reference to the base figure of 86 days in 2010-11.

Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal form a group where they started with a moderate base of 46 and 20 days respectively, kept an moderate increasing pace and ended up with 50 and 23 days of employment generation in 2014-15. In percentage terms, the increases are nine and 15 respectively.

Table 3
Employment Received under MGNREGS
Per Households 2010-11 to 2014-15

State	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	% increase from 2010-11 to 2014-15
Madhya Pradesh	17	21	28	33	33	94
Rajasthan	69	64	70	57	46	-33
Tamil Nadu	67	73	81	67	51	-24
Tripura	86	88	91	93	69	-20
Uttar Pradesh	46	52	58	59	50	9
West Bengal	20	25	28	31	23	15

Average wage per households under MGNREGS in 2010-11 to 2013-14

The average wage earned by each household, which depends up on the corresponding days of employment and also the wage rate offered under MGNREGS varied considerably in each year. During 2010-11, the wage ranged between Rs. 1682 (Madhya Pradesh) to Rs. 8621 (Tripura). After Tripura, Rajasthan registered the next highest average wage with Rs. 5287. In

2011-12 too, Tripura registered the highest wage of Rs. 10341 and lowest is recorded by Madhya Pradesh again, but this time this has gone up by Rs. 881 than 2010-11's wage of Rs. 1682. The average wage has further gone up in all states and Tripura stands first with an average wage of Rs. 12603 and Madhya Pradesh continues to record the lowest (Rs. 3613). The data on wages for 2013-14 also show that the past trend continues where Tripura leads the other states and Madhya Pradesh trails behind all states (the average figures being Tripura Rs. 14,665 and Madhya Pradesh 4483).

However, the percentage increase is seen to be the highest in Madhya Pradesh at 1.66 per cent as it started with a very low base of Rs. 1682 and touched the mark of Rs. 4483) while Rajasthan registered the lowest percentage increase of 0.15 point.

Table 4
Average Wage per Households under MGNREGS 2010-14

State	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	No. of Times Increase from 2010-11 to 2013-14
Madhya Pradesh	1682	2563	3613	4483	1.66
Rajasthan	5287	5163	6493	6088	0.15
Tamil Nadu	4476	5193	6755	6077	0.36
Tripura	8621	10341	12603	14665	0.70
Uttar Pradesh	4630	6507	8145	9105	0.97
West Bengal	2141	3271	4276	4672	1.18

Percentage share of MGNREGS in the total wage employment:

Now the attempt is to examine the share of MGNREGS employment in the total wage employment and data shows the percentage figures.[2] In 2010-11,Tamil Nadu accounts for larger share of 30 per cent and even in the succeeding years, this figure more or less continues. Close to Tamil Nadu in 2010-11 is Tripura with a corresponding figure of 29 per cent and in this case too, shares of similar magnitude are witnessed in the succeeding years. But Rajasthan presents a slightly different picture the MGNREGS share of 22 per cent in 2010-11 shot up to 33 per cent in 2011-12 but declined to 22 per cent in 2012-13 and further declined to 19 per cent in 2013-14. This is due to the fact that the decrease in wage employment days under non MGNREGS from 2012-13 to 2013-14 is much smaller as compared to the corresponding decrease in wage employment from MGNREGS sources.

Figure 1
Percentage share of MGNREGS in total wage employment
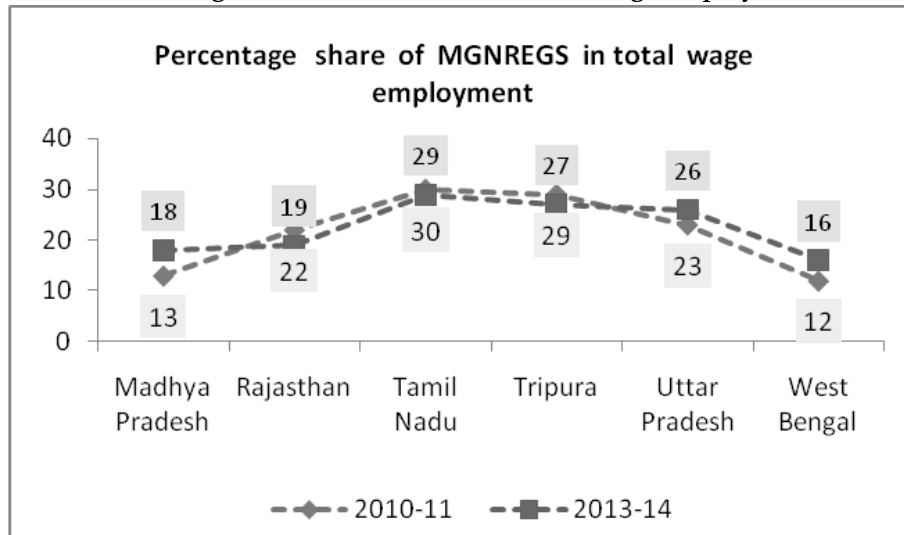
Reasons for Lesser Participation in MGNREGS in 2014-15

As discussed above, the average employment generation under MGNREGS ranged between 23 days (West Bengal) and 69 days (Tripura) during 2014-15 and when compared to the position in 2010-11, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal are the states which registered positive growth while the other states of Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Tripura slid back in employment generation and in quantitative terms, the dip is to the extent of 33 per cent (Rajasthan) to 20 per cent (Tripura) with reference to 2010-11. When asked what could be the reason(s) for lesser employment level in 2014-15, the households have given varying replies- first, they put the blame on implementing authorities that they could not provide employment despite request and the intensity of such response is as high as 90 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, 89 per cent in West Bengal and 25 per cent in Rajasthan. In Madhya Pradesh, another reason cited for lesser employment level is 'worksite being far off'. The other major reason given for lesser participation across states is employment outside MGNREGS preferred (26 per cent in Rajasthan, and 20 per cent in Tamil Nadu, 33 per cent each in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal). In Tripura, the major reason for lesser participation is sickness of the worker (77 per cent).

Impact of MGNREGS

The impact of MGNREGS on participating households can be expected in terms of improvement in the household incomes and thereby reducing the dependence on various coping mechanisms which they hitherto (would have) followed and lastly improvement in various components including food intake, nutrition status etc. This section analyses the impact in respect of these aspects.

Household Income from MGNREGS

Wage employment is the main source for the workers under MGNREGS and during 2014-15, each participating household in the entire sample got an average wage of Rs. 8007 and this source forms 15.0 per cent in the total income in this year. Of all the six study states, Tripura is the state which registered the highest average of Rs. 14,604 and Madhya Pradesh with an average income of Rs. 5074 and West Bengal emerge as laggards. (It may be noted that the wage received under MGNREGS is a function of both the number of days of employment and also the wage rate paid).

Household Income from Works Taken up under MGNREGS

Across four states of Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh, development of wet land was taken up in 25 households and in another 20 households dry land was developed under MGNREGS in all the four states except Tripura. Further, in these states, not more than four households took up horticulture development under MGNREGS either in the wet land or dry land. Besides, minor irrigation schemes were implemented under MGNREGS in three cases two in Tripura and one in Tamil Nadu.

Besides participating as wage labour in the works taken up under MGNREGS, some workers who are part of the sample covered, also took up activities under MGNREGS by way of land development, raising horticulture crops and using micro irrigation facilities. But such farmer - workers are not more than 34 or hardly seven per cent in the entire sample. These farmers reported an average income attributable to MGNREGS is to the extent of Rs. 5147. These 34 farmers come from Madhya Pradesh (six), Tripura (17) and Uttar Pradesh (11). But across these three states, as per the analysis, the farmers of Uttar Pradesh have benefited more (an average income Rs. 5686) while Tripura is very close to Uttar Pradesh with an average figure of Rs. 5470.

Coping Mechanisms

The mechanisms usually adopted by poor households to cope up with distress situations include migration, child labour, indebtedness, disposal or mortgage of land, cattle, and gold. Another aspect included along with these coping mechanism is decline in the food insecurity. As the respondent households of the study are exposed to MGNREGS for some time, it is of interest to find out the extent to which their dependence on these mechanisms has come down due to the additional earnings they got from MGNREGS.[3]

Migration

Going by the state-wise percentages computed, it is seen that the dependence on migration is not high. In the overall sample, nearly 50 per cent mentioned that they did not experience migration even earlier. Across five states leaving out those households which did not 'experience' migration, a majority of households of the states of Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal mentioned that the position remained as it is implying that there is no decline in the migration incidence. But in Rajasthan found that the incidence of migration has declined to a moderate extent (62 per cent). Of all the five states, Uttar Pradesh appears to have benefited more from MGNREGS where 43 per cent of sample households reported that the incidence of migration has come down to a significant extent.

Food Insecurity

This is another aspect which is expected to be addressed due to participation in MGNREGS. According to a large percentage of households (85 per cent of Rajasthan and 64 per cent of Tripura, about 35 per cent of West Bengal sample respondents), MGNREGS helped them in reducing food insecurity to a moderate extent. But as the analysis suggests, the scheme could not make much dent on reducing food insecurity in Madhya Pradesh (42 per cent) and in Uttar Pradesh (53 per cent) where the response was the 'incidence remained as it is'.

Incidence of Child Labour

Poor households resort to this mechanism whenever they face distress. But in the study sample, Uttar Pradesh appears to be an exception where about 93 per cent have reported the *status quo* in this regard. In other study states child labour does not appear to be an issue at all.

Indebtedness

In so far as this mechanism is concerned, no uniform pattern obtains across states. In Madhya Pradesh, indebtedness is not an important issue at all either prior to MGNREGS or now, while Tripura found the utility of MGNREGS where the scheme is responsible for decline of indebtedness to a moderate extent. But according to 96 per cent of sample households of Uttar Pradesh, MGNREGS could not impact this phenomenon and as a result the same position continues even now.

Mortgage of Cattle or Land

This is a common phenomenon among the poor households where the poor households resort to mortgage the fixed assets including land and house besides gold. But, except in the case of Rajasthan where about 40 per cent have experienced moderate decline due to exposure to MGNREGS, in other states either the problem did/does not persist or it did not show any decline.

Disposal of Cattle or Land

When faced severe distress, the poor households resort to dispose of cattle/gold/land. Only in Rajasthan, did MGNREGS come to the rescue of the sample households where the scheme helped reduce the incidence to a moderate extent while in the case of other states either the issue did not apply or the things remained as they are (implying that MGNREGS did not have any impact).

Improvements in Various Components

The sample households are exposed to MGNREGS for the last six to seven years in the study states and in this background it would be of some interest to ascertain the impact of the scheme in terms of bringing about improvement in various components that reflect their general wellbeing.[4] The impact of MGNREGS on each component is expressed in percentage form. The discussion that follows is both component and state-wise improvements.

Food Intake

At the aggregate level, this component gets a percentage score of 70 and across the six states, MGNREGS appears to have made larger impact on the sample households of Tamil Nadu. Here, this component received a

percentage score of 89 and the state slightly closer to Tamil Nadu is Rajasthan with a corresponding score of 81.

It is further evident from the analysis that Madhya Pradesh,Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal fall short of the aggregate score of 70 per cent and the lowest percentage score is registered by Madhya Pradesh. It suggests the impact of MGNREGS in ensuring food security is relatively low.

Figure 2
Improvement in Food Intake
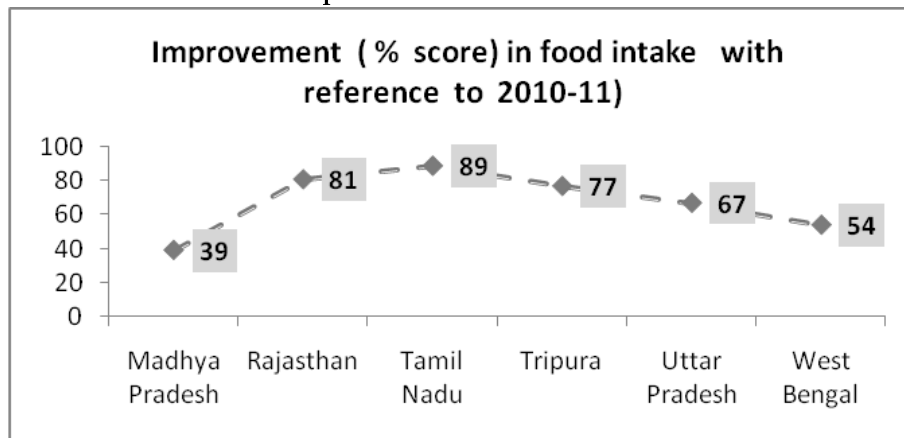
Housing Condition

By virtue of being exposed to MGNREGS, it is expected that the households' housing condition would improve. But, the impact is not discernible among more than 59 per cent and across the study states, Rajasthan stands apart with 79 per cent and there exists a tie between Tamil Nadu and Tripura with 68 per cent.

Again, the same states viz., Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal get the lower positions in housing condition too and of all the six states, Madhya Pradesh gets the lowest position on housing condition.

Health Status of Old Members

Not much impact of MGNREGS is seen in this regard. While the aggregate percentage score is 53, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Tripura form one group where the percentage score is higher than the aggregate score.

And, among these, MGNREGS' impact is seen most in Tripura where the percentage score is 70 and Rajasthan is placed second with 65 per cent. As in the case of first two components, in this case too, Madhya Pradesh lags well behind other states with a percentage score of 38.

Health Status of Pregnant and Lactating Women

This component received a percentage score of just 46 at the aggregate level and only two states obtain higher percentage score than this and they are Rajasthan and Tripura (with a score of 63 per cent each) and among the rest, the percentage score varies between 33 (West Bengal) and 44 (Uttar Pradesh).

Figure 3
Improvement in Health Status of Women
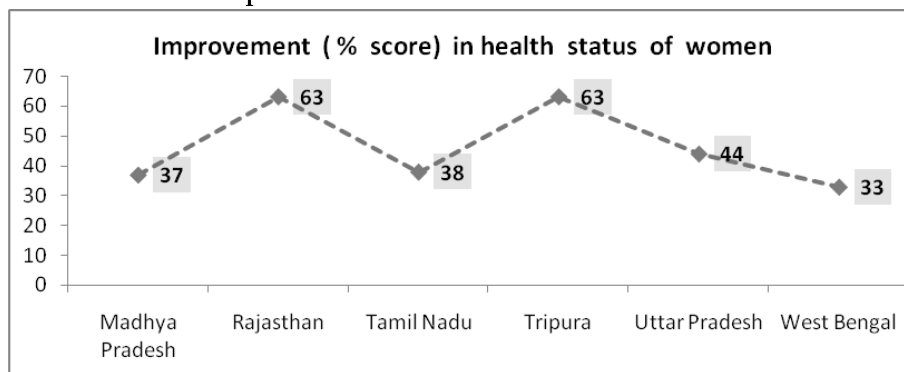
Health Status of Children below Five Years

On this component, the position is slightly better as compared to the position on the previous component (health status of pregnant and lactating women, if any). Going by the trends emerging from the analysis, it can be inferred that the beneficiary households attached more (relatively) importance to children's health especially in Tripura state. This state yields a percentage score of 69 and the state closer to this state is that of Rajasthan with 64 per cent. Besides these two states, Tamil Nadu also scored a higher percentage than the aggregate score and Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal constitute the other extreme. And, among these three states, while Uttar Pradesh is closer to the aggregate score, with a percentage score of 49, West Bengal occupies the lowest position with 33 per cent.

Nutrition Status of Pregnant and Lactating Women

On this component also, the scheme did not seem to have made much impact. For the study area, the impact in percentage terms is just 46 only. However, across the states, Rajasthan and Tripura on a different footing with about 65 per cent and the remaining four states fall short of the aggregate value and the lowest is recorded against West Bengal.

Nutrition Status of Children below Five Years

Even in this regard, the impact of MGNREGS is not so good. The total impact is slightly above the mid-value of 50 per cent. But among the states, Tripura yields the highest score of 70 per cent and Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan's scores are in the range of 62-65 per cent. The ranking among the states which occupy the bottom three positions is Uttar Pradesh (46 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (36 per cent) and West Bengal (35 per cent).

Children's Education

This is one of the critical components, which is expected to receive much attention in the beneficiary households. As the analysis reflects, this component gets percentage score of 61 and Rajasthan's sample households appear to have attached more importance to children's education. As compared to the aggregate value of 61 per cent, Rajasthan's score is higher by 21 per cent and Tripura is slightly a way behind Rajasthan by five per cent. Even in Tamil Nadu also the impact of the scheme is seen on children's education. As in the case of other components that have been discussed so far, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal are the laggards with percentage scores lower than 53.

Clothing

This component also is expected to receive some attention in the context of larger earnings due to MGNREGS. The aggregate score on this component is 62 per cent and Rajasthan tops the list with 79 per cent, 17 per cent higher than the aggregate value. After this state, a tie occurs between Tamil Nadu and Tripura with 74 per cent. Among the remaining three states, the position of Uttar Pradesh is only a shade better than the other two. Of all the states, West Bengal benefited the lowest (33 per cent only).

Land Condition

Improvement is expected to take place in the land condition because of two possibilities: (i) if the land is taken up for development under MGNREGS and (ii) if the households spend some part of the wage earnings they got from MGNREGS on land improvement. But as we have seen earlier very few households (34 out of 480) reported to have got the benefit of the first kind. The analysis shows that the impact of the scheme is 49 per cent only. However, Rajasthan and Tripura samples reported slightly larger impact of MGNREGS in this regard (62 and 63 per cent respectively).

Household Assets

Impact of MGNREGS is also expected among the sample households in improving the household assets.[5] But the evidence we get through analysis does not support the proposition much. The aggregate score does not touch the half-way mark of 50 per cent (exact score is 46 per cent only) and the highest is seen against Tripura (60 per cent), closely followed by Rajasthan with 58 per cent. But in this case, Uttar Pradesh occupies the lowest position (33 per cent).

Figure 4
Improvements due to MGNREGS
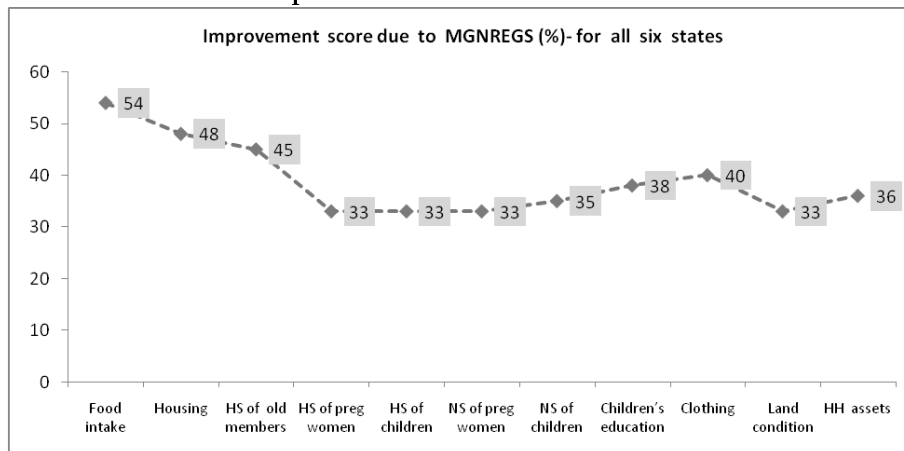
Of all the 11 components, food security witnesses largest improvement (with a per cent score of 70 per cent), followed by clothing (with 62 per cent) and children's education (61 per cent). Housing condition and health status of old members, children, nutrition status of children below five years get moderate per cent scores. The components that received lowest priority include health and nutrition status of pregnant and lactating women and household assets.

Conclusion

Among the six study states, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Tripura got the first position in regard to the 11 components on which the impact of MGNREGS is examined. While Tamil Nadu tops the list on food security front (in fact this state got a percentage score of 89, highest among all states on all components), MGNREGS made relatively larger impact in respect of more than one component. As per the analysis of the data in this regard, the

sample respondents expressed happiness on housing and health status of pregnant and lactating women. The component on children's education and land condition received greater attention due to MGNREGS.

In contrast to this, Tripura emerges as the state where health aspects are given more importance than others and the components are health status of old members, pregnant and lactating women and children as well besides nutrition requirements of pregnant and lactating women and children also improved (relatively in larger measure than other states). The households assets also witnessed larger improvement in this state on account of MGNREGS.

Thus, of the six states, Impact of MGNREGS is seen to be the highest in Rajasthan followed by Tripura and Tamil Nadu. Among the remaining three states, fourth position on the impact of MGNREGS is seen in West Bengal while Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh share the lowest position. But this rank order is not consistent with that based on wage incomes from MGNREGS except in Madhya Pradesh.

End Notes

1. The dependency ratio is defined as the number of workers divided by the total number of members in the sample households.

2. Total wage employment includes wage employment from MGNREGs and other sources like agriculture and non-agriculture wage employment.

3. The distress situation is compare from 2010-11 to 2014-15.

4. Improvements in various components were studied with comparison from 2010-11 to 2014-15.

5. Household asset includes moveable and immovable assets.

Integrated Action Plan (IAP) in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Affected Areas: The Ways of a Better Tribal Livelihood

Ashok Kumar Nanda[*]

Koraput is a tribal dominated Left Wing Extremism affected district in Odisha. The people highlighted the root cause of naxalism in the area and analysed various development initiatives undertaken in the district under Integrated Action Plan to ameliorate tribal livelihood and restrain spread of naxalism in the district.

For many, who had a glimpse of Koraput in Odisha rightly say that the district is like a meditating saint. Koraput in fact is known for its serene and scenic natural beauty, exhilarating tribal culture and heritage, abundant natural resources and many more. Koraput has been a hunting ground for many researchers, development professionals, senior bureaucrats; even poets and writers who got so much to start with and accomplish on this green valley. The important tribes found in Koraput district are Paraja, Kandha, Gadaba, Bhumiya, Dharua, Halva, Omanatya, Pentia, Bhatra etc. Koraput has national recognition for public sector units, like Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL), National Aluminum Company (NALCO).

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The geographical coverage of the district is 8,807 Sq. Km. which is 5.66 per cent of the total state's geographical area. The district is third largest in terms of the total geographical area of the state. The district known for its tribal population which comprises of 6,97,583 (50.5 per cent), the Scheduled Caste population in the district is 1,96,540 (14.2 per cent). The district is a Scheduled Area because of majority of the population belong to Scheduled Tribe.

The urban population of the district is 16.3 per cent and rural population is 83.6 per cent as per 2011 census. The total literacy rate in the district is 49.87 per cent out of which female literacy being 38.92 per cent and male literacy being 61.29 per cent. The rural literacy is only 35.06 per cent compared to urban literacy rate which is 67.17 per cent in the district.

Naxal Menace and Koraput

Naxalism has emerged as one of the biggest internal security threats over the past two decades in India. In 90s naxal movement was only concentrated in few states and in very few districts in those states. Gradually in late 90s and in the last decade, there has been a substantial increase in this menace which spread over to Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and still continues to spread. What is noteworthy is that the districts in which hardly anybody had ever thought about such a threat are the districts becoming the strongholds of naxals and are continuously expanding in an alarming pace in states like Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha.

It is said that the eminent activist like Nagbhushan Pattnaik had initiated this concept in different pockets of Odisha in early 1968. However, it is during the past two decades the Naxal movement has really gained momentum and strengthened its position in almost all parts of Odisha. Initially there were groups such as 'Peoples War Group (PWG)' active in districts like Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangapur, Rayagada, Gajapati, and Ganjam. The Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) was largely present in Sundargarh, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar. After the formation of Communist Party of India (Maoist), the Naxal movement spread to different parts of Sambalpur, Kandhamal, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Jajpur and Angul in Odisha. Presently, there are three zonal committees of CPI (Maoist) functioning in Orissa i.e., Andhra-Orissa Border Special Zonal Committee (AOBSZC), Jharkhand-Bihar-Orissa Special Zonal Committee (JBOBSZC) and Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DSZC). The MCCI and PWG groups were merged in 2004.

Dynamics of Tribal Development

In spite of special focus on the Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes since independence, it is appearing as if still there is lot of space for improvement as there has been very minimal visible change in their living condition which is reflected by scholars from time to time. This phenomenon is more visible in states like, Chattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and in the North East States. Though North East States have their own issues, the other states like Odisha, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh etc. have a gap between the government and the beneficiaries and especially the SC/ST communities. Constant interaction, proper planning, implementation and monitoring of all developmental work with the ownership of the SC/ST communities and proper evaluation of development work that hardly has any impact on these vulnerable communities.

The historically known backward district of Koraput has many untold stories as depicted in the human development reports published from time to time. In 1970s, the CDI rank value of the district was 11th which slipped down to 13th in 1990s.

Table 1
Aggregate Development Ranking of Undivided Districts
in Orissa by Deprivation Method

S. No.	District	1970s		1980s		1990s	
		CDI	Rank Value	CDI	Rank Value	CDI	Rank Value
1.	Baleswar	0.297	7	0.304	6	0.322	6
2.	Bolangir*	0.312	6	0.233	8	0.292	8
3.	Cuttack	0.443	2	0.456	3	0.445	3
4.	Dhenkanal	0.231	8	0.227	9	0.314	7
5.	Ganjam	0.402	5	0.353	5	0.337	5
6.	Kalahandi*	0.209	9	0.206	11	0.195	11
7.	Kendujhar	0.178	12	0.216	10	0.267	10
8.	Koraput*	0.192	11	0.200	13	0.163	13
9.	Mayurbhanj	0.202	10	0.264	7	0.273	9
10.	Phulbani	0.177	13	0.201	12	0.177	12
11.	Puri	0.418	3	0.476	2	0.473	2
12.	Sambalpur	0.411	4	0.415	4	0.407	4
13.	Sundargarh	0.646	1	0.620	1	0.671	1
	C. V. Value (in %)	42.68	-	40.07	-	40.24	-

* Refers to KBK Districts.
Source: Meher, R.K. (1999). *Development Disparities in a Backward Region,* APH Publishing Corporation, New Delhi, P. 114.

The State Human development Report 2004 may be referred to assess the human development aspects of the district which shows that

Koraput has still a long way to go. The HDI of the district in 2001 is lying at 0.431 and ranked at 27 out of the 30 districts. The Gender Development Index (GDI) is as low as 0.415 and the rank is 26 in the state whereas the Reproductive Health Index (RHI) is at little higher position and gets 0.509 points with a ranking of 22 among the other districts in the state. Both the Education Index (EI) and the Health Index (HI) have put the district in 27th rank.

Apart from the poor socio-economic backdrop of the tribal villages as mentioned above, lack of ownership of government programmes, tribal communities have a typical socio-cultural lifestyle which is different than that of the urban lifestyle and the biggest difference lies in the value system between these two. The tribal people believe in living for the present and do not bother about the future. This is reflected in their lifestyle in which they usually have many children, more than one wife, limited land/other resources. They do not prefer to cut down their expenditure on chewing tobacco, drinking country liquor, spending on food etc. Because of their poor socio-economic condition, lack of power to change the way the governance units work as per their priorities, their spending habit and socio-cultural lifestyle, they tend to end up in conditions such as severely low savings, low income, less food or lack of proper balanced diet, lack of education, and health support etc. Here there is no sufficient mechanism which can hold them and support them from going further taking them away from their state of extreme poverty. Even though there are support systems such as SHG groups, loan facilities, subsidies, agricultural extension system, grievance redressal system etc., there are many gaps in these support systems which are failing to extend actual support to many tribal and SC families.

Before they could understand the basic reasons of their marginalisation, the so called exploitation and corruption by the handful of well to do villagers, grassroot level government officials, banks, legal professionals and police are invanding minds of deprived and marginalised people. They want to punish the exploiters and corrupt officers who have snatched away their land, their belongings, their rights, and moreover the police personnel who have mostly failed to resolve their village disputes, and provide proper justice.

In this backdrop where no facilities are available and even if something is available, nothing is free for them and there exists exploitation and corruption in these areas. As a result this element of naxals enter these villages who are sometimes welcomed on account of fear and sometimes wholeheartedly due to all the above development maladies.

Here it may be noteworthy to mention that even in SC villages or in the rural areas occupied by upper caste people, this phenomenon is very rarely seen as the SC or the upper caste communities have a sense of flowing with the stream and they quickly learn how to make the system work for them. The naxals hence, have a safe haven mostly in the tribal dominated villages rather than in SC or upper caste villages. The tribal life style and their poor socio-economic-cultural condition, and their value system make them highly vulnerable to get under influence of the naxals who rather know how to attract these people by their explosive speeches, their anti-government stand and their pseudo-pro-people approach.

Naxal Dynamics and Government Strategy

Taking into account the vulnerable traits that the tribal people have been suffering since generations and the poor governance. The naxals have devised certain long term strategies which have really helped them grow their strength. Though government has understood the game plan lately and also taken some concrete steps to defuse these strategies, still it has a long way to go and needs to be more consistent in its efforts in future.

Taking advantage of the innocence and simplicity of the tribes, their resentment and dissatisfaction over the system of governance, high disparity among the facilities provided in urban and rural area the naxals have planned their objectives. The top down approach of development which hardly ever cater to the need of the people, the naxals further provoked the semi-literate or illiterate tribal and rural youths and showed the dream of a new social order. They assure that everybody would be equal, right of everybody would be protected, all disputes would be resolved instantly without running to police stations for months together and nobody would demand a bribe from a common tribal man. The naxals propagate that they will provide justice instantly in the Jan Adalats. This attracted the innocent tribal people. The history has many of such instances. The main reasons behind naxals gaining ground in the tribal of Koraput are:

(a)   Inaccessible area.
(b)   Underdevelopment and lack of proper health, education and facility to support livelihood.
(c)   Concentration of tribal people with typical socio-cultural practices, their innocence, psychosis, their resentment towards the government system.

(d)   Lack of infrastructure facilities resulting in limited scope for business, interaction with the urban people and access to the facilities available in the urban area.

(e)   Lack of proper education/vocational education.

(f)   The wrong impression of tribal and rural people about the police administration and judiciary system.

(g)   Lack of awareness about the system of governance, democratic system and judiciary system among the people.

(h)   Lack of sufficient scope of entertainment, sports and other creative activities in rural and tribal areas.

(i)   Sense of insecurity that develops from the threat of naxals among the people.

In a nut shell, where basic services of government are absent, police could not reach in time to protect the rights of people and where justice is a distant dream, naxals reached there and propagated their ideals and concepts which are easily acceptable for the tribal people.

Government Strategies

Though the naxals have succeeded in their attempt to a great extent, it is still not late for the Government to take action. Government has understood its role and has been acting upon the alarming situation which has been created on account of both: lack of timely outreach of development programmes and timely redressal of the grievances of the tribal and rural people. After a thorough analysis of the situation, government has taken certain concrete steps on a war footing at the Central and State levels. As Government treats naxal activities as single largest internal threat in the country which is threatening the internal security, therefore it has been allocating additional funds for this cause without any hesitation. Only thing that it is needed more emphasis is a planned and concerted effort at all levels by all departments towards development and the establishment of trust between the Government and people who are two sides of a coin. In the present situation the government has been concentrating on: Strengthening security; Rural development; Ensuring rights of local communities; Improvement in governance; and Public perception management.

Government is conducting *Jansampark Shivirs* to create a stronger relationship with the people and beneficiaries who have several queries, expectations, complaints and suggestions are discussed at public platforms. The officials of government departments gather in a place where they appraise the people about various developmental schemes and also clear

their doubts regarding schemes. Similarly police administration is also organising such *Jansampark Shivirs* to distribute medicines, organise sports events, distribute prizes, distribute sports materials and try to improve the image of police among the public. Government is also organising Gram Sabhas in the areas where there has been resentment over setting up mining, and industrial units and the resolution of the Gram Sabha is given due importance. Through Gram Sabhas and social audits the people of the tribal areas are constantly brought to the centre stage of planning, implementation and monitoring of the government programmes which are devised for them.

Special Initiatives of the State Government

(a) *Strengthening Panchayat Raj Institutions:* The government has been trying to strengthen the PR institutes and empower people by enabling them to take their own decisions through Gram/Palli Sabhas. Recently Gram Sabha Sashaktikaran Karyakram (GSSK) was devised in the lines of union government's Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA) in which streamlining of Gram/Palli Sabha is tried and the resolutions of such sabhas too are recorded at state level.

(b) *Rehabilitation of Surrendering Naxal Cadres:* The government has announced certain packages of providing land, house, and a lump sum amount for the surrendering naxal cadres to start their own business and lead a dignified life. The police department has also initiated to include these surrendering naxals in their battalion of homeguards.

(c) *Withdrawing Minor Cases against Tribal People:* The government also tried to withdraw minor cases against tribal people who used to support the naxal outfits out of fear and provided them a chance to reconcile themselves and lead a tension free life.

Infrastructure Development and IAP

Three key ingredients are considered very essential in order to curb naxal menace in any area: (a) Trust and partnership between the government and people, (b) Strong security net for the common people and (c) Development. If there is strong bond between people and government, the people or community shall take the ownership of the government programmes then each of the government programmes ultimately become successful. This is evident in almost all developed countries, in which a strong bond of mutual trust and a sense of partnership between government

and public is seen as a prerequisite of development of the nation. Secondly every citizen in the country should feel secured and safe in the hands of a strong security network and should feel assured of his/her rights being protected with a prompt and impartial judiciary system. The sense of security shall make the people brave and fearless. This will help the people to tackle extremism of any form. Thirdly, underdevelopment is a laboratory from where anti-social and anti-government thoughts emerge. Hence development should be uniform across all areas of a state and a full-proof service delivery system should be in place. In order to cater to the needs of first two aspects, the government has been taking effective steps to strengthen security forces in the state, requisitioning additional security forces from centre, restructuring the training of the security personnel to tackle any challenges including the naxal menace in the districts. In order to supplement the development works in the LWE affected areas, IAP came in to force in the year 2010.

IAP or Integrated Action Plan was formulated as an additional central assistance to supplement the ongoing development works in the Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts. It is a 100 per cent grant by the central government. In November 2010, 60 tribal and backward districts were selected for implementation of IAP with a block grant of Rs. 25 crore and Rs. 30 crore per district during 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 respectively. The fund was planned to be placed at the disposal of a committee headed by the District Collector. Other two officers are the Superintendent of Police and the District Forest Officer. The number of district later on increased to 88.

Under this scheme the district level committee has been given flexibility to spend the amount for development schemes as per felt needs of the people as assessed by the committee. The committee is supposed to draw up plan that will consist of feasible proposals for public infrastructure and services like school buildings, Anganwadi centers, primary health centers, drinking water, road connectivity, restoration of electricity in public places such as PHCs and Schools etc. The Development Commissioner/equivalent officer in charge of development in the state shall scrutinise the proposals and monitor IAP as a whole in the state.

At the national level the Planning Commission has been given responsibility to monitor the implementation of the scheme and take suitable decisions on the modalities for implementation of the scheme as a part of the 12th Five Year Plan.

Salient Features of the Scheme

(i)   The district level committee is supposed to draw up a plan consisting of proposals for public infrastructure and services such as school buildings, Anganwadi centres, drinking water, village roads, facility of electric lights in public places such as PHCs and schools etc. The schemes are selected keeping in mind that they should be able to show results in short term.

(ii)   The local MP (Member of Parliament) and other PRI functionaries will be consulted in respect of the schemes to be taken up under the IAP.

(iii)   The expenditure on the projects under IAP needs to be over and above the expenditure being incurred for the regular State/Central/Centrally Sponsored Schemes. The district level committee should ensure that there is no duplication of expenditure on the same project.

(iv)   The State Government will release the funds directly into the bank account opened for this purpose by the District Collector or District Magistrate. The State Government will ensure that funds are transferred to this bank account within 15 days of the release of the funds to the Consolidated Fund of the State Government failing which the State Government should pay a penal interest at RBI rate to the concerned district.

In India as many as nine states are substantially affected by LWE with varied intensity. In those states, 88 districts, 1159 Sub-districts and 28992 Panchayats are covered under the scheme.

IAP Achievements in Koraput

Integrated Action Plan (IAP) has been implemented in Koraput district since 2010. Even though infrastructural development activities are going on for last few decades in Koraput, still there has been a huge demand for construction and maintenance of Anganwadi centres, village roads, vital connectivity roads and bridges which need repair and up keeping after a certain period of time. The benefits of such up-keeping and construction are received by one and all in the district. These help in augmenting economic activities resulting in better standard of life for the people in the district.

In 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 financial years, a total of Rs.9243.90 Lakhs has been spent and total 1985 projects have been completed benefitting 1045 villager and approximately 2.5 lakh population. The amount of grant was spent on drinking water, cement concrete roads, education and

health infrastructure, roads and bridges, livelihood support, skill development and construction of forest roads etc. The amount was spent keeping in view the long standing need of people of Koraput.

Table 2
Year Wise Allotment and Expenditure Under IAP

S.No.	Year	Allotment (Rs. in lakhs)	Expenditure (Rs. in lakhs)	% of expenditure
1	2010-11	2500.00	2500.00	100
2	2011-12	3000.00	2672.13	89.07
3	2012-13	3000.00	2664.86	88.83
4	2013-14	3000.00	1406.91	46.89
	Total	11500.00	9243.90	80.38

Source: DPMU, Koraput

Table 3
Sector-wise Amount Sanctioned,
Expenditure Made and Projects Completed under IAP

S. No.	Sector	Amount Sanctioned (Rs. in lakhs)	% of Amount Sanctioned	Expenditure (Rs. in lakhs)	Project Sanctioned	% of Project Sanctioned	Completed
1	Drinking Water	1016.76	8.86%	557.15	406	15.92%	256
2	CC road	1106.52	9.64%	1119.88	412	16.15%	412
3	Education Infrastructure	1159.30	10.10%	1140.37	250	9.80%	245
4	Health Infrastructure	339.18	2.95%	295.28	25	0.98%	14
5	Forest road	484.50	4.22%	474.5	9	0.35%	6
6	Road and Bridge	2945.15	25.67%	2288.18	311	12.19%	151
	Culvert	408.50	3.56%	238.45	80	3.13%	58
7	Livelihood Support	491.23	4.28%	298.35	126	4.94%	108
8	Other Infrastructure	429.80	3.74%	216.06	80	4.00%	48
9	Skill Development	419.12	3.65%	312.63	11	0.43%	6
10	Electricity	371.17	3.23%	334.65	542	21.25%	459
11	Irrigation	2176.89	18.98%	1888.4	277	10.00%	216
12	AWC Building	121.00	1.05%	80	21	0.82%	6
	Total	11469.12	100.00%	9243.9	2550	100.00%	1985

Source: DPMU, Koraput

A total number of 256 drinking water projects, 412 pieces of cement concrete (CC) road, 245 educational infrastructures, 14 health infrastructures, 151 number of roads and bridges, six forest roads, 58 culverts and 216 irrigation projects are built in the district under IAP. Apart from that, vital projects relating to skill development and livelihood support are also extended. In all these years, 19.95 per cent of funds was spent on roads and

bridges, 16.46 per cent spent on irrigation, 13.64 per cent on educational infrastructures and 9.76 per cent on CC roads in addition to other development activities.

Livelihood is perceived as one of the key areas identified in the context of Koraput district which has given birth to all vulnerability such as health, education, environment, and even naxalism. Hence, top priority has been accorded to this and creating number of livelihood options for the people of Koraput has been taken up in an integrated and convergent manner since last decade. IAP is treated as a boon in this direction which has added strength to the district administration to fill some of the critical gaps which otherwise would have been left unaddressed due to lack of finance and administrative provisions. Forty six livelihood projects have been taken up till date under IAP and some of the key interventions are discussed later in this article.

On account of the inputs of IAP, the scenario of the district is changing very positively. Projects like CC roads and water supply schemes are concentrated deliberately in the strategic locations of highly LWE affected Gram Panchayats.

A positive impact of the scheme is that water supply schemes are mushroomed across the district catering to the needs of people and make them self-sufficient in terms of potable drinking water supply.

Special Focus Interventions in Koraput District

Due to lack of roads, blasted culverts and untimely closure of roads by the naxals, the opportunities of livelihood were further squeezed to a great extent in the LWE affected areas. Hence, the top priority of the district administration was to promote livelihood opportunity in the district in order to engage the people in productive purposes and to create a sustainable livelihood support system through an integrated approach. The following resolutions were taken in the District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC):

(a)   Develop/repair critical links to all naxal affected areas and restore mobility.

(b)   Initiating livelihood based projects through SHG members.

(c)   Creating additional irrigation potential by tapping spring based perennial water sources.

(d)   Infrastructure support to strengthen traditional artists groups to improve the socio-economic condition.

The district administration was sure that these steps not only would open the horizons of livelihood but at the same time would cover up the 'trust deficit' by creating an amicable ambiance. Also due to the substantial progress of the SHGs under the strong federations at various levels, it was decided to have a model involving the SHGs and district level federation of Mission Shakti.

As many as 46 livelihood related projects were launched in the district under IAP in the nook and corners of the affected areas but only few major projects are narrated here to project the initiatives that could bring about the long coveted transformation among the people of Koraput district.

a.   Niger oil Extraction unit
b.   Fly Ash Brick making unit
c.   Sanitary Napkin production unit

Niger Oil Processing Unit, Koraput

Koraput is the biggest producer of niger in Odisha. The tribal people grow niger on the dry uplands and hills of Koraput. The geographical set up and climate sutable for niger production in the district. In the first place, because niger is a dry season crop and can be taken up under a sequential cropping, it could serve as a possible catch crop (a backup crop that compensates for the failure of a main crop) in areas susceptible to late rainy season/early dry season etc. It is best suited in area where upland rice and other crops are frequently decimated and seed is easily established through simple hand sowing which the tribes of Koraput are pretty comfortable with. Cultivation of niger requires few inputs and the amount of biomass it produces makes it a good crop too. Its reported weed-depressing ability makes it a cover crop and seed production seems suited to marginal land with not so fertile soil as is available in Koraput and the seed's oil is considered a healthy alternative cooking oil. But as there is always a dark side of every boon, like other highest producing areas, Koraput has its own worries of niger production too. As niger is grown as a back-up crop that compensates the main crop, in the event of low yield, it cannot supplement the loss of the main crop and in the event of high yield, the tribals often resort to sell niger at a low price to the middle men as niger cannot be consumed unless and until the same is processed and the oil is extracted. As there was very few niger oil producing units in and around Koraput district, the mill owners have the monopoly power in the fixation of the price and niger producers have been compelled to sell the produces at a lower rate as they do not have any other option left with them. The tribal community

producing niger in small quantity are not united under cooperative fold and hence, had to sell to the mill owners or their agents at a low price.

The niger oil processing units promoted by the District Administration are constantly making profits. The major achievements of the units have so far been providing a safety net to the niger producing tribal farmers to whom the units are providing remunerative price and thereby protecting them from resorting to distress sale. Initially the cultivators used to sell niger at a low price of Rs. 16 to Rs. 18 per kilogram (kg) even though there was a minimum support price for the farmers of Rs. 24.50 per kg in 2010-11 and Rs. 29 per kg in 2011-12 by the government. But after the units started functioning, the farmers are now getting an average of Rs. 35 per kg of niger by selling to the district federation. This is no doubt a huge achievement of the district administration which feels proud of such an initiative in tribal dominated Koraput. It has also supported the SHG members of the district who are also cultivating niger in small quantities. These units were established with a project cost of Rs. 24.85 lakhs each (District Mission Shakti Federation, Koraput, Year: 2012-2013).

Fly Ash Brick Making Units, Borigumma and Koraput

Brick making in the district has been a profitable venture keeping in view the overdose of development works through various flagship schemes and private constructions. A handful of brick kilns in the district have been selling bricks at a higher cost of Rs. 3.50 to Rs. 4.00 per piece. The BPL families and the SHG groups expressed their helplessness to undertake construction works particularly to construct Indira Awas houses. The IAY houses could be bigger and better in neighbouring Malkangiri district where with the same amount the beneficiaries could build bigger and stronger houses because of the availability of cheap and best quality bricks. Even many of the SHGs suggested constructing brick kilns of their own with low technical knowhow and with high risk of losses attached to the venture. The District Administration strongly felt the intense requirements of bricks in the district and decided to promote fly ash brick units initially in two blocks of Koraput and Borigumma as a pilot experience. The fly ash is a byproduct of nearby NALCO (National Aluminium Co. Ltd) which can be availed free of cost at a minimum transportation cost.

It is interesting to note that the unit is running profitably and has become a role model for the district and beyond. Within the first year the Koraput unit could produce 12,30,000 bricks and got a profit of Rs, 15,37,500 after selling at an average price of Rs. 1.25 per brick. These units could

engage as many as six local SHG groups and support their livelihood initiatives substantially. Thanks to the initiative of the district administration and the District Mission Shakti for successful functioning of these economically viable ash brick making units (District Mission Shakti Federation, Koraput).

Sanitary Napkin Unit

The tribal adolescent girls studying in various schools had problems in adopting hygienic practice during their menstrual cycle periods. They found it extremely embarrassing to dispose of the used sanitary napkins besides the problem of the same too. In this backdrop, the Mission Shakti and the women and child development unit had series of discussion with other partners as how to motivate the tribal girls to use sanitary napkins and also of making available the article and acquainting them about the safe disposal of used napkins etc., as a part of this campaign, it was proposed to establish a low cost sanitary napkin unit with the support of IAP in Koraput.

There are 51 hostels, many day schools and colleges existing in the district where SC/ST girls study and most of them are adolescent girls who also go through menstrual cycle every month. In order to cut down the grown up girls' drop-out rate in the tribal dominated district one of the strategies which emerged was to promote hygienic sanitary napkins which would be affordable and usable keeping in view the requirement of these tribal girls. It was decided to promote the use of napkins initially in the educational institutions and then go to the open market for marketing this local produce. As there is a provision of Rs. 30/- for each girl student staying in these hostels to buy cosmetics, the demand for such napkins was ensured in the first place. The district federation of Mission Shakti reviewed few such units in the vicinity and other districts and opined that such a unit can be viable in Koraput district too. It was decided to provide these napkins at a lower rate to enable a common tribal girl to afford it. Against a price of Rs.35 to Rs. 40 for private brands in which five to six pieces of pads usually are available, the Mission Shakti district federation fixed a price of Rs. 21 for seven pieces of napkin pads. This project has provided both livelihood and sanitation and hence, has been widely appreciated as a multi-faceted project.

The unit runs with the support of Mahamayee Dakua SHG in Koraput. It is successfully running and earning profit. They have already got Rs. 40,000 as profit after an initial sale of Rs. 1,20,000 in last six months. The members of the SHG who are running the unit are very happy. They have extended their gratefulness to the district administration which actually

brought them in to a noble job to serve girls and women of the district and outside.

Up-scaling Education through Inputs from IAP

The district administration found some cases where educational institutions required support for construction, repair and maintenance, electrification, additional class room, libraries and resource rooms, hostel buildings, providing cots, in the hostels up-keeping/construction of toilets, construction and up-keeping of staff quarters, provision of tube wells etc. Responding to these requirements a total amount of Rs. 891.45 lakhs have been released to 196 schools under SC/ST development department and School and Mass Education department (135 projects of SC/ST development department schools and 61 projects of School and Mass Education department). Out of these 146 projects are already completed, 41 projects are in progress under IAP.

Promotion of Tribal Art and Culture

The practitioners of tribal and primitive art forms living in the district are on a decline due to several reasons. There is now a choice between sustaining tribal arts forms and earning a good livelihood. On the other hand taking the advantage of this situation, the naxal cadres usually promote the tribal art forms and Natya Mandlees as entry point programme in a new area. In yet another dynamics, many such schemes have been proposed for a tribal centric communication strategy. Hence, the district administration decided to support the cause for sustaining the primitive tribal art forms as they would serve many purposes which have become recognised mandates of any district administration. The schemes are:

(a)   Sustain and preserve primitive art forms.
(b)   Protect the innocent tribes from the clutches of naxal outfits through Natya Mandlees.
(c)   Provide the primitive art groups sustainable sources of income so that they continue to practice the same.
(d)   Support various flagship schemes through appropriate tribal centric communication strategies to promote them in the rural area and thereby enhance the performance of these schemes.

Under this intervention till date 553 performing art groups have been granted Rs. 14,49,686/- to perform cultural programmes and at the same time spread certain messages related to health, education, livelihood, and environment etc. The main aims of district administration in this regard

are that the rare tribal art forms should survive as, tribal youth would get source of entertainment and would divert attention from negative thoughts of joining naxalites to the positive and productive channels. The performance of many flagship schemes of these nature have been successfully enhanced which are reflected in the state level report cards. In order to provide them a permanent platform, the district level Committee decided to set up skill development in communication skill eight Information Education Communication activity at Koraput district headquarters and in five blocks of the district under IAP these centres are now used by the Artist Federation for their programmes thus not only the art form/practices but also the livelihood is sustained.

Diversion Weir and Watershed Intervention

Koraput is a district that lives on the hills and rocks. The district has a sizeable portion covered with forest. As there are thousands of perennial water sources existing in the district especially natural springs, diversion weirs and field channels these can be effectively used for irrigation and other purposes. A total of 1,26,000 hectares of land in the district are uncultivable and barren land. Out of the net area sown most parts are hill side fields which are not so fertile. But in spite of these challenges, the farmers of Koraput have recognition in the state level for quality vegetable production. Vegetable and paddy are usually exported from Koraput district to the neighbouring states after meeting the domestic consumption. There are numerous natural springs in the district are for small scale agriculture purposes. The district administration has encouraged and promoted multi-purpose diversion weir projects. The aim of the district administration is the optimum use of the existing water resources for the promotion of agricultural activities apart from pisci culture, vegetable cultivation by other minor irrigation projects, avenue plantation etc.

To make optimum use of water resources, the total number of springs identified in the district was above 1000. With the support from the Department of Land Resources (DoLR, GoI), number of diversion weirs were constructed in the district. Majority of these were strategically constructed in the naxal-prone Blocks and Gram Panchayats.

Integrated Action Plan (IAP) in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Affected Areas

Table 4

Number of Water Body Projects and Additional Ayacut Created under IAP

SL	Total Number of Projects	Cost of The Project (Rs. in Lakhs)	Additional Ayacut	No. of Farmers Benefited
DW and FC	130	1100.66	2600	1950
LIPs	118	905.04	2360	1534
MIPs	9	145.00	180	135

These are some of the success stories adorning the show case of the district administration of Koraput. With timely support from the State and central government, many such initiatives have recently been taken up and are in process. With support from the PRI members and community, many such initiatives would bear the fruits in the coming days. The success of theses scheme will pave the ways for augmenting developmental needs of the community in a larger area. It is needless to say that proper utilisation of IAP and other funds and creation of assets as well as engagement of people in productive channels, have been successful to counter the left wing extremism activities to a greater extent. However, success of the initiative will be tested with the passage of time.

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India-South Africa: A Soft Power Perspective

Shilpa Vijay[*]

The obejctive of this paper is to unfold significance of India-South Africa bilateral relations since the time of Mahatma Gandhi. In this paper opportunities and constraints of India-South Africa relations have been analysed on the background of soft power perspectives.

In the present global scenario India–South Africa relations have gained much more importance and attention. This bilateral relationship is not merely fulfilling for both the parties as such but has significant regional and global implications. The affinity that both the countries have developed for each other is rooted in the commonality of cultural practices and processes. India and South Africa have a relationship that can be traced back to the ancient times. But for the purpose of the occasion the paper will confine to contemporary issues only. The deep and diversified relations between India and South Africa are shaped by a number of factors. Few popular milestones are the role of M.K. Gandhi's contribution in fighting against racial discrimination in South Africa, India's efforts towards promoting Asian-African unity, India's support and role in fight against apartheid, and contribution of large Indian community in the prosperity of South Africa. Both India and South Africa are the emerging developing

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nations in their respective regions and the common ground held by both on various regional and international issues such as support for reforms of United Nations' Security Council and other global institutions: commitment for climate change; for non-discriminatory international trade practices and so on are encouraging enough. Both nations have developed close political, strategic, cultural and economic ties since the end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994.

Dr. A.L. Basham, in his authoritative 'Cultural History of India', has noted that 'While there are four main cradles of civilization which, moving from East to West, are China, India, the Fertile Crescent and the Mediterranean, specially Greece and Italy, India deserves a larger share of credit because she has deeply affected the religious life of most of Asia. She has also extended her influence, directly and indirectly, to other parts of the World' (Mukherjee, 2015). Today, The South African Indian Origin community numbers around 1.5 million and constitutes about 3 per cent of South Africa's total population. There is longstanding Indian cultural impact in the African region. India enjoys tremendous soft power advantage in South Africa; it is this which would elevate India-South Africa relations to newer heights. In comparison to China, India scores better in terms of goodwill and Image it generates through its Capacity Building Programmes, agenda free approach and democratic values. A number of bilateral agreements have been concluded between the two countries in diverse areas ranging from economic and commercial cooperation, defence, culture, health, education, ICT, human settlements, science and technology etc. Both nations share the membership of several multilateral groupings like IBSA, BRICS, BASIC, IORARC and G-20 and working together to formulate strategies on the issues affecting developing nations. In many respects, India and South Africa share a common vision on a range of global issues and domestic challenges. South African President Jacob Zuma has described the relations between the two countries as being based on, 'Very deep historical, cultural, economic, family, and political ties between our two countries and two peoples. India and South Africa are the most powerful emerging economies of Asia and Africa. It is hoped that as a powerful economy and democratic system, both nations could play an instrumental role in shaping the political, economic and strategic agenda of the 21st Century'.

In the contemporary multipolar world, the role of soft power has acquired increased importance to advance and strengthen the foreign policies of nations. The creation of a positive image is becoming an integral part of a country's foreign policy. In the present global scenario, soft power

is a vital weapon to enhance the role and image of countries. Soft power is a staple of daily democratic politics. As stated by Joseph Nye who first coined this term, that 'Soft power is the ability to effect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment. A country's soft power rests on its resources of culture, values and policies….. soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others'. 'The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)' (Nye, 2008). The ability to establish preferences tends to be associated with intangible assets such as an attractive personality, culture, political values and institutions, and policies that are seen as legitimate or having moral authority. Soft co-optive power is just as important as hard command power. If a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes. If its culture and ideology are attractive, others will more willingly follow... Various trends today are making co-optive behaviour and soft power resources relatively more important (Nye, 1990).

India is already a cultural superpower. India has a very long tradition of art, culture and yoga. India's cultural heritage is so rich, in almost every sphere of activity India has been culturally very strong. India's soft power is more deeply felt in Africa than any other external power in Africa, particularly China. As discussed by Former Union Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor, 'The components of India's soft power as diverse as films and bollywood, yoga, ayurveda, political pluralism, religious diversity and openness to global influences... Our democracy, thriving free media, contentious NGOs, energetic human rights groups, and the repeated spectacle of our remarkable general elections – all these have made India a rare example of the successful management of diversity in the developing world' (Tharoor, 2008). While the successful impact of bollywood across the world has helped raise awareness of Indian culture, soft power elements such as the institutional models of a long lasting democratic and plural political system have also inspired societies abroad. As the world's largest democracy with an independent media and judiciary, India has important soft power advantages over the other rising power in the region, China especially in the African region. There is a longstanding Indian cultural impact on Africa.

The various dynamics of Indian soft power can be classified as:

Political Dimension

As stated by Mahatma Gandhi 'The commerce between India and Africa will be of ideas and services, not manufactured goods against raw materials after the fashion of western exploiters.' It is well known that Gandhi's ideas of non-violence and satyagrah had great influence on many African leaders and had profound influences on democratic struggles in South Africa and elsewhere. Mahatma Gandhi has commenced his political-legal career in South Africa, experimenting with civil disobedience in the 1890s and 1900s, to improve the quality of living of the Indians living there. After his departure from South Africa, passive resistance was organised in South Africa by his followers Y.M. Dadoo and Naicker who sought guidance and counseling from Gandhiji. A statue to him was unveiled in Pietmermaritzberg during the 2003 Cricket World Cup. Also recently South African tourism has launched a new 'Gandhi– Inspired Tourist Attraction' project that identifies 13 places that were seminal in Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's tenure in the country. South African Tourism's Gandhi webpage was also launched at the event. The website gives comprehensive details of Gandhi–related sites across South Africa. As said by South African Tourism Chief Executive Officer Thulani Nzima 'The Gandhi-Inspired tourist attractions makes Mahatma's South Africa accessible to people who want to understand how this country shaped his conscience, his service to humanity and his great contribution to world history'. The role of Mahatma Gandhi in fighting against racial discrimination is widely appreciated and recognised in South Africa.

India's efforts towards Asian-African unity, India's support and role in fight against apartheid is also a prominent factor that generates a lot of goodwill in the hearts of South African people. South African leader Nelson Mandela was awarded the Mahatma Gandhi Peace prize and Bharat Ratna by the Indian Government. Mandela mentioned that 'India was the single largest source of inspiration to the movement in South Africa' and appealed for India's help to 'walk the last mile together' (Bajpai, 2010). Also the Indian democratic values, Independent judiciary, press has also an important source of admiration and respect in South Africa. India is seen as a role model on account of its democracy and robust institutions. Leaders of modern India from Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Nehru to Mrs. Indira Gandhi are held in exceptionally high esteem in South Africa.

Both nations have concluded many declarations and agreements on mutual cooperation. In The Red Fort Declaration 1997, both nations rededicate themselves to the ideals and vision of Mahatma Gandhi which

have inspired them and which are powerfully symbolised by their common commitment to the preservation of the Gandhi heritage sites in South Africa, phoenix settlement and Tolstoy farm. In 2003 Joint Declaration by India-South Africa, both nations taking note of the commendable progress made by both countries towards the goals of growth with equity and justice, addressing poverty and under development, India and South Africa agree that their bilateral cooperation should contribute to empowerment of the marginalised and disadvantaged citizens, which is common priority. Both nations have agreed on cultural exchange programmes for the years 2004-06. In 2006 Tshwane Declaration both nations gave priority to health sector and they agreed that the agreement on cooperation in health and medicine should be implemented expeditiously. To identify means of cooperation in capacity building and skills enhancement in the key ICT sector, they requested the working group set up under the MoU in information and communication technologies to convene as a matter of priority. Both nations expressed satisfaction at the increasing cultural exchanges between the two countries and decided that the cultural exchange programme, which expires in 2006, would be renewed and that academic exchanges between the two countries, particularly through University-to-University linkages, would be promoted.

In 2010 joint declaration, both nations expressed satisfaction at increasing cultural exchanges between the two countries and agreed to further promote educational exchanges including through University-to-University linkages. Towards this end, both nations noted that the MoU for cooperation in the field of communications and information technologies has expired in September 2009 and called for an early renewal of the MoU and a meeting of the Joint Working Group to identify projects for joint cooperation in the ICT sector (Key Bilateral Documents, 2014). More recently on 7-9 July 2016, with the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to South Africa, both nations signed Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding majorly on four areas: ICT, establishment of grassroots innovation in the area of science and technology, tourism and programme of cultural cooperation. President Zuma and Prime Minister Modi also discussed intensified collaboration in the sectors of defense, energy, agro-processing, human resource development, infrastructure development as well as science, technology and innovation.

Social Dimension

The major part of the Indian origin community came to South Africa from 1860 onwards as farm labour to serve as field hands and mill

cooperatives in the sugar and other agricultural plantations of Natal (which was then a British colony). Most of these initial migrants were from Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh with some from eastern UP and Bihar. A second wave of Indians came after 1880. These were called the 'passenger Indians' because they paid their fares as passengers on board a steamship bound for South Africa. This was the community of traders who mainly hailed from Gujarat.

Today, the South African Indian origin community numbers around 1.5 million and constitutes about 3 per cent of South Africa's total population. About 80 per cent of the Indian community lives in the province of KwaZulu Natal, about 15 per cent in the Gauteng (previously Transvaal) area and the remaining 5 per cent in Cape Town. A century and a half of existence in an alien land, and four or five generations of acculturation in a dominant white society, has diluted their Indianness. Ms. Ila Gandhi, MP (ANC) and a granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi clearly summed up her Indian South African identity when she said, 'I am a South African; a very proud South African. The Indianness comes in at the level of culture, the way we eat, the kind of things we eat, the kind of things we appreciate- like music, drama, the language we speak. We only enrich our country by having all these different tastes and habits. What I am basically saying is that that is where the Indianness stops' (Bhatia, 2016). South Africans of Indian origin are well-represented in Government, business, media, legal and other professions. The year 2010 marked the 150th anniversary of the first arrival of Indians in South Africa. Today, the vast Indian Diaspora has exposed Indian values and ideas to many important countries including Africa. Indian Diaspora epitomised India's soft power and actively spread its civilization, heritage and cultural ethos in their host countries. Overseas Indians become India's best ambassadors to spread and popularise the country's values, beliefs, culture and heritage overseas. Recently on 20th March 2014 the South African government also included five Indian languages Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Tamil and Telugu as an optional third language in South African state schools, as several groups of Indian origin were demanding it for several years.

Also there is a tremendous popularity of Indian Bollywood, cuisine, Hindu traditions. People of Indian origin in South Africa have been actively engaged in philanthropic activities through establishing educational institutions, hospitals, giving donations to the poor and needy people and providing relief in natural calamities. The first and foremost among the People of Indian Origin (PIO) philanthropic activities, is their contribution to

the promotion of education in South Africa. The Indian teachers are also teaching African students voluntarily. PIO's contribution is also noticeable in providing adequate medical facilities. They have also made arrangements with Indian practitioners to provide medical services free of charge in the severely poor areas in black townships (Pathak, 2011).

Economic Dimension

Another dimension of India's growing global presence is the internationalisation of its own corporations. The IT industry has played a significant role in transforming India's image from a slow moving bureaucratic economy to a land of innovative entrepreneurs and a global player in providing world class technology solutions and business services. India's Technical and Economic Cooperation programme (ITEC) has also been a useful medium of promoting cooperation in development of human resources. In the financial year 2013-14, under ITEC, 100 slots have been allocated to South Africa. PAN–African e-network programme launched by India in 2007 an initiative to push people power in Africa, which would connect all the 53 African countries and allow schools and hospitals across Africa to link up with top institutions in India, provide them e-education and e-medicine services. India has also been organising training programmes for the diplomatic representatives of South Africa. Recently Indian tourism is planning to conduct an online training programme for the travel tour operators of the African markets. The Indian tourism stall showcased the country as an attractive destination especially for the medical tourism. Also recently in December 2013 the HRD Ministry of India has decided that students from Africa should get special attention in Indian educational institutions, both in government and private. HRD Ministry has mooted a new scheme to set up international hostels and foreign student offices in 15-20 Universities. Indian companies are investing in capacity building by systematic training of South Africans, creating jobs and playing an important role in the development and economic growth of South Africa.

Cultural Dimension

There is a huge cultural affinity between India and South Africa. India has two chairs of Indian studies in South Africa, and soon planning to set up six chairs of Indian studies in other parts of South Africa. With the help of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), an intensive programme of cultural exchanges is organised throughout South Africa including scholarships for South African nationals. In addition to such

cultural programming, a 'Shared Histories' festival organised as a public-private partnership is also held, which held its fourth edition in 2010. The fifth edition of the 'Shared Histories' festival was underway in September 2011. India's Minister for Tourism and Culture visited South Africa in August 2008 and signed the Programme of Cooperation (POC) in Arts and Culture for 2008-2011. A Festival of India in South Africa was jointly organised by Department of Arts and Culture South Africa and High Commission in Pretoria during June-August 2011 and a Festival of South Africa in India was organised in February-April 2013 under the POC. Recently the 9th World Hindi Conference was held in September 2012 at Johannesburg. ICCR offered a total of 52 slots to South Africa in 2014-15 and 37 were utilised. For the year 2015-16, ICCR has offered a total of 52 slots for South Africa and so far 59 slots have been utilised. International Yoga Day was celebrated on 21 June 2015 by the mission/posts in collaboration/association with local organisations in 13 cities across South Africa. Nelson Mandela once remarked 'India and South Africa are the two countries held so closely by bonds of sentiments, common values and shared experience by affinity of cultures and traditions and by geography'.

Both nations have also promoted sporting ties, with the Indian national cricket team and the South African national cricket team frequently exchanging visits and participating in cricket tournaments hosted by either nation. In his visit to South Africa PM Modi said 'Love for this game runs wide and deep in our societies and cricket is an important part of our relations'. India had been in the forefronts of nations that imposed sanctions on the apartheid government and the two countries had never played cricket against each other. India was also the first country to make a test tour of South Africa in the post-apartheid era. Recently IPL cricket has greatly brought the two nations very closely. South African Coach Garry Kirsten ensured victory for India in 2011 Cricket World Cup. In 2010 joint declaration, both nations agreed to work closely together in the field of of sports cooperation and on sharing experiences on upcoming events such as the 2010 FIFA Soccer world cup and the Commonwealth games. They expressed confidence that this would form the foundation for the enhanced partnership in their sporting relations.

Positive Outcomes

After establishing the diplomatic ties in 1993 to now, in their 21 years of relationship both nations have come a long way. After the beginning of diplomatic relations, both nations have been working in wide areas like

trade, education, cultural exchanges, sports, tourism etc. The bilateral trade stands at USD 15 billion and both nations are targeting to reach more than USD 20 billion by 2018. India is South Africa's sixth-largest trading partner, with annual trade recording at USD 5.3 billion in 2015-16. On July 2016 Prime Minister Modi visited to South Africa, he said 'The annual trade between the two countries has grown by over 300 per cent in last 10 years and that about one fourth of India's investments in Africa are in South Africa'. Both nations as members of IBSA, BRICS, BASIC are working in wide areas like trade, academic, cultural, climate change, agriculture, etc. and share common views regarding WTO negotiations and UN reforms. South Africa supports India's candidacy for the permanent membership of UN Security Council. Recently South Africa supports Indian stand on Food Security at WTO. India is also a very prominent member of Southern African Development Community (SADC) and South Africa is the most influential member of this group. The preferential trade agreement between India and Southern African custom union is also under negotiations.

Areas of Constraints

There are still areas of hurdles that need to be overcome to foster more strong and trustworthy relations. After a long relationship still there are constraints regarding the preferential trade agreement (PTA), which had been on the agenda since 2003-04 but still negotiations are going on. After a long historical relationship India as compared to its rival China, is quite very much behind in terms of trade relations with South Africa. The number of high level visits between India and South Africa is also not very frequent. Also there are several instances of Indian community in South Africans being the soft targets of criminals in South Africa; it suggested Indians were as badly hit as any other country. Also there are lots of complaints received by HRD Ministry in India from African students about the lack of infrastructure facilities and also about their problems in various colleges in Pune that offer courses in Marathi language. There are also several complaints of misbehaviour and discrimination in India with Africans being reported. There is also a factor of rivalry seen between the two nations in the African region.

The Road Ahead

There still exists a huge potential to deepen this partnership. India should not regard Africa simply as a source of natural resources. Instead it needs to invest in the continent's human capital and share know-how. There

are already signs of this happening, such as India's funding of the Pan-African e-Network Project in partnership with the African Union. India's post-colonial democracy may provide lessons for Africa. It also offers important experience in agricultural expansion, clean water management and dealing with growing climate change threat. There exists a wealth of goodwill towards India in South Africa. We should take advantage of all the opportunities towards expanding the unexplored areas of cooperation. India's soft power had emerged until now independently of the government policies. In practice Indian diplomacy has neglected soft power as an important tool of state craft. India will have to use its soft power in a more systematic and planned manner. India should focus on promoting more and more tourism packages and cultural-educational exchanges, research, ICT, agriculture technologies, pharmaceutical and health in South Africa. The serious deficit of high level visits from India to South Africa exacerbates the growing asymmetry in high level political exchanges. Although India has taken several initiatives, yet the success of soft power not just merely depends upon its amount of assistance but more on its timing and effectiveness (Jha, 2012) and in this area India really needs to work a lot. There is also a challenge for us to improve our delivery system for project assistance. Moreover it also needs to continue to improve its internal economic performance and resolve its lack of transparency, inefficiency and social inequality. A soft power initiative builds that understanding and comfort level amongst the two nations and would elevate the relations to newer heights.

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Panchayati Raj Institutions in Jammu and Kashmir

Younis Ahmad Sheikh[*]

The concept of Panchayati Raj is not new to Jammu and Kashmir. It exists since earliest times. The institutions of Panchayati Raj in Jammu and Kashmir seemed for some time to have disappeared permanently into the mist of militancy. Despite inhospitable security environment, the state government succeeded in restoring the Panchayati Raj Institution in 2001 after a very long gap of 22 years. Panchayati Raj in Jammu and Kashmir faced many ups and downs. Jammu and Kashmir has its own Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Raj Act of 1989, which is at variance with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. This paper attempts to highlight the functions of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Jammu and Kashmir. The paper also provides a backdrop of PRI's and highlight the ups and downs faced by the PRIs during Panchayat elections.

Panchayati Raj is an indigenous and time-honoured concept in India. The form may vary, but the spirit has always been part of India's socio-cultural ethos. Its origin can be traced back to ancient ages where community spirit was the main force not only to keep village communities united but to help them to manage local affairs independently. Sir Charles Metcalfe characterised them as small 'republics having nearly everything that they want within themselves' (Kumar, 1992).

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Panchayat Raj, as a system of governance at the grassroots level in rural India has rightly been conceived as the most viable and proper mechanism of realising the goals of democracy and decentralisation. After independence efforts have been made to create the units of self-governance at the grassroots level but all in vain since they could not produce the desired results. After independence efforts were continued to create the Panchayats as units of self-governance but the committed Central Government's initiatives came out with 73rd Amendment for the establishment of Panchayat Raj institutions in India (Sisodia, 2012).

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has its own unique history as far as Panchayati Raj is concerned. As Panchayat Raj is a state subject, each state was free to evolve its own system depending upon local needs, circumstances, administrative conveniences and experiences. Unlike other states of the country which have the three tier Panchayat structure as per the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment of 1992, Jammu and Kashmir has its own Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Raj Act of 1989, which is at variance with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. Because of Article 370 of the Constitution of India, the central bill does not apply automatically to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It had in any case to pass its own law without having to conform to the new constitutional provisions on Panchayati Raj. The state has adopted Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 before the passage of this Constitutional Amendment. Nonetheless after the enactment of 73rd Constitutional Amendment act, state of Jammu and Kashmir has introduced Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Raj Rules, 1996 in exercise of the powers conferred by section 80 of the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989. With the approval of the Amendment concerning the reservation, the state has tried to make it on the lines of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (Sharma, 2012).

Brief Profile of the State

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is often termed as the 'Paradise on earth'. Until the partition Jammu and Kashmir was the largest among the princely states (Khan, 2011). The state of Jammu and Kashmir in total covering an area of 2,22,236 sq.kms., of which 78,114 sq.kms., are under illegal occupation of Pakistan and 37,555 sq.kms. under China. In addition to this, 5180 sq.kms of Jammu and Kashmir was illegally ceded to China by Pakistan under the March 1963 Sino-Pakistan Boundary agreement (Sadiq, 2016).

According to Census 2011 the population size of Jammu and Kashmir is 12,541302 which is 1.035 per cent of total population of India, out of which population size of male is 52 per cent and female is 47.04 per cent. Rural population is 72.6 per cent and urban population is 27.3 per cent. Currently, the state has 6551 villages, 4128 panchayats, 143 blocks, 82 tehsils and 22 districts.

The Backdrop of Panchayati Raj System in Jammu and Kashmir

The basic objective of Panchayati Raj is rapid and all round rural development. The desire of development among the rural people is age old, but in the light of the changed political conditions at national and state levels, the need to improve existing standards has tremendously pressing. Consequently public institutions like Panchayati Raj designed for development, have to work, on the one hand in most difficult and demanding situation, and on the other hand, have to struggle hard to strike roots in an unfavourable society (Bora and Darshankar, 1992).

In Jammu and Kashmir, the roots of Panchayati Raj were planted by Maharaja Hari Singh in 1935 by promulgation of the Jammu and Kashmir Village Panchayat Regulation Act. A special Department of Panchayat and Rural Development was created in 1936 to administer the 1935 Regulation. By an Amendment in 1941, the list of functions of the 1935 Regulation were widened. By an Act of 1951, the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI), was adopted to be re-established. The Jammu and Kashmir Government thereafter enacted the Village Panchayati Act in 1958 replacing the 1951 Act and in 1989 Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act came into existence (Sheikh, 2014). Nonetheless after the enactment of 73rd Constitutional Amendment act, state of Jammu and Kashmir has introduced Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Raj Rules, 1996 in exercise of the powers conferred by section 80 of the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989. With the approval of the Amendment concerning reservations, the state has tried to make it on the lines of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (Sharma, 2012).

Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989

The Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Raj Act, 1989 was introduced in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly in April 1988 and passed in March 1989. The Governor gave his assent to the bill in July 1989. For the first time an Act was named as 'Panchayat Raj Act' rather than a 'Village Panchayat Regulation Act'. The former implies the promotion of Panchayat Raj in the state (at village, block and district levels) whereas the latter was confined to

Panchayats at the village level only. This was certainly a very positive development. The Act has been described as a 'radical' step as it aims to, 'promote and develop the Panchayat Raj system in the state as an instrument of vigorous local self-government to secure participation of the people in the implementation of development planning' (Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir, 1996). The full involvement of the people was proposed to be secured by the process of direct election of the Panch, Sarpanch and Chairman of the Block Development Council. The Preamble of the 1989 Act states, 'whereas it is expedient to promote and develop Panchayati Raj in the state as an instrument of vigorous local self-government to secure effective participation of the people in decision making process and for over-seeing implementation of development programmes' (Choudhary, 1990).

This Act provides for a three tier system (Village, Block and District levels) for governance at the grassroots. The institutions thus created are called Halqa Panchayat, Block Development Council and District Planning and Development Board respectively. Every Halqa Panchayat has 7 to 11 Panch and a Sarpanch (who lead the Halqa Panchayat). The Sarpanch and Panch are elected directly by the people. There is also another person by the name of Naib Sarpanch and he is nominated by all the Panch of a Halqa Panchayat. Naib Sarpanch would perform the same duties as the Sarpanch in the event of Sarpanch not being in a position to fulfil his/her duties. Village level worker is the secretary of the Halqa Panchayat.

The 73rd Amendment Act that came into force in the year 1993 laid down constitutional provisions for formalising Panchayats as institutions of local governance at the district, block and village levels in India. Halqa Panchayat is the village level unit in the three tier structure of Panchayat system. In a given block, all Sarpanch would collectively constitute the Block Development Council (BDC). Similarly, all the Block Chairpersons together constitute the District Planning and Development Board (DPDB). The adoption of Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Act of 1989 was indeed a pioneering step as Jammu and Kashmir joined the league of Assam, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka who already had their own state laws. However, all the other states dissolved their state acts to adopt the 73rd Amendment Act, 1992 (Government of Jammu and Kashmir, 1989). The 73rd Amendment lays down principles for devolution through Panchayati Raj Institution, the state of Jammu and Kashmir has the prerogative to include or exclude provisions of this Amendment as per its needs (Sheikh, 2014).

Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj and 73rd Amendment Act, 1992

Article 370 of the Indian constitution grants special status to Jammu and Kashmir State. This article defines that except for the subjects like defence, foreign affairs and communications, the Indian Parliament needed the State Government's concurrence for applying all other laws. This article provides greater sovereignty for Jammu and Kashmir as far as the matters of the state are concerned. Therefore even in the case of 73rd Amendment that lays down principles for devolution through Panchayati Raj institutions the state has the prerogative to include or exclude provisions of this Amendment as per its needs.

The State Act has already incorporated some features of the 73rd Amendment Act, including State Election Commission. There is already State Finance Commission Act in vogue serviced by the Finance Department and its jurisdiction has been extended to the Panchayats also. The State Act contains the main features of the 73rd Amendment Act which include three tier Panchayat Raj System, the concept of Gram Sabha, reservation for SC/ST proportionate to their population and one third reservation for women, constitution of State Election Commission and Finance Commission and implementation of the developmental functions commensurate with the 11th schedule of the Constitution of India. But the state Act had adopted different pattern for the political empowerment of women and other weaker sections i.e., 'nomination rather than reservation of seats'.

The Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Act, 1989 was amended in 1999 and a new provision was substituted by virtue of which the number of women members to be nominated by the prescribed authority shall not exceed 33 per cent of the total number of elected panch. But the Act also provides that while making such nominations the representation of SC/ST and other weaker sections shall be given due consideration. At block level the 'prescribed authority' (Director Rural Development and Panchayats) is having the power to nominate two members to give representation to women including SC/ST or any other specified class (Lone, 2014).

Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Elections: Ups and Downs

In the year 1989, the militancy stormed the whole state and has paralysed the process of development of the state. Panchayat Raj institutions have not been actively and effectively involved in the developmental activities (Koul, *2002*). Not any meaningful strategy has been adopted by the State Government to curb this violence as the state machinery has totally failed. All this led to a worst effect on the development in the state. The

majority of the damages took place in the year 1990, the emerging year of militancy but in the preceding years this number decreased in the state. From 1990 upto September 2005, 655 schools, 340 bridges and 1168 government buildings were either burnt or damaged (The Daily *Al-safa,* 2005).

Despite inhospitable security environment and desperate attempts of the State Government to hold Panchayat elections, the State Government succeeded in conducting Panchayat elections during the first quarter of 2001 after a very long gap of 22 years. During the period from 1989 to 2000 no such elections were held in the state because of the threat of militancy and during this period the Panchayats were dysfunctional. The election in 2001 was conducted in phased manner. The election of 2700 Sarpanch and 20548 Panch constituencies was conducted in a staggered electoral process by the state election authority on non-party basis and with a high degree of transparency, impartiality and fairness. During the period of Eighth Plan expenditure incurred on the Panchayats, community development and national extension service was Rs. 1954.93 lakhs which increased to Rs. 12531.60 lakhs in Ninth plan (Sadhotra, 2001).

Large number of constituencies were left vacant in 2001 Panchayat elections because of the call for boycott given by the separatists and militants. Yet, surprisingly, the Panchayat election of 2011 was quite different. Everyone was taken aback as the Panchayat elections in Jammu and Kashmir did not evoke any untoward happening in 2011 as was seen in previous election. The Halqa Panchayat elections were conducted under the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act of 1989 in order to take the development process to the grassroot level (Sheikh, 2014). In this election, 4130 Sarpanch and 29719 Panch were elected in 143 CD Blocks falling in 22 districts of the State. (Panchayat Elections, 2011). People participated with great enthusiasm; about 80 per cent turnout was recorded. However some Panch and Sarpanch were later shot dead by militants. Recently in April, 2016 Panchayat institutions completed its term successfully. Fresh elections got delayed by few months due to Kashmir unrest on killing of Burhan Wani (Militant Commander). It is expected that the new Panchayat election will be conducted soon.

Functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Jammu and Kashmir

Panchayati Raj Department is an important department of Jammu and Kashmir related to the rural development. The main objective of this department is to strengthen the Panchayati Raj System so that Panchayats

can realise the dream of rural administration and rural development with complete coordination and transparency. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has adopted Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989. The Panchayat Raj Act, 1989 provides for a three tier system (i) Halqa Panchayat, (ii) Block Development Council, and (iii) District Planning and Development Board at Village, Block and District level respectively.

Halqa Panchayat

The Act has conceived the Halqa as a crucial tier for the entire process of democratic decentralisation by giving it wide ranging functions. Every Halqa shall have a Halqa Panchayat consisting of such number of Panch as the prescribed authority may, from time to time, fix in this behalf. Every Halqa Panchayat consists of not less than seven and not more than 11 Panch, including the Sarpanch, as the prescribed authority may, from time to time, fix. Provided that if the prescribed authority is satisfied that women or Scheduled Castes or any other class are not represented in the Halqa Panchayat, it may nominate not more than two persons to be members thereof. Sarpanch is elected directly by the electorate of Halqa Panchayat while as Naib-Sarpanch is elected by the Panch of the Halqa Panchayat. The village level worker is the secretary of the Halqa Panchayat. Halqa Panchayat performs a number of functions subject to availability of funds (Mathew, 1990). There is hardly any development activity left out which does not fall within the purview of the Halqa Panchayat. The role/functions of Halqa Panchayat in rural development are: (Government of Jammu, 2011).

- It prepares plans for the development of the Halqa.
- Regulation of buildings, shops and entertainment houses and checking of offensive or dangerous trade.
- It supervises the implementation process of rural development schemes.
- It assists the banks and other financial institutions in the recovery of loans.
- Regulation of sale and preservation of fishes, vegetables and other perishable articles and foods.
- Maintenance of community assets created under MGNREGA and other rural development schemes viz., Panchayat Ghars, common facility centres, community latrines etc.
- Maintenance of cremation grounds and grave yards is done by Halqa Panchayat.

Block Development Council

For every Block in the state, there is a Block Development Council bearing the name of the Block. The Block Development Councils consisting of Chairman, all Sarpanch of Halqa Panchayat falling within the block and chairpersons of marketing societies within the jurisdiction of the block. Provided that if the prescribed authority is satisfied women or Scheduled Castes or any other class are not represented in the council, it may nominate not more than two persons to be the members of the Block Development Council. The Block Development Officer shall be Secretary of the Block Development Council (Methew, 1990). The role/functions of Block Development Council in rural development are:

- It provides administrative and technical guidance to Halqa Panchayats and review of their works.
- It ensures that the funds provided by the DRDA to the Halqa Panchayats are utilised as per the scheme guidelines within its jurisdiction.
- It monitors the use of community assets created under various rural development schemes.
- It supervises plans relating to agriculture, rural development, animal husbandry, social forestry, education and public health.
- It prevents the misuse of community assets of the Halqa Panchayats.
- It supervises and monitors the Rural Sanitation Programme (Central/State) executed by the Halqa Panchayats.

District Planning and Development Board

Each district has a District Planning and Development Board comprising of the chairman of the Block Development Councils of the district, members of parliament and State Legislature representing the area, chairman of the town area committee at the district and president of the municipal council, if any. The chairman of the District Planning and Development Board is nominated by the government from amongst the members of the District Planning and Development Board. The District Development Commissioner is the chief executive of the board to be assisted by district level heads. The role/functions of District Planning and Development board in rural development are:

- It develops marketing infrastructure/marketing network/tie up arrangements for the marketing of products in rural areas.

- It monitors and evaluates all poverty alleviation programmes and the coverage of women, SC, ST and other BPL beneficiaries in these programmes.
- It monitors loan and subsidy disbursement in coordination with Banks and other financial institutions in rural development programmes.
- It prevents the misuse of community assets of the BDC.
- It arranges wide publicity of watershed guidelines amongst people of the concerned areas.
- It approves the budget of the Block Development Council and supervises and coordinates their work.

Conclusion

Panchayati Raj Institutions have been in operation in Jammu and Kashmir since long time but these institutions have not been developed fully and are not able to acquire the status and dignity of viable and responsive people's bodies due to a number of reasons like corruption, terrorism, irregular elections, irregular representation of weaker sections, lack of people's participation etc. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has adopted its own Panchayati Raj Act, 1989, which is at variance with the 73rd Amendment Act 1992. In 2011 for the first time Panchayat elections were held with great enthusiasm, earlier Jammu and Kashmir witnessed the first Panchayat election in 1974, after that a few Panchayats went to the poll in 2000, large number of constituencies were left vacant in these Panchayat elections. However, 2011 election was quite different and was held in all Panchayats. These institutions are playing an important role in the development process at grassroots level. To build a strong and vibrant civil society, it is necessary to make these institutions more democratic and effective instruments of change and development. There is the need to empower these institutions to take decisions freely which are bestowed to them and without any political interference.

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Religion and Dalit Commununities:
In Search of an Agency for Liberation

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The aim of this article is to explore the ways Dalit communities are adopting to break their religiously sanctioned degradation and to gain dignity, equality and self-respect in society. How their mission of emancipation has gained momentum? Among the various alternatives, focus of this article is to explore the strategy of religious changes adopted by Dalits to create new religious identity different from mainstream religion. The paper also unfolds what are the psychological impacts of this process on Dalit communities? And finally, how this process of constructing an alternative religious identity and institutions are acting as an agency of their liberation?

This article analyses the importance of alternative religious identity of Dalit communities and how it act as agency for their liberation from the scourge of Hindu religion? The practices reflected in Dalit autobiographies and various other Dalit writings in general and particularly Dalit writings of Hindi heartland largely explain the various experiences of Dalit communities. They are transforming their common pains, sufferings and feelings through these alternative practices. They are creating a sense of solidarity by celebrating their festivals, following their rituals and practices based on their own cultural resources different from mainstream Hindu

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religion. In doing so they are not only acquiring a sense of solidarity, self-respect and dignity but also a new socio-religious domain, which is inclusive and accessible to hitherto marginalised Dalit community.

These religious practices of Dalits emerged out due to discrimination, segregation, subordination and marginalisation by mainstream Hindu religion to contest their inferior status and to assert their identity and self-respect. Dalit religious practices have become an important means to assert their identity and self-respect against the exploitative Hindu social order. It has become an important instrument to overcome their degraded position and graded inequality. As reflected in Dalit autobiographies, Dalits' religious myths, symbols rituals and practices are given new meaning to explore their identity. It has become a tool to redraw the new domain and create new socio-religious framework such as Dalit-Bahujan (Ilaiah, 2009). The practices of reviving, renovating and practicing religious rituals are being used to attain certain goals which provide Dalit communities a sense of self-respect and a sense of their own religious functions. It is acting as an agency for emancipation of Dalit communities. They are trying to inculcate a culture i.e., an alternative 'way of life' having their own norms, faith, ethos and spirits latently (in subtle way) through which they can propagate their mission of emancipation. It helps them to develop an abstract value into Dalits' living practices.

As reflected in Dalit autobiographies within the context of segregation, marginalisation and subordination and blocked social, religious and cultural mobility in the mainstream Hindu religion, Dalit communities through their alternative religious practices do feel that they have the potential to change their lives on their own. They are exploring their hitherto buried as well as ignored 'cultural resources' for centuries like myths, heroes, histories, stories and narratives. It broadens their space and ensures the way to achieve and access equal participation within mainstream society. Many of their practices and performances like reciting Dalit narratives, poems, stories and worshiping Dalit heroes are now contesting the fixed degraded position of Dalit communities. On the one side it is constructing or restructuring their new domain by generating new faith towards Dalit cultural resources and on the other side it helps to deconstruct and subvert the Hindu social structure based on the Brahminical code of conducts and the notion of pollution and purity by negating the exploitative and discriminative Brahminical philosophy (Narayan, 2009).

In this process Dalit religious practices are becoming heavily ritualised and they celebrate their past in organised way. In some way such

ritual performances are amounting conflict with mainstream Hindu society. It also questions their authority and protests against the existing exploitative Hindu social order. As observed in Dalit autobiographies, Dalits started some traditions of using symbols, paintings and rituals to express their views as they did not have knowledge of alphabets. These performances are today breaking the delegated limits of Dalit communities and creating possibilities of new domain in their lives within their own socio-religious framework. It reflects the power of Dalit religious ritualistic performances to redraw their religio-cultural horizon. The impacts of these ritualistic performances are clearly visible in helping them make their presence felt in political domain as well. As these alternative rituals provide them with loosely a common vision of the religio-moral universe different from mainstream Hindu religious practices which to some extent helped to capture State power. This has not only redesigned their public space but it has created a sense of emancipation from exploitation and discrimination. These ritual performances have become strategic tools of innovation for transformation of society and redrawing new space for Dalit communities both individually and socially.

The collective experiences of pain and suffering among Dalit communities are solidifying them to restructure existing exploitative social order. Collectively they are now executing their broaden space in search of becoming master of their own destiny. Previously their destiny was decided with biological accidental birth and degraded occupation imposed by their so-called manu-vadi upper caste master (Narayan, 2011). The old understanding about the dynamics of social relationship based on underlying principle of Verna system and notion of purity and pollution are increasingly getting influenced by Dalit religious practices and performances. The old social relationships are also transforming through the transaction of power to Dalit communities. The functional natures of social relationships are changing through the faith and respect developed among Dalit communities within their religio-cultural domain and framework. Institutionalisation of their own religion is exploring the way to assert their respectful identity in society (Parson, 1986).

However degraded Dalit religious rituals and practices may be in the upper caste vision, it gives them freedom to make their choice. They make themselves all decisions regarding their religious performances. They act as a decider of their own course of action. At least in their religious celebration all members of Dalit communities have access to equal participation without feeling of subordination and humiliation. In view of

Dalit religious rituals Vijay Prasad observes that the different Dalit practices of worships do not count seriously in the mainstream Hindu religion. Their religious practices are typical and very complex, a faith based on worship of local deities, preceptors, Goddesses, figures and animals. They do not have any place in Vedas and other sacred Hindu religious scriptures. They trace their roots in Dalits religious myths, stories and histories. They are highly localised (Prasad, 2000).

It is true that even after more than seven decades of independence, majority of Dalit communities are still in the same state of backwardness but the solidarity feeling through common experiences has assumed importance in the light of socio-cultural and religious development. At the grassroots level upper caste still assume privileged and powerful position but these Dalit alternative religious practices are invoking power within Dalit communities to hold the condition under control. Various autobiographical narratives along with other literary sources explore that the practice of complete segregation of Dalit communities from mainstream Hindu religious institutions in south India is still in practice (Rajan, 2011). The stigmas of sinful and unclean are attached to Dalit communities. Dalit communities through their alternative religious practices intimate themselves to share their common sufferings. Their alternative religious practices have established a pattern of social interaction within Dalit communities.

To understand this new dynamics of social relation analysing the case of Uttar Pradesh state of India is very much helpful. To show their grievances Dalit communities are spending even their hard earned money extravagantly. They are performing expensive function following their own ritual practices. In fact, the performance of these rituals and religious practices have widen today significantly to include not only the old and ancient deities but also by enmeshing in and celebrating the birthday of their contemporary heroes like Ambedkar, Periyar, Phule, Kanshi Ram, Jhalkari Bai, Mayavati and other Dalit iconic figures. Analysing this development Pradeep Kumar (1999: 822-26) and Sudha Pai (1997: 2313-14) aseert that:

The portraits of Ambedkar, Phule, EVR, Shahuji Maharaj etc., in its rallies are a tribute to those who fought against untouchability and caste system. From the speeches of BSP leaders and their use of symbols like the 'Ashok Chakra' and 'Blue Flag', we can logically conclude that dalit politics propagate non-Hindu symbols. The carving out of new districts during Mayawati's chief ministership, and naming them after Gautam Buddha, Shahuji Maharaj, Jyotiba Phule, etc., categorically points towards a cultural

revolt against the brahminical tradition of naming districts Rampur, Laxmanpur, Sitapur, etc. This strategy created apolitical fervour and sensitised the Dalit masses on these issues (Kumar, 1999: 824).

These personalities represent antibrahminical ideology due to their movements against caste in particular and the hierarchical Varna system in general and the symbols of the BSP reflect revolt against brahmanism in Indian culture. This has generated in Uttar Pradesh, a socio-cultural process of 'Ambedkarisation', i.e., tremendous growth in the consciousness among Dalits about the life and ideas of Ambedkar (Pai 1997, 2313-14).

Moreover, the news flashed on CNN World, a television news channel, on February 03, 2010 had explored that 'one of India's Dalit communities had declared its own religion'. Followers of 14th century spiritual Guru Ravidas will now have their own holy scripture, a flag and a greeting. The new holy book compiles Guru Ravidas writings which until now were predominantly found in sacred Sikh scriptures that the sect placed in its house of worship. The new Ravidasia faith was installed to large congregation at the birthplace of the revered leader in Uttar Pradesh state' (Singh, 2010). The CNN World news channel flashed that 'the experts said that the move was a response to social discrimination against Dalit communities in Punjab state of India where close to 30 percent of the population is Dalit, the highest in any Indian state' (Singh, 2010). When the channel interviewed an eminent scholar of Punjab Babir Madhopuri, who has written several books on the Hindu caste, said that 'the Ravidasia and Dalits remain marginalised in Punjab politically, religiously and economically and this act was the response of their all kinds of marginalisation' (Singh, 2010). According to the CNN World television news channel experts, 'analysts said the declaration of new faith is likely to be a psychological boost for Dalits in India. They appear to have asserted themselves in a strategy that will give them a greater bargaining strength in their state where power has centered around specific caste'. Expert Madhopuri has believed that 'this announcement of alternative religion is the symbol of Dalit assertion' (Singh, 2010). This is further in the eyes of Dalit communities a viable way for their mission of emancipation from the scourge of segregation and discrimination from the mainstream religion.

One of the most important movements in respect to alternative Dalit religious identity is that of Ravidasia movement in the northern India. If we observe and contextualise the strategies and methods adopted by Ravidasia, a Dalit community in northern India, for the construction of separate Dalit religious identity beginning in Punjab and now almost whole of northern

India will reflect the emerging pattern and practices of new alternative Dalit religious and social identity different from mainstream religion. According to Ronki Ram this pattern is neither included in the domain of 'assimilation' nor in the domain of 'radical separatism' of religious conversion as advocated by Dr. Ambedkar. It is the 'middle path' of both strategies of 'assimilation' and 'radical separatism'. Ravidasia are using teachings and philosophy of Ravidas to project a separate Dalit identity in northern India. They are using teachings, poetry, philosophy and legends about the life of Ravidas as a catalyst to build and generate new inter-communal relations among various Dalit communities (Ram. 2008). Ravidasia are playing an important role continuously in the formation of a separate alternative Dalit identity in northern India.

Ravidas was a Dalit, having profession of cobbler, making and mending shoes. He is now Dalit religious icon. His teachings emphasise on the dignity of labour and individual irrespective of their caste, religion, birth, color, race etc. He preached the philosophy of equality, liberty and fraternity. He spoke compassion for all living beings. His egalitarian principles today work as a pedagogic tool to spread the message of self respect and the dignity of occupations of downtrodden, marginalised, deprived and exploited Dalit communities. He criticised Hindu religion that imposed various religious and social restrictions based on occupational caste status. Dalit communities today use his spiritual teachings to generate self-respect and an alternative religious identity different from mainstream religion that not only restricts from entering into their religious institutions and participating in religious rituals and practices but also treat worse than animals because of their occupation and low caste birth (Ram, 2004).

What makes Ravidas a prophet of Dalit communities in north India is his unique way of generating a sense of self-respect and creating a dignified identity of self. He neither denounced his caste nor hid his identity of Dalit/Chamar nor made a call for conversion, assimilation or Sanskritisation. He continued with his degraded cobbler occupation while emulating the prohibited dress and other symbols of upper castes. He argued that dress, symbols and culture cannot be categorised specifically for specific caste. This is the subject of individual irrespective of his caste, colour, birth and occupation. Ronki Ram defined it as his 'innovative middle path'. According to him this 'innovative middle path' of Ravidas 'shows that how the lower castes could achieve social mobility without sacrificing or compromising their distinct Dalit identity (Ram, 2008). Today this novel 'innovative middle path' of Ravidas is becoming most effective tool to

generate social consciousness among Dalit communities in north India and installing the institutions of their alternative Dalit religion to promote their distinct identity. Dalit communities 'in order to look different from the shrines of Hindu and Sikh religions, and to distinctly project their separate Dalit religious identity, Ravidas Deras have formulated their own religious symbols, ceremonies, prayers, rituals, and messages of social protest against the oppressive structures of caste domination in the agrarian society of Punjab' (Ram, 2008). Further, explaining Ambedkari, Ronki Ram asserts that adopting 'middle path' and establishment of large number of Ravidas temples in order to assert their independent Dalit identity 'has generated a sense of confidence among them and provided them an opportunity to exhibit their hitherto eclipsed Dalit identity. These Deras (Ravidas temple) in fact, have been functioning as missions to sensitise the Dalits and to facilitate their empowerment' (Ram, 2008).

Another Dalit group/panth prominently active in north India is Kabir Panth. It has also emerged as a result of widespread dissatisfaction of Dalit communities from orthodox, exploitative and discriminatory Hindu religion. Kabir Panth is known as religious sect and has a considerable influence among the Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh people. It has also some influence in Bihar. This is Dalit religious sect. It follows the teachings and preaching of Kabir. Kabir was the great singer, saint, poet, philosopher and social reformer. He strongly criticised the religious discrimination, exploitation and atrocities and spoke for the establishment of equal and just social order. He spoke for lower backward, Dalits and other deprived classes (Das, 2009).

On the contrary to mainstream Hindu religion, the Kabir Panthis believe in 'monism' (one god) and do not have faith in caste based on Verna system. The basic religious teachings of Kabir are very simple and secular in character. According to Kabir Panthis (followers of the teachings of Kabir) all life is interplay of two spiritual principles. One is the personal soul (Jivatma) and the other is God (Paramatma). For them universe is governed by two knowledge, the 'internal knowledge' and the 'external knowledge'. They consider soul i.e., 'Jivatma', as the source of internal knowledge and external knowledge comes from the God i.e., 'Paramatma'. They give importance to internal knowledge and according to them Dharma/Religion is a call of soul (Jivatma) which is present in all living creature. It is Kabir's view that salvation is the process of bringing into union these two divine principles (Das, 2009).

According to Kabir panthis Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Nanak Dharm these all are illusive term. These are *mat-majahab* (popular sect). It can create war but not religion. When people call *mat-majahab* (popular sect) religion, it is nothing but disrespect to religion. Religion is eternal, static, and unchangeable whereas *mat-majhab* (popular sect) is changeable. For them, religion is not a communal or collective subject, it is completely individual subject. Religion does not discriminate human beings. It does not believe in hierarchy, order and authority, neither believe in super-ordination and sub-ordination nor in exploitation and subjugation to other. Its basic principles are equality, liberty and fraternity. In all these above so-called religions, the group of people with certain vested interest came together having distorted notion of true religion, framed a code of conduct as a governing principle of religion. Taking the help of these codes of conduct framed by them, they created hierarchy and order and brought subjugation and discrimination to other which is completely against the religion. Further, they created religious institutions to perpetuate their interest and became the head and priest to hold the dominant position in society. They are the masters and rests are treated as followers. All these so-called religions are agency of discrimination, exploitation, conflict, superstition, irrationality and dogma. In every above so-called religion there is hierarchy and order. So, they are not religion but popular sect.

Another fact of Kabir Panthis revealed by Badri Narayan is that on the one hand Kabir panthis are criticising religion as an agency of discrimination, exploitation, conflict, superstition, irrationality, unscientific and dogma, on the other hand they are claiming to gain the status of religion. Kabir Panthis have been fighting for getting recognition as a religion since the previous census of India 2001. They are trying to assert their identity as a separate religion. Replying to this Abhilash Das is of the opinion that Kabir panthis are claiming for a separate religious status just because of a true follower and propagator of religion. The teachings of Kabir and our practices are completely based on equality, liberty and fraternity that are sole tenets of religion. Our rituals and practices are non-discriminatory and impose no restriction at all. Kabir panthis are fighting for the end of religious discrimination to Dalits, deprived and other backward society to bring justice and equality to them. Our religion is not a forced religion or forced conversion but a choice of individual, so are saying Kabir panthis. So, Kabir panth is the only true religion. It has the potential to grow as a world religion (Das, 2009). Non-caste character of Kabir panth has attracted a large number of Chamars in Uttar Pradesh. In this view R. S.

Khare asserts that educated Chamars in Lucknow follow a distinctive principle, ideals and ideology based of Guru Ravidas teachings. They have their 'Saint' represented by Ravidasia rather than the Brahmin. They have their argument behind it that the purity of spiritual attainment is not based on caste and birth. Spiritual purity is open to all and it is equally accessible to all irrespective of their caste, birth, colour, race etc. provided one has a true devotion to their master. In this way they criticise the Hindu religious tradition and rejects all their essential attributes like 'idol worship; Gods and Goddesses; Vedas and Law Code; belief in rebirth; Brahmanic rites, ceremonies and sacrifices; and the entire Verna and Jati-endangered hierarchical relations' (Khare, 1984: 17).

Very precisely, in the view of Kabir Panthis religion is related to Jivatma i.e., soul or inner knowledge. It helps in the inner development of an individual. It gives a certain direction of outwardly activities. Both soul (Jivatma) and God (Parmatma) are interdependent to each other. Inner development influences the external development and vice-versa. But the Dalit and a section of society which are downtrodden and exploited, victim of economic and social circumstances, can never progress inwardly. They are restricted by outward environment. They can never achieve inner growth until and unless external freedom and suitable environment are not created. Hence, in the attempt to gain this outer freedom and to end the humiliation and the exploitative environment of Dalits so as to remove all hindrances to inner development, right religion should be adopted. Now comes the question that how they institutionalise their religion to propagate their mission of social justice.

The Weberian concept of 'the routinisation of charisma' (Weber 1997, 363) can be applied to the Dalit religious organisations which evolve out of the specific common religious experiences of Dalit communities. From such common experiences a form of religious association of Dalit communities emerges which culminates in a permanent institutionalised religious organisation. The common religious experiences of humiliation of Dalit communities by the mainstream Hindu religion marked the beginning in the creation of their alternative religious identity and eventually their institutionalisation. Taking the motivation from teachings and philosophy of their Dalit charismatic figures like Ravidas, Kabir, Phule, Ambedkar and others, Dalit communities are doing nothing but evolving stable forms out of that philosophy. They are evolving a character of permanent relationship to form a stable community of followers of Dalit charismatic figures, what Weber defines it as the 'routinisation of charisma'.

There are two factors responsible for promoting the institutionalisation of Dalit religion. First; the imposition of restriction entering into mainstream religious institutions which left no option to Dalit communities except to install their own religious institutions to fulfill their expressive need concern. Second; there is a sense of spreading, promotion and propagation of Dalit religious philosophy to create a kind of solidarity among their communities. Thus the development of specifically Dalit religious organisation represents both the cause of general discrimination of Dalit communities and effect as in view of empowered Dalit to create their separate religious identity free from the encroachment of mainstream religion. For example; Ravidasia dedicated to him temples, bhawans (memorial halls), educational institutions and chairs, cultural organisations, and hospitals. They founded several missions to accurately establish facts about his life and works and to disseminate his message of compassion, equality, and brotherhood in India and abroad. They worship his image, celebrate his *jayantis* (birth and death anniversaries), recite his hymns every morning and night, raise slogans such as "*Ravidas Shakti Amar Rahe*" (The spiritual power of Ravidas live forever), and put faith in his spiritual power (Ram, n.d). Further he asserts that 'the establishment of a large number of Ravidas Deras by the Dalits in Punjab and in other parts of India over the last few years is a case in point. Ravidas has become very popular among the Punjabi Dalit diasporas as well, who have built Ravidas temples in almost all the towns of the world wherever they happened to live even in small numbers in order to assert their separate caste identity. The number of Ravidas Deras has been multiplying very fast, and has taken the form of an alternative socio-cultural Ravidas Deras movement for the emancipation of the Dalits.' (Ram, 2008) Now, let us analyse the various modes of Dalit religiosity and their importance in developing independent Dalit identity. So, their various modes of Dalit religious identity includes temples, memorial hall, educational institutions, library, television channels, introspection camp, prayer, aarti, greeting, celebration of birth and death anniversaries and slogans and many more.

After analysing religious orientation and religiosity of major Dalit castes of northern India, the Chamars, the Bhangi, the Chuhra, Dalit religion appears to be almost similar (Webster, 2002). Their religious movements can be called 'local bottom up movements'. Rural Dalits leaders in their villages started these movements first. These rural Dalit leaders try to convince and motivate Dalit communities to the various notion related to their cultural resources and true ethos of religion discarding irrational, discriminative,

exploitative and humiliating tendency of mainstream Hindu religion. They are rejecting the Brahminical notion of religion and raising personal conviction to their own cultural resources.

Two things should be noted here, First; the 'relational nature' of Dalit religiosity. It maintains a relationship with their prophet as their master, guide and path-breaker in their mission of emancipation. Second; the newly developed alternative Dalit religious identity creates a new voluntary band of followers who work at local (village) level to teach the philosophy of their master. In religious gathering they express the basic etiquette in the relationship to their pattern of worship. They have deep notion of sacred and profane and they try to develop good relationship with sacred things identified by these local Dalit workers. They develop a new kind of belongingness and it acts as the first form of Dalit religious organisation. Since, at village level the Dalits are more victimised by mainstream religion, when they find a similar and almost equal opportunity to express their religion, which has basic motive to denounce Hindu religion and their exploitative practices, they enjoy it more than upper level organisation. At local village level it is observed that the religious worship is not simply a philosophical and intellectual expression but it involves the feeling, emotion and acts of men. It includes songs, sacrifice, sacramental feast, gesture, greetings, speech, bizarre sound along with sorcery and animal sacrifice. It may be irrational, not important for practical purpose but the development of social solidarity among Dalit is the most influential effect of their various acts (Singh, 1993).

Creation of belief system among followers comes at second level. It includes storytelling, poetry reciting, recitation of couplets, and inspiration to listen CDs, cassettes, reading booklets and explanation of Dalit life world in the domain of the teaching of their masters like Ravidas, Kabir, Dr. Ambedkar and many more. At this level Dalit leaders provide alternative booklets like Ravidas Tikka, Ravidas Vani, Ravidas Chalisa, Dalits life stories, books like Kabir Darshan, and other Dalit scripture, poem based on Dalit heroic characters to read and recite in similar manner as Hanuman Chalisa, Durga Chalisa and other are recited in the main stream Hindu religion. At the last stage they are installing their religious institutions like Ravidas temple, social institution like public charitable trust and statues of Dalit iconic figures like Dr. Ambedkar, Jyotirao Phule, Periyar, Kanshi Ram, Mayavati and catching leading Dalit icons to inaugurate these institutions (Chertier, 1987).

Dalit icons, leaders academia etc. also participate in the annual celebration of festivals in solidarity with introducing new rituals and religious practices of Dalit communities. At the intellectual level modern scientific mode of apprehension is developed. However people from diverse Dalit castes belong to different regions but having common experiences of religious segregation feel same cultural contact when they meet in these religious and non-religious Dalit ceremonies. This has contributed immensely in the creation of a strong bond of fraternity. It helps in development of non-political common religious thought formed with the common goal to emancipate them by creating an independent alternative Dalit religious identity. The development of such common thought pattern is part of raising the level of empowerment, dignity, self-respect among Dalit communities. That is the mission of emancipation of Dalit communities. The newly emerged Dalit religious groups differ from mainstream religious groups in respect of its rituals, its belief, and above all, in its types of organisations and institutions. Finally, it helps the process of institutionalisation of Dalit religion. The pattern of worship, which includes various modes of Dalit religiosity, is constructed at intellectual level of Dalit organisation. All stages act as a part of whole. In this process they get a sense of freedom.

After analysing the institutionalisation of Dalit religion through the various modes of their religiosity and their distinct religious orientation in the process of developing an independent Dalit religious identity, what we need to see is their psychological dimension of religiosity and its social significance to Dalit community. At psychological level it allows them to unshackle themselves from the clutches of social inferiority and indignity imposed by mainstream religious tradition in a way no other strategy can match its efficacy. In doing so this (alternative religious practices) not only help them shed the prejudices of past, incapacitating them socially as well as individually but also give them a new sense of dignified freedom, in the universe of their own, which is a precondition for any creative pursuit. This free condition helps them achieve social mobility, a dignified fraternity, financial security and well-being.

Given the social 'ethics at the core of religion' and as well given the motivational and emotional power it embodies, if cultivated steadily and systematically in a given religious community it can bring about cultural and civilisational transformation. Dalit religion, given its subordinated and oppressed background and its aspiration to achieve all the dignity and glory, life can get in religion, it (Dalit religion) can potentially scale cultural and

civilisational height hitherto unknown (Webster, 2002). Further according to Ellwood as mentioned by Webster, for religion to perform truly the task of cultural and civilisational progress, it must get rid itself of metaphysical and theological baggage and be adapted to the demands of both science and democracy. Dalit alternative religious practices to a large extent meet the conditions led down by Ellwood. Dalit alternative religious practices are in many ways, itself the product of the protest from both at once too much emphasis on theology and metaphysics in mainstream religious traditions and at the same time too graded and superstitious to be compatible with science and democracy. Indeed the ideas of democracy, equality and dignity of individual characterise the essence of the Dalit religion.

Psycho-Spiritual aspect of alternative Dalit religion reflects that the oppression as a consequence of hierarchical caste system may manifest in multiple dimensions. It may fracture and immobile the oppressed (Dalit) socially, culturally, economically, spiritually and psychologically. In fact very often than not oppressed may come out of aforementioned some consequences of oppression, to be precise, socially, culturally and economically, if we radically alter the existing customary framework of social intercourse into a concrete politico-legal framework which vanishes hitherto existing unequal indignant social life of oppressed. But it may be, indeed it is as so many research have shown over the years that, the altered egalitarian formal political promises may only touch the superficial level of thoughts and psychology of oppressed, 'there depth of experience' which has gone century into making it may remain untouched. As a result every little hurt may act as a mirror of their past wounds of oppression.

In attempting to explain the consequences of oppression of Dalit psyche in hierarchical caste structure, as Webster, referring to J. C. Heinrich, argues that 'there is a universal urge for self-expression and superiority inherent in human nature' (Webster, 2002). It is this universal urge which is choked by hierarchical caste based social relation resulting in a chronic sense of inferiority, insecurity and meaninglessness which further produces anger and rage which may be either suppressed, expressed openly and directly, or expressed in directly in a passive aggressive manner according to circumstances.

Another relevant analysis is provided by Roland and Kakar. For them, peculiar Indian child socialisation into household and its attendant social traits of love and respects among superior and subordinates extends far beyond this primary group into the secondary social environment of *Jati* where the same role they exhibit. But this socialisation is highly

asymmetrical among the upper caste Hindus and Dalits. For upper caste Hindus, they can be benign connections between their home nurturing and the secondary socialisation into the caste hierarchy. But for Dalit the same socialisation is an experience of oppression. To explain this C. B. Webster elucidating for Roland and Kakar, remarks that:

The hierarchy into which by nature they have become immersed and emotionally (as well as economically) dependent upon is at the same time source of constant humiliation to their 'we-self'. The result can only be a seriously conflicted inner world where a deep sense of once own worth and lovableness rooted in a mother's nurturing and the happy early childhood is fighting with constant feeling of shame about the status of once 'we-self' ascribed by the outside world, where a deep dependence upon 'superiors' for validation and status are at war with an equally powerful anger at those 'superiors' for withholding these, where a deep desire to prove once 'merit' to those to deny with is mixed with a sense of helplessness. Hierarchy, dependency and conflict seem to be built into the inner world of Dalits as much as into the external world with which they must deal' (Webster, 2002: 136).

There is another explanation of distinctive experience of Dalit psyche of oppression called trauma which results from all kinds of violence and atrocities unleashed upon Dalits within the operation of hierarchical caste based social relations. Now the question that begs is that through what mechanisms can this 'depth psychic experience of oppression of Dalit be healed' (Webster, 2002)? How the alternative religious practices can help Dalits to the new sense of freedom and dignity not something as superficial truth but an experienced reality?

To begin with as we have seen above that ultimately 'self' is the product of interacting factors of familial socialisation and outside secondary environment of, in case of Dalit, unequal hierarchical oppressive caste structure. It is this 'nurturing environment' which creates and sustains the distorted and degraded notion of 'self' among 'Dalit psyche' which has to be confronted with. This 'nurturing environment' can be altered, in my view, through a distinctively radical religio-universe of imaginations and practices. This is precisely what alternative Dalit religious practices is all about. As Webster rightly put it 'the ethos of the nurturing environment is altered primarily by the introduction of a new religious ideology (e.g., egalitarian bhakti, 'engaged' Buddhism, Dalit theology) and its incorporation into the rites, rituals, customs and practices of the religious community' (Webster, 2002).

Conclusion

Hence, the social significance of Dalit alternative religious identity pervades every aspects of Dalit's life right from their empowerment to a better and dignified life. It brings out the better adjustment between individual and society. It does not only give the emotional motivational social security but it also gives independent identity, solidarity and self-respect. The institutionalisation of norms, values, rituals and symbols create new patterned network of social relationships at both 'intra-public' and 'inter-public' levels which manifests itself into broader sphere of religious grouping. This patterned network of social relationship is the part and parcel of Dalit's 'bottom-top-movement' to create independent Dalit religious identity in their everyday ordinary lived experiences free from supernatural, metaphysical, transcendental and other worldly reference.

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Book Review

Handbook of Research on In-Country Determinants and Implications of Foreign Land Acquisitions

Evans Osabuohien (Editor)
USA, Business Service Reference (IGI Global), 2015, P. 495
ISBN10: 1466674059, $ 212.00 (Print, Hard Cover)

Harashankar Adhikari[*]

'Land grabs' or large scale land acquisitions have emerged as the most challenging issue in recent times at global level, particularly in developing countries. The financial and economic crises after 2008 changed the perception of land in terms of value for increasing demand for food crops, feed stock, bio-fuels, etc. Multifarious factors i.e., country, community and household of land acquisition affect the outcomes of land deals ranging from economic and sociological to environmental issues that differ within and across countries.

There are several studies which investigated the determinants and merits or demerits of land acquisition globally. 'Handbook of Research on In-Country Determinants and Implications of Foreign Land Acquisitions' edited by Evans Osabuohien is a praiseworthy investigation that explores various determinants of land acquisition (processes and outcomes) at large

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within same country. This book consists of five sections with 21 chapters where different distinguished scholars throughout the globe have shared their scholarly research findings in relation to the land deals.

The section one (Overview, Historical Issues and the General Stage of Affairs) deals with historical outlooks of contemporary aspects of multifaceted nature of land acquisition. Implications of the Foreign land Acquisitions (FLAs) and approaches towards sustainable development have been shared with examples of pros-cons of the FLAs in Africa. It also investigates the Chinese involvement in large scale land acquisitions under the FLA in Africa in relation to dispossession of land capital, property rights, and gender role, etc. The scholars argue that purchase, or lease of large scale land in developing countries might lead to food insecurity and weaken rural development.

Land acquisition and role of gender have been studied in section two of this book. The scholars investigate the gender relations in land acquisition through two cases from two countries in two different continents. Indian women are worst sufferers in land deals so far as developing policies are concerned. It is expressed that laws and customs exclude the majority of Indian women from inheriting landed property and men are usually involved in the management, usage, and transfer of land. The experience from Zimbabwe speaks that 70 per cent of women are main producers of food. So, land acquisition is a threat to these rural women for management of their livelihood.

Contributing factors to the disparities of land acquisition in terms of nature, extent, and implications, both at domestic and cross country level, have been observed in section three (Country and Inter-Country Variation of Land Acquisitions). For this purpose, the scholars share their studies on land acquisitions from five different countries. It includes the impact of FLA on food security and food supply chain in Nigeria where the encouragement to local land investors in large scale agriculture by government for large scale agricultural production is very much significant. Land deals and their impact on livelihood in Ethiopia direct to facilitate possible win-win method of land deals. All parties (the government, the investors, and the local community) involvement should improve necessarily for land deals to achieve maximum benefits as recommended by the scholars. How large scale foreign direct investment (FDI) in land in special economic zones in India has created conflict, has been analysed critically with policy options and determinants of FLA to reduce adverse effects. In chapter 11, the author analyses the socio-cultural aspects of FLA. Relationship between FLAs and corruption has been investigated through an experience of Mozambique and

Tanzania. Hindrances of the implications of FLAs on sustainable livelihood have been noted as a fear of exploitation of local communities which promotes power dynamics, corruption, and false sense of security among land owners.

There are positive and negative impacts on the quality and services relating to basic amenities (i.e. education, road, water, and health) of land deals in the host community comparing to the community without such land deals. With reference to the above, the cases of Uganda and Nigeria have been measured by the scholars. Particularly, in Nigerian community it has had negative impact on their livelihood after 20 years of land deals. So, the scholars suggest the need to incorporate the economic sustenance of the host communities in large scale agricultural returns during the processes of negotiating land deals (section four).

Finally in section five of this book, the scholars deal with the issues relating to land reforms, legal framework, and the agrarian transformation for large scale land acquisitions. For instance, one scholar explores the impact of Zimbabwean Fast Track Land Reform Programme in social, economic, and political tension in Zimbabwe. According to his observation, it was not land reform in true sense but it facilitated the economic and political crisis for self-seeking interests of government aiming to retain political power. Second example analyses the failure of popular Land Use Act in Nigeria. It reflects why the numerous laws and institutions relating to water sector in Nigeria have not achieved national water demand despite huge water resources. So, the scholars suggest the need of administrative co-ordination between land and water resources. Amendments of Tanzanian land Laws of 1999 might solve the conflicts of decentralised land administration. It has been observed in relation to the weakness in effective implementation of the said law. The reference to this experience of the transformation of the agricultural sectors in Nigeria is an effect of FLAs on small scale farmers. They argue that there is emergent need of strong collective actions among the displaced land owners, government, and investors to bridge the transition from sustenance to commercial agriculture effectively.

The overall observation tells that this research based hand book importantly investigates the experiences of land acquisitions in all respects. It is an essential resource guide for the policy makers, administrators, law makers, researchers dealing with the issue of land acquisitions at global level. It is also a helpful resource for the academicians in the field of sociology, cultural anthropology, economics and law.

Book Review

State Politics in India

Himanshu Roy, Mahendra Prasad Singh and A.P.S. Chouhan (Eds.)
Primus books, Delhi, 2017, Pages 919, Rupees 575

Arif Ahmad Nengroo[*]

Every state politics has its own internal dynamics and is different from others. This difference is on the basis of population, territory, economy, topography, caste, religion, class, communities and relationships respectively. There are commonalities across the boundaries like the expansion and intensification of capitalism, social relations, administrative transparency, growth of party system and emergence of civil society. The study of state politics after independence in India was undertaken less seriously because of the dominance of one party system at centre and their influence upon states. The states are dependent on centre because the distribution of powers and revenue was more in favour of centre. Due to the changing social structures and civic requirements the governance, decentralisation, infrastructural development have acquired prominence in last 20 years. The law and order is supposed to be a state concern but the 42nd Constitutional Amendment 1976 made deployment of forces in aid of civil power in a state an exclusive union competence. These developments overshadow the state governments and subordinate state politics into national politics. In the past 63 years several works have been published on

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the theme of 'state politics' but most writers have concentrated on electoral politics.

This edited volume, entitled State Politics in India, comprises of 29 well-researched articles which is a compilation of two consecutive seminars on different aspects of state politics, organised by Jiwaji University, Gwalior.

The first chapter 'Region, Caste and Politics in Andhra Pradesh: Mapping the Paradigm Shift in the State Politics' by K. Srinivasulu, explores the history of formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956 on linguistic principle by State Reorganisation Commission. He puts his arguments in six sections. In the first section 'Social Structure', he finds caste as an important feature of political and social structure of state. The main castes in Andhra Pradesh are Brahmins, Reddy, Kammas, Velamas, Rajus and Kapus, dominates the media, education and administration. In the second section 'phase of Congress dominance' Srinivasulu observed that Congress opt the agrarian reform agenda (left wing agenda), dominate the influence of lefts. Despite the debacle of Congress at centre in 1967 and 1977 elections, Congress send 41/42 members to the lok sabha from Andhra Pradesh. In the third section 'Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Regime: 1983-4' Srinivasulu finds that TDP tries to win the hearts of poor farmers and people by initiating the scheme of Rs. 2 per kg rice and by giving subsidy on power and fertilisers. The transformation of agrarian rich caste into non-farming sectors paved way to the non-Congress government in Andhra Pradesh. The fourth section 'politics of economic reform' Srinivasulu analysed that by the shift in macro policy paradigm and introducing economic reforms brought changes in states economy and society. In the fifth section 'rural crisis and electoral reform' Srinivasulu finds that due to the neglect of agriculture, rural economy in Naidu's regime and due to the start of *padayatra* and controlling the factionalism within the party by S.R. Rajasekhara, Congress strengthened its base at grassroot level. At the end Srinivasulu highlights the dominance of Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) on other parties and this domination forced them to make coalition with TRS. Srinivasulu also highlights the Telangana Movement and analysed that with the participation of students, writers, artists, employees, businessmen, farmers, occupational communities and almost every section of society in the movement paved the way for the creation of separate state of Telangana. Srinivasulu also highlights in this chapter that the print media, education and communication channels play a key role in making separate Telangana.

Nani Bath's *Arunachal Pradesh: A Centralised Federal Unit* briefly discusses about the history of formation of Arunachal Pradesh. The state has

record number of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes as various communities have migrated from diverse directions in different groups. Bath highlighted that the agro-climate and topographic conditions were very favourable for agriculture and horticulture sectors which are the main sources of state's economy. Apart from this, Bath pointed that the proper electoral politics was started in 1977 elections and analysed that the people of this region support national parties instead of local parties as local parties are existed only the time of elections. Bath highlighted that the dominance of one party system (Congress dominance) still existed in Arunachal Pradesh. He explains that by the claim of China on McMahon Line and by their invasion in 1950 stressed the central government to give statehood to this region in 1986, and allocate more funds for the upliftment of this region.

Apurba K. Baruah in his writings *Politics in Assam* highlighted the past history of Ahom rulers who ruled Assam for 600 years. Demographically it is one of the most multi-cultural states with a large number of religious, linguistic, tribal and other ethnic groups. Baruah highlighted that agriculture is main source of economy but continuous floods pushes the economy to difficult situation. Baruah analysed that the politics in Assam is linguist based, dominated by Assamese speaking and not caste based as its literacy rate of Scheduled Castes is above national figure. The state has strong historical background of local-self government, passed various amendments from to time to strengthen these institutions. The electoral politics is dominated by Congress till its debacle in 1980, paved way for other national as well as regional parties to make entry in Assam's electoral politics. The manifesto of almost all parties focused on issues like corruption, illegal migration, insurgency, ethnic identity but fails to solve these issues when comes in power. Baruah highlights that regionalism is an important feature of Assam politics as there are various organisations active which demands autonomy for their respective regions.

In the Chapter *Understanding State Politics in India: A Case of Bihar*, Dinesh Kumar Singh, discusses about the dominance of caste over society and politics of Bihar from 1930s to 1960s. Singh highlighted that the formation of provincial conference by middle class Kayastha community with Muslim community, demanding separate Bihar from Bengal. The Bihar Times 1984 started by provincial conference, Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha and All India Kisan Sabha, highlights the discrimination faced by Bihar and demand to free the oppressed masses from slavery and subjugation and abolition of Zamaindari system. Singh analyses that the caste played an important role in the electoral politics of state which is reflected in the

elections. From 1952 general elections Congress dominate the politics of Bihar except 1967 and 1977 elections which started bi-party system in Bihar. The multi-party system was started in 1990 after the dominance of Backward Castes in electoral politics of Bihar. Singh highlights that the major issue of the state is land reform which has not been solved by any government. Apart from this Singh acknowledges that migration issues which hurdles the growth of economic sector.

Niraj Kumar Jha in his chapter *'Politics in Chhattisgarh: A Region without Regionalism'* discusses about the history of Chhattisgarh and the peoples struggle in general and tribal's in particular to maintain the identity of Chhattisgarh. The demand for separate statehood came in the end of 2000 when State Reorganisation Commission give it the status of statehood. Jha acknowledges that the state is rich in natural resources which helped it to emerge as the power hub of country and rice bowl of central India. Due to the efforts of state government for the development of state, the state received the award of United Nations Development Award. The electoral politics is predominantly dominated by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) due to the development programmes, shift of tribal votes to BJP, split within Congress party. Despite these developments Jha explored that the position of tribal is same and even face many serious problems, displacement, traffing of womens and girls, naxalism, etc.

The sixth chapter in this volume is captioned *Multilevel Framework of Governance in Delhi: As Non-Sovereign State*. Rekha Saxena goes on to discuss in detail about the history of Delhi from Mauryan period till 1912 when British government had transferred the national capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi. Saxena acknowledges that due to the migration of different people from different cities after independence for economic purposes resulted a number of unauthorised colonies and slum bastis in Delhi. As a commercial hub, Delhi's economy heavily relies on service sector consisting of real estate, trade, transport, public administration, financial and insurance sector, communication, restaurant and hotels. Saxena explores that after the status of Union Territory, Delhi is governed by Centre, State and three Municipal councils without clear demarcation of powers and authorities which creates hurdles in policy formulation, implementation and coordination. Saxena analyses that after the status of statehood in 1991 the electoral politics was divided between two parties BJP and Congress. With the emergence of Aam Admi Party in 2013 elections winning 32 seats and form government with the support of Congress, remains only in office in 49 days but sweeps the 2014 elections with 67 seats out of 70. Saxena

acknowledges the voter base of parties; upper class with large segment preferring BJP, middle class consistently preferring the Congress over BJP and middle class regularly supporting the Congress.

Parag D. Parobo in the seventh chapter namely *Politics in Goa: Instability, Identity and Capitalist Transformation* discusses about the struggle for maintaining the unique identity of Goa, recognising Konkani as official language and attaining status of statehood. Parobo points that capitalist penetration of Goa through mining in first phase, fishing in second phase and land in third phase has influenced the formation of government. Parobo analyses that division in Goan society on the basis of caste and religion influenced the electoral politics of Goa. Parobo highlights the electoral politics of Goa in three phases, from 1963-80 dominated by Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) with the vote base of Bahutan Samaj, second phase was marked by Indian National Congress (INC) with the merger of United Goans Party (UGP) a local party and the third phase from 1989 onwards by capitalist transformation in land, localisation of power on the basis of caste and religion institutions and with the emergence of BJP as a political force.

Amit Dholakia, in his chapter *The Shifting Basis of Political Legitimacy: An Analysis of the Dynamics of Gujarat Politics* acknowledges the dominance of elites (upper castes) and economic (middle castes) on politics and culture of Gujarat till the end of 1970s. Author analyses that the split of Congress at national level by executing the marginalised groups in the government institutions, results lose of its support base in Gujarat. He highlights the various *yatras* conducted by various organisations and by Narendra Modi about the pro-Hindutva helped BJP to dominate the electoral politics of state after 1995 which brought back the era of one party dominance in Gujarat. Dholakia acknowledges that the instability in Gujarat was due to the various riots and construction of dams.

The Chapter on *Democratic Transformation and Party System Transition in Haryana* by Sunil K. Choudhary, broadly discusses about the social profile, language, land holding pattern and caste class structures of the Haryana. Choudhary highlights the influence of decentralisation, Khap Panchayats on the electoral politics of state and the democratic transition and political transformation from Congress to Safforn party in the state. Choudhary analyses that Haryana continue to remain susceptible to party feuds and family fiefdoms of Lal's. In the politics of Haryana issues like development, governance, transparency and accountability are gaining importance nowadays.

Book Review

Rekha Chowdhary, in her chapter *State Politics in Jammu and Kashmir: An Exercise in Asymmetrical Federalism* discusses about the manifesto of National Conference (NC) 1944, which had a radical orientation in political and economic terms of state. She reveals that the land reform programme was historical because the landlords were not paid compensation for the excess of land and the tillers to whom this land was redistributed were not asked to pay for it. Rekha acknowledges that the land reform programme which was historical unlike India, instrument of Accession and 1952 Delhi Agreement started the democratic process in Jammu and Kashmir; but by the removal and detention of Sheikh Abdullah and by making more provisions applicable to Jammu and Kashmir weakened this process. Rekha analyses that the electoral politics of state was dominated by NC till 1996 Assembly elections, from 2002 the era of coalition politics was started in the state with the coming of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) with a trend of local party and national party. She acknowledges that the regional disparity in the state was with the dominance of one party system which had their base in Kashmir region and with the multi-layered diversity of Jammu and Kashmir. She analyses that the policy change of NC from economic to political support, subsidy system by Central Government and militancy had affects the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. Author also highlights that the issues related to governance particularly demand of autonomy, human rights violation, demilitarisation, Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA), Public Security Act (PSA) and Disturbed Area Act (DAA) which are the major problems being faced by the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The chapter on *Identity, Politics and Development in Jharkhand* by Krishna Murari, explores that after British Administration the landlords and moneylenders dominate the resources of tribals in Jharkhand as a result of this several tribal revolts against these have initiated in Jharkhand. Apart from these, several groups were formed against this domination; demands separate identity of the region. Murari acknowledges the various acts which prohibited the transfer of land from Adivasis to non-tribes by way of sale and purchase and the movements undertaken by different parties to protect the land and forests of this region, tries to strong their vote base. The main aim of these movements was to achieve socio-economic and political betterment of these indigenous people of Jharkhand. Murari analyses that there was not so much progress in these spheres especially in economic sphere even after grant of the statehood to this region. He also argues that the influence of capitalists on industries, commercial service, agriculture sector, connection with politicians, rise of identity and ethnicity on the basis

of religion, caste and trible identity have dominated the electoral politics and government formation in Jharkhand. Murari highlights the problems which affect the Jharkhand state especially the rise of Crorepati MLAs, crimes by MLAs and the naxal violence.

Muzaffar Assadi, in his chapter *'State, Society and Identity Politics in Karnataka: Shifting Paradigms'* briefly discusses about the identity politics of Karnataka which was affected by reservation policy and land reforms policy of different regimes. Assadi highlights the policy of special economic zones and the path of development followed by state government which becomes a symbol of development and also a symbol of Karnataka's new economy but at the same time it has become the symbol of displacement, dispossession, acquisition, loss of identity and livelihood. Apart from this, there are a number of movements like dalit movement, farmers movement and ecology movement which introduced new political idoms, political discourse and a new political culture and changed the politics of identity as well as state society relations. Assadi acknowledges that due to the shift in Karnataka's politics from one-party dominance to multi-party especially with the entry of BJP in the power resulted in growing intolerance and communalism.

Burton Cleetus's chapter on *'Missionaries, Marxists and the 'Model State': Engaging with Political Practices in Kerala'* acknowledges about the path of modernisation that was followed by the three regions of state which resulted high human developments and was declared as the 'Kerala Model'. The basis of communist movement was upon economic and tries to locate uniformity between caste and community. Cleetus highlights that the leftist parties push forward their ideas on society and social organisations after coming power in state legislature in 1957. The caste and religious groups of state were actively engaged and present in education. The church has more influence on education as they forward their beliefs and faiths through them. They considered schools as channels through which they found their presence and maintain their hegemony within state and society. He analyses that both communists and church opposed each other, the former claims that hegemony of church on education and health was against their interest whereas later claims that the activities of communists create conflicts between the two. Cleetus explores that the parties make alliances on the basis of common ideologies as they considered they have emerged from common socio-cultural terrain. The Marxism, Communist Party of India (Marxists) [CPI(M)] and Communist Party of India (CPI) functioned their ideology in a democratic system and bridging the gap between struggles and governance and recognise the Indian state system.

Book Review

The chapter on *'Madhya Pradesh: Politics of Democracy, Domination and Dissent'* by A.P.S. Chouhan and Niraj Kumar Jha, acknowledges about the geography and natural resources of Madhya Pradesh. Despite being so richly resources of nature, its 31.65 per cent population is below poverty line and has nutrition problem as well. They highlighted the rate of crimes and corruption in the state, supported by the bureaucrats and politicians. They point out that there has been a transition of electoral politics from one-party dominance to two-party system. They highlight the status of Panchayati Raj Institutions and provisions of these institutes which was amended from time to time. The representation of women is low in these institutions even after 50 per cent reservation for the fair sex. They analyse that the two things, firstly Bhopal Gas Tragedy which results almost 20000 deaths and about 5.69 lakh injuries and disabilities; secondly the construction of dams which consequences displacement of the people, reflects the level of governance and level of corruption in the state. They explore that the naxalism problem is not the problem of law and order but the problem of justice and government support to naxal people and connection between them. Due to this, marginalised people have faced many kinds of humiliations on the basis of caste. They analyse that due to the ineffectiveness of various groups resulted slow change in the state.

Ashok T. Borkar in his chapter *'Caste, Politics and Development in Maharashtra'* highlights the formation of Maharashtra state by uniting the three regions Marathwada, Western and Eastern Maharashtra. He also highlights the inequality between these regions in terms of economy, education and industry. Maharashtra was second largest state in terms of population and area and number one in terms of socio-economic development and most urbanised state of India. Borkar explores the movement led by Marathi-speaking people for the creation of one mega state. The working class in Bombay also supports the movement but the support of Congress was minimal to the movement. Nearly 100 above people were killed during these 7-8 years of movement till it achieved the status of statehood on 1 May, 1960. Borkar acknowledges that the electoral politics of Maharashtra state was predominantly dominated by Congress which was reflected by election results from 1960 to 2009 but in 2014 election BJP emerged as single largest party with 122 seats followed by Shiv Sena 63 seats to form the government. The domination of Maratha caste was very high as nearly 50 per cent of ministers were belonging to this caste. Borkar explores the irrigation and electricity projects as it has 70 per cent capacity of irrigation but unfortunately only 18 per cent land (cultivable) was under

irrigation. Borkar highlights the problem of naxalism in state particularly in Gadchiroli, Gonda, Chanderpur districts as these districts have good forest cover which provides naxalities a good hiding place. Instead of rich resources these districts have less developed because of naxalism problem. The polo was also highlighted by Borkar as it was an ancient political tribal organisation which was a good example of direct democracy among these tribals.

The Chapter on *'Politics of Manipur: A Congress Bastion'* by M. Amarjeet Singh, highlights the chronicles of Manipur history from Military Raj till the British period which is reflected in different historical records such as Cheithrol Kumbaba (33 to 1890 AD) and from the merger of Manipur into India till it achieved the status of statehood in 1972. Singh acknowledges the role of women which they played in business, against alcohol and substance abuse and against security forces excess. Singh highlights the movement against the construction of dams to save the natural resources of state. The different issues were also highlighted like ethnicity, insurgency, human rights and Nagal movements which were the source of concern for government as well as to the general population. The successive governments fail to meet the expectations of people and fail to solve the aforesaid conflicts because no government till 2002 would complete the full term in office. Singh explores the dominance of Congress over electoral politics of Manipur as only five to six years of non-Congress government was in the state.

The chapter on *'State Politics in Meghalaya: A Regionalism That Poses No Threat to Nationalism'* by Susmita Sen Gupta highlights the demand of separate state for tribal population carried by different parties till they achieve it in December 1971 by declaring Meghalaya a full-fledged state. Gupta acknowledges that the land pattern of tribals which was somehow different from one another. The property was transformed from generation to generation through women but its actual control is in the hands of men. Gupta explores that a number of regional parties have emerged in the state from time to time but fails to strength their base except United Democratic Party (UDP). The performance of parties in four assembly elections of Mehgalaya clearly shows the dominance of Congress in electoral politics of state. Gupta acknowledges that civil society organisations played a vital role in the state politics of Meghalaya by influencing the policy decisions of the government. The church also played a dominant role in all spheres of life and in selecting the leaders and shaping the decisions of government. Gupta

observes that the politics of regionalism in Meghalaya does not pose any threat to integrity of Indian union.

The Chapter on *'Politics in Mizoram: A Rare Example of Democratic Transition on Troubled North Eastern Border'* by Jagadish K. Patnaik, explains about the political development of state from insurgency to democratic setup which is the result of signing of peace accord between Government of India and underground leaders of Mizo National Front (MNF) which facilitates the creation of a separate state of Mizoram. Patnaik explores that homogeneity of the Mizo society helps the minority groups to bring their representatives in legislative assembly. Homogeneity is the base of strength in the state. Patnaik highlights some issues of discontentment from which state overcomes after signing the peace accord and due to the role of civil society and different organisations. The Church, Young Mizo Association and Mizo Zirlai played vital role in education, health, elections, facilitating peace and development in the state.

Kedilezo Kikhi in his Chapter *'Politics in Nagaland: From Military to Electoral Democracy'* broadly discusses about the status of Nagaland from backward tract to the status of statehood 1963. Kikhi unravels the role of church in initiating the peace process between underground organisations and Government of India which paved the way for Shillong Peace Accord of November 1975. Kikhi analyses that the misjudgment of India and here 'Hit Hard and Swift' policy had deepened the fear and sense of non-Indianness among Naga people. The Kohima declaration between Government of India and National Socialist Council Nagaland did not provide any fruitful result as they fail to reach any solution. He acknowledges that the public need politicians much more than they need public. Today the underground groups now openly participate and work for their choice leaders. Kikhi assesses that the economic packages without accountability increases corruption in state and affect the agricultural economy of state. The pattern of land ownership in the state and forest property owned by the people or lineage groups also hurdles in developmental process and in utilisation of natural resources. Kikhi explores the role of Christianity in bringing social and cultural change among the Nagas and the benefits brought by Christianity in education and health care. The state has complete autonomy in social and religious matters under Article 371 of Indian Constitution which protects Naga traditional law.

Mohammed Badrul Alam in his chapter *'Mapping the Contours of State Politics in Odisha in Context of Elections in Recent decades'* highlights the dominant castes and their influence on administrative sector and the role of

tribals in electoral politics and their increased demand for greater autonomy to state. Badrul assesses that the coalition government was most time in the state because no party won the clear majority in most of the assembly elections. The rise of regional parties in the state and their support base helps them to perform well from time to time especially Biju Janata Dal (BJD) which dominates the electoral politics since its inception. Badrul analyses that the influences of newspaper editors was very much on electoral politics of the state by getting tickets to contest elections and the most newspapers were financed by politicians or industrialists. The dynastic politics is very much seen in Odisha which is reflected by giving tickets to family members to contest and try to capitalise the mass support on their family name. He acknowledges the various issues which hurdles in the way of BJP to strong the support base in the state and to perform well in the electoral politics of Odisha. The miracle of Modi wave did not work in Odisha as the party win only one lok-sabha seat out of 21 and 10 seats in assembly election out of 147 seats in 2014. Despite being the rich state in natural resources, it is one of the poorest states of India because the government fails in proper allocation of funds, lack of accountability in state, less participation of all sections in democratic politics. These aforesaid problems and government's hard policy to curb the naxal movement give more strength to the naxal movement.

The Chapter on '*Puducherry Politics: Politics in an Exceptional Union Territory*' by L. Premashekhara, acknowledges that the union territory of Puducherry was small in term of geographical size, population, income, legislature and a cabinet with small powers. Despite these realities the Puducherry evolved a political culture that is free from communalism, political violence, linguistic chauvinism and other features that haunt almost every part of India. The electoral politics was mainly dominated by Indian National Congress both in Lok Sabha and legislative assembly. Premashekhara analyses that due to the limited powers the Union territories legislature functions in a constrained democratic framework, this limitedness of power is the base of statehood demand. This issue was passed a number of times by legislature. This is also only one issue which dominates the politics but not much seriously. Premashekhara acknowledges that Puducherry achieve the status of union territory due to the intervention of French institutions.

Ashutosh Kumar in his Chapter '*Punjab: Politics of a Borderland State*' broadly discusses about the effect of partition on Punjab which caused lose of land and two rivers and about the carving of Haryana from it and some districts to Himachal Pradesh. Kumar highlights that the issue of identity

politics was very active after partition which results in demanding the Punjabi suba by Akali Dal on the basis of Punjab, Punjabi and Punjabiat. He analyses that the demand for autonomy in the form of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution failed as it was considered as communal and threat to national unity and integrity. This rejection gave the birth to militancy in Punjab which results in mass killing and human rights violation and gave the birth of an idea of Khalistan. Kumar highlights that due to the end of militancy, the normalcy came in the state which reflected by participation of people in 1993 Panchayati raj elections. With the coming of normalcy in the state, the Akali Dal changed its political agenda from identity politics to developmental issues. He acknowledges that after the normalcy in the state, the governments fail to provide fruitful results in economic sectors which reflected in the increased number of suicides among the framers.

B.C. Upreti in his writings *'State Politics in Rajasthan'* highlights the trends which emerged in Rajasthan after its formation. The regional parties did not rise up in the state which results that the issues of development, regional language and autonomy have not influenced the politics and governance of Rajasthan as they did not receive any support from the political parties. Upreti acknowledges that the political leaders of Rajasthan have not been able to rise above regional level and caste identity which consequences imposition of leaders from the central leadership that sharpened the factional politics of the political parties. The caste dominance on electoral politics was very high in the state as no party was in a way to ignore caste as a political factor. The dominance of caste was not upper caste dominance but the smaller castes have demanded political space as well. Upreti mentions that the politics of reservation was very much active from the last two decades and both parties INC and BJP tries to play politics over it. The economic development in the state was not impressive due to the lack of a clear vision of development.

In the Chapter *'State Politics and Political Participation in Sikkim'* A.C. Sinha, broadly discusses about the struggle of the Nepalis underdogs for an honourable life which was actively supported by various leaders especially Sonam Tshering, Dimik Singh Lepcha, Kazi Lhendup Dorji Kazi and by their ethnic intelligentsia. These anti-colonial and anti-fedual movements were intertwined and were subverted by the elites. This continued for two decades from 1953 to 1973 and was used by Nepamul leaders to educate themselves in the field of democratic struggle; results Sikkim merger with India. Sinha analyses that Sikkimese have completely been Indianised within three decades, turn Indian democracy into a vibrant competitive electoral

and representative system by active participation. The state has an image of a well administered state from British period till these days. Sinha highlights that the trend of Sikkism electorate is that they give the leader a long period of time to fulfill their expectations, once they switch to another leader they never look back to old leaders.

Dravidian State Politics: From Social Reforms to Populism, in this chapter P. Ramajayam broadly discusses about the state politics which travelled from radicalism to populism in three phases. Ramajayam acknowledges that the first phase of Tamil Nadu politics was politics of culturalism with ideological base and tries to implement welfare schemes. The process of iconisation of personalities was started by naming different places, institutions and social welfare schemes. The objective of this was to strengthen the non-Brahmin social base. The process of upliftment of weaker communities was also started through reservation and representation in the politics and administration but the major share went to OBCs and dalits. He explores that the second phase was started by the existences of class structure among the OBCs, the emergence of Hindutva and the dilution of ideology which diverts politics of Tamil Nadu. The then CM Ramachandrah keeps these issues aside and starts privatising basic education, encouraging armed struggle in Sri Lanka by projecting Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as sole voice for the island Tamils. Ramajayam analyses that the impact of film Industry was very much high on Tamil Nadu politics. The influence of national politics was very much on Tamil Nadu politics during 1990s. During this decade the emergence of various castes based organisations, making the electoral politics a place of hard bargaining and negotiations. Ramajayam explores that the third phase was started with the All Iindia Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)-Congress Alliance in 1991 which swept away the Dravidian ideology; was the turning point of Tamil politics. The rise of Hindutva and culmination of OBC power pressed Dalits and Minorities to rethink their social alliance with Dravidian politics.

Monisankar Misra in his chapter captioned *'State politics in Tripura; A Synoptic View'* broadly discusses about the history of Tripura from Manikya dynasty ruled Tripura for 600 years till merger with India in 1949. The expectations of almost all associations were very high about all round development with merging into India but it creates a number of problems. Misra acknowledges that the politics was predominantly dominated by the questions of rehabilitation of Bengali refugees, emergence of communal politics and movement for the status of full-fledged statehood during first three decades of its existence. The electoral politics was dominated by

Congress and form successive governments till 1977. But due to the mis-governance, corruption and allegations of nepotism, decision of de-reserve the tribal reserve wiped out Congress clearly and helped the left front to form the government. The left front recognised Kokborok as second official language and establishes Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council in March 1979 and held Goam panchayats. These measures could not stop insurgency but takes a turn which results the 'Mandai Massacre' in 1980 creates ethnic riots in Tripura. Misra highlights that Congress-Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti (TUJS) coalition restored political power from left front in 1988, dissolves Goam panchayats and signed a peace accord with Tripura National Volunteers (TNV). During 1990s the law and order situation was deteriorated because of insurgency and many parts were declared disturbed. In 1993 left front came into power and revitalise the Panchayat Act but fails to control the tide of insurgency. All the tribal political parties came together and form Indigenous Nationalist Party of Tripura in 2002. Misra assesses that the peace came in the state with the help of strategies adopted to deal with insurgency, friendly relations with Bangladesh, declined support from various insurgent groups, splits and surrender and rehabilitation of refugees. With the returning of peace the left front continuously form government from 2003 to 2013 made one party dominance system in practical terms. Misra acknowledges that due to the lack of infrastructure, easy and comfort connectivity with rest of India hurdles the economic growth of the state.

In the Chapter on *'Uttar Pradesh: The Story from the Hindi Heartland'* by Vinny Jain, discusses the two parts of the state politics of Uttar Pradesh (UP). In the first part the author says that the politics of Uttar Pradesh is dominated by regional party Samajwadi Party (SP) because it has greatest presence in the state of UP. The author assesses that in 2012 assembly elections the state saw an essentially four cornered contest between the two national parties, the Congress and BJP and the two regional parties the SP and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). The contest was mainly between the regional formation with the BJP and the Congress assigns an inferior rank to playing their third and fourth fiddle. This indicated that the prime ministership in India is still fleeting through the state of Uttar Pradesh. She acknowledges that the Congress has been steadily declined in Uttar Pradesh for decades and is currently a less performer in the state. The decline of the Congress in the Uttar Pradesh was mostly associated to the walking out of various caste groups from the Congress fold in favour of caste based parties such as SP, BSP, RJD and BJP, all the parties walked away the composition of the Congress. The author highlights the rise of BJP and the skills it adopted

to increase its electoral base becomes an important topic in the study of political parties in India in recent years. The BJP makes an effort to shape the unity among Hindus. The author further explores that with 39.7 per cent of the votes and 75.7 per cent of the seats, the BJP scores the best performance recorded by any party in Uttar Pradesh since the Janta Party victory in 1977. In the 16th Lok Sabha election the extraordinary rise of BJP in the state has diminished all other parties to single digits ranging from five (SP), zero (BSP). Jain acknowledges the rise of different regional parties, their voter base and their performance in different elections. In the second part she shows the equilibrium movement in the politics of state over the last 20 years, lacking sequential growth support movement, mobilise the population against the government, has had an adverse effect on the economy, the growth story and the general well being of the state, all of which have been rapidly declining. In the end, the author explains that the state is now continued as the most developing area of the nation, economically as well as culturally.

Pampa Mukherjee, in her Chapter *'Politics and Development in a New State: The First Decade of Uttarakhand'* divides her paper in three parts, in the first parts she highlights the geographic and social structure of the state. The state is mostly hill as 92.60 per cent land is under mountains cover. The major castes are Brahmins and Rajputs which together constitute 70 per cent of the population. The economy of the state is based on agriculture on rural areas, industry on plains, tourism and small scale industries. In the second part Mukherjee highlights the *Andolan* (mass movement) for separate state for Uttarakhand. The phenomena can be traced from colonial period. Uttarakhand is the only state which demanded separate state on the basis of economic concerns. Mukherejee acknowledges that during the first phase the movement was supported only by urban elites; in second phase number of social protests raised on socio-economic issues and economic-political discrimination; in the third phase movement reached high with the 'Mandal Commission' 27 per cent reservation to OBCs. In the third part Mukherjee mentions that the electoral politics was dominated by Congress and BJP instead of only one regional party Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD) in the state which failed to come in power. The economic policies of the successive governments for development were stressed mostly on plain areas which resulted separate economic policy for hill regions. Uttarkhand is among first states which give 50 per cent reservation to fair sex in all levels of Panchayats. Mukherjee also highlights the Village Forest Joint Management

implemented by Forest Department and its impact on communities of Uttarkhand.

The last chapter *'State Politics of West Bengal: Contemporary Scenario'* is written by Amiya K. Chaudhuri. In this chapter the author says that the politics of West Bengal is different from other states of India, like the rise of radical political ambience, leftist parties in different variant and the growth of different regional sentiments. Chaudhuri divides the politics of West Bengal into three phases, in the first phase the dominance of singe party from 1947 to 1966 and from the 1972 to 1977 in which eminent work of the then Chief Minister of West Bengal and the effects of partition on West Bengal was highlighted. Author also says that after the end of the one party dominance six parliamentary elections were conducted and in these elections, the minority coalition's government emerges in India and in many states. From 1977 the rise of CPI(M) was clearly shown both in central elections and in the state elections of the West Bengal. It becomes possible through the showing of sympathy to refugees and by supporting their demands in the state and in the centre level. However Chaudhuri acknowledges that 2008 assembly elections proves watershed for the Bengal politics because the certain common properties were characterised, political development, and the proper relation between the political parties was made. But the rule of the CPI(M) starts to an end after the protests start in the Nandigram and in the Singur against the government policies and programmes of development. In the elections of the 2011 the CPI(M) faced the humiliating defeat and the new phase of Bengal politics started with the rule of Trinamool Congress (TMC) under the leadership of the Mamata banargee. In this phase, the dispute with the Gorkha National Liberation Front were solved, also the menace of moist problems comes to an end, the work for human development has taken momentum.

After reviewing all the 29 papers of this book, it can be stated that this is good attempt to understand the factors that changed the whole scenario of Indian State politics. This volume *State Politics in India,* is a noteworthy academic contribution in the existing body of knowledge for the scholars, academicians and members of civil society.

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