# Breaking the *Daridrata Chakra* Building Capabilities of Vulnerable Groups in Odisha

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## Introduction

Identifying root causes of poverty, and building capabilities of people are central rights-based activities to break through the *daridrata chakra*, or the cycle of impoverishment. In this paper, we analyse root causes of poverty identified by non-governmental organisation (NGO) workers in Odisha, and capability-building activities adopted by NGOs to alleviate vulnerabilities associated with poverty.

Non-state organisations, and their active engagement in development activities, are crucial for people's rights to entitlements to become a reality. Scholars (Dreze 2002; Sen 2004; Sengupta 2007; Bebbington et al 2007; Nelson & Dorsey 2008) have discussed in detail the important role of non-state organisations in furthering the cause of a human rights' approach to development. Sen (2004) argues that human rights induce obligations on agents who are in a position to help, promote or safeguard the freedoms of human beings. Furthermore, "some recognised human rights are not ideally legislated, but are better promoted through other means, including public discussions, appraisal and advocacy" (Sen 2004: 319-320). Public discussions, which are unobstructed, and an interactive process, is possible in a political environment where a reasonably free flow of information and uncurbed opportunity to discuss differing points of view can be achieved. Such an environment, Sen contended can best flourish in democracies.

Elsewhere, Dreze (2002) argued that in spite of strong institutional foundations, an absence of public discussions on social issues can make a mockery of democracy. Public discussions are central to a robust democracy, and all agents with the capacity to support human rights must do so through advocacy, open discussions and information sharing. Society, according to

Sengupta (2007), consists of many interacting agents such as corporation, non-government organisations, community-based and faith-based organisations, women's groups, and international bodies, all of which are duty-bearers and share the obligation of the State to ensure rights of rights-holders. Furthermore, Sengupta argues that although the state is the primary duty-bearer, "it cannot deliver the right on its own without taking into account the actions of all concerned social agents" (2007: 329).

In our analysis of development activities undertaken by NGOs in Odisha, we have selected two rights-based development activities of NGOs, namely, identifying root causes of vulnerability of marginalised groups, and capability-building for empowerment. For a detailed discussion on a longer list of elements of rights-based approaches to development, refer to Uvin (2004), and Gready and Ensor (2005). The two development activities were chosen after a careful examination of the above-mentioned discourses on the basic elements of rights-based approaches to development. It was important to highlight why and how NGOs chose certain development activities based on their understanding of the root causes of vulnerabilities in the regions where they were working, and who the most vulnerable and marginal groups were. Once the marginal group, and the primary cause of its vulnerability, both, were identified, it was then possible for the NGO to initiate other rights-based development activities.

## *Selected non-government organizations*

There were two aspects in the selection of NGOs for the study which were important for the study. One was the type of development intervention undertaken by the NGO which ranged from actions in response to a natural disaster, or development projects. The second was their geographical location in order to be able to cover rural and urban areas in the study.

The six state level NGOs selected for this study were Peoples Cultural Centre (PECUC), Right to Food Campaign (RtFC), Society for Women Action and Development (SWAD), Vasundhara, RUCHIKA, and Centre for Action Research and Documentation (CARD). RUCHIKA works with urban slum-dwellers (also termed as villages of Salia Sahi, and Dumduma). Vasundhara is based in Bhubaneswar and works on issues related to forest rights with forest-based communities across the state. CARD works with the women in the villages of Tangi block of Khorda district, and SWAD works with communities in Satyabadi and Gop blocks of Puri district. PECUC has been engaged in

processes of empowering women for two decades through networking amongst different communities across Khorda district. The Odisha Campaign office was set up by the independent Commissioners appointed by the Supreme Court of India in Bhubaneswar, Khorda district with the aim to review and monitor the implementation of the provisions under the food entitlement programs in the whole state. In addition, interviews with development practitioners working with international NGOs (especially Action Aid and Practical Action) provided significant information on how rights-based activities were operationalised by their partner local NGOs in the selected districts.

The primary causes of vulnerability differed with the context in which an NGO was working, and it ranged from landlessness, lack of access to basic public services such as potable water, toilets and sewage disposal, child abandonment, an absence of conflict resolution bodies at village level, to social inequalities based on caste and gender. The ultimate aim of the development intervention of the NGOs was to build capabilities of the vulnerable poor so that they would be able to undertake the responsibilities of the tasks themselves in the near future.

### Urban slums

As a result of poverty, and landlessness, there is an increase in seasonal migration of the poor in Odisha. Most poor migrants travel to neighbouring states with the help of contractors to work as brick kiln labourers and on construction sites. The seasonal migrants are some of the poorest and the most vulnerable, and according to Action Aid program officer Nayak, they bear a triple burden being landless, migrants, and susceptible to exploitation by unscrupulous human traffickers. Others such as program coordinator of Jal-Jungle-Jameen, Sahu said that if the seasonal migrants were given land rights, it would be the first step in addressing the problems of bonded labour or selling children to human traffickers to feed the rest of the family.

Evidence from the field suggested that the main reasons for a move to urban slums are: the possibility of daily wage labour; immediate cash payment for work which may not be the case in villages; facilities such as electricity in urban areas; and respect for labour compared to villages where caste and class restrict poor families from engaging in traditionally different labour. According to RUCHIKA community mobiliser Senapati, in 2000, RUCHIKA surveyed the living conditions of slum dwellers in *Dumduma, Kargil basti, Salia Sahi, Maali Sahi and Shikharchandi bastis*, and concluded that one of the primary

reasons of vulnerability to communicable diseases was open defecation due to a lack of sanitation facilities.

> *The State has no welfare programs on water and sanitation facilities for slum dwellers similar to those in rural areas. It is difficult to initiate and maintain toilets, sanitation and water projects without continuous funding, which leaves poor slum dwellers vulnerable to poor undignified living conditions. This is especially challenging for women.* (Senapati)

A second reason for being vulnerable in urban slums was the fear of constant eviction from urban lands by private and state agencies. Discussing the complexities involved in owning land in urban slums, RUCHIKA program officer Dwivedi said that although landownership was crucial for poor people for survival in urban slums, it was unfeasible for the state government to grant land pattas to everyone who demanded it.

> *Land ownership is a complex issue in Odisha, and the increasing number of slum dwellers, for example, from 50,000 families to 75,000 families in 2010 has made it difficult for the State to concede to their demands. However, the ownership of land is central to food security and well-being for poor urban slum families, and they are demanding patta for the land where they are living. And why not? After all they, not the Sarkar, cleared the forests and settled there.* (Dwivedi)

In urban slums, capability-building activities thus ensured people's engagement in the construction of roads, management of the waste-management centres, filling and repairing water tanks, administering sewage and drainage systems. In some cases, poor communities themselves were encouraged by NGOs such as RUCHIKA to invest a small amount of money to maintain and cover the costs of repair to infrastructure that was essential to their daily lives. Through contributions of materials wort0 Rs.1400 from the community, the construction of toilets in the primary school in *Salia Sahi* slum with an overhead rainwater harvesting tank was completed. Following the success of the project, the 60 families residing in the slum expressed an interest in having piped water to their homes, and collected Rs.1000 from each family to have taps and pipes linked to their homes from a communally owned water tank in the slum. According to RUCHIKA development practitioner Rashmi, the residents also pay a sum of Rs.20 per month per

household as a contribution towards the maintenance and usage charges of the water services. In 2007-2008, a committee was established by the women of the local Self Help Group (SHG) to take overall responsibility for decision-making on all matters related to the maintenance of the water tank.

According to Dwivedi, building capacities also involved training community members to repair and maintain hand-pumps, water tanks and use the tool box, to use sensors which signal the level of water in the tank well in advance before it is empty. In 2010-2011, RUCHIKA organised a series of workshops to help communities comprehend the complex nature of building and maintaining sanitation and waste disposal systems (see Box 1). The workshops emphasised good hygiene practices, and the reasons behind the spread of common diseases.

> *RUCHIKA was instrumental in initiating discussions on the links between sanitation and health of the slum-dwellers. An important factor was the availability of running water, and building capacities of the community in technical repairs. With the help of our donor Practical Action, we have been able to train locals as technicians and do other odd jobs themselves.* (Dwivedi)

**Box 1**

*Dukhini Hasada is a Santhal tribeswoman from Mayurbhanj district, and had been a resident of SaliaSahi slum for the last 27 years. In the initial years, she contends that life was very difficult because her family was displaced from the forest lands, and as a migrant living in the urban slums which were not recognised as a legitimate homestead grounds by the State. In 1995, she joined a local self-help group (SHG) which the NGO Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD) had initiated to support women's income-generation efforts through savings of Rs.20 per month to be able to fund for immediate family needs. Eventually, through her perseverance, she became the president of many SHGs, and of the SHG federation of (145 SHGs), and maintained their cash register. She organised women locally for many social causes including the anti-arrack events. She also became a social worker, stood for elections to become Ward Member of the slum, and eventually bought 5 guntha land in the slum, and has given many homes on rent for Rs.1500 per month. She has also constructed public toilets in her block of small houses, and is vigilant about the water tank overhead which was constructed with the financial and technical support of*

> *RUCHIKA.We are trained to repair taps, tube wells and water tank leakages. The slum owns a toolkit box for repairs, and is easily accessible to us if there is a breakdown. (Hasada)Challenges remain as the land Hasada owns, and rents out to tenants, belongs to the state government, namely, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, and she does not have patta or deeds to the land, according to Senapati. Other slum dwellers in Salia Sahi have also made written requests to the government for homestead plot on the land they were already settled in. Training and enabling vulnerable people to identify, and find solutions to, problems strengthens peoples' decision-making capabilities, as well as provides a sense of ownership over communal resources.*

## Natural disasters

Natural disasters such as floods and cyclones in coastal Odisha impact upon the vulnerability of poor landless communities. Most NGO activities in the coastal regions were initiated in response to the devastation followed by the 1999 Super Cyclone. In their activities towards building disaster risk reduction (DRR) capabilities of villagers facing floods, PECUC field officer Upma narrated how their first reaction to the 1999 cyclone was to dam the overflowing river and create shelters for the displaced people. This was done by involving women's self-help groups to dam the river with sacks of sand and planting fruit trees. Shelters were created in common spaces such as schools and panchayat offices where meals were communally cooked and shared. The second concern was to create alternative livelihoods especially for the landless as those with land could go back to farming eventually and make themselves food-secure. Landlessness in many cases led many families to start trucking, and get involved in other local businesses. Panchayat ward member Archana Sahu said that her family had wished to get involved in plantation work but the Horticulture department asked for land *pattas* which they didn't possess. As a result, her family begun looking for alternative sources of livelihood, and members of the extended family got involved in setting up cycle shops, *paan* (betel nut) shop and truck loading business.

> *We were ruined by the cyclone. When the Horticulture department demanded proof of land ownership, we realised we had none, and therefore had to figure out how to earn a livelihood. We were devastated but slowly got involved in small businesses locally.* (Sahu)

Other international NGOs such as Concern Worldwide intervened by building local capacities, providing a link to government development activities,

and coordinating with all stakeholders to sustain its efforts in DRR (Bhatt e al 2010). It partnered with the Odisha Institute of Medical Research and Health Services in an 18 months' project to strengthen disaster preparedness of panchayats in Cuttack district. 300 villages and 60 SHGs were trained in First Aid use, and 10,000 saplings were planted to counter a cyclone impact.

Describing their strategy to facilitate capability-building of communities in Satyabadi block, SWAD official Bandhu said that building mutual trust amongst villagers, and with SWAD, was their foremost concern. Trust was achieved through the formation of governance forums, and discussions within the forums. According to farmer Laxmidhar Palle, through the meetings in the governance forums, members began a dialogue with each other on their basic needs, and with SWAD, to find innovative solutions together for increasing food security and to find long-term solutions to reduce impact of annual floods.

> *When the annual floods came, we had to wade through the water for 2 kilometers at least to reach a dry area. The nearest safe space at Balibaata village used to get very crowded, and with the help of SWAD, we decided that we needed to build local community shelters from incessant rains, cyclones, and raise our homesteads to higher levels to protect against floods. In these governance meetings of the Forum planned by SWAD, we also decided we must have more than one crop a year to increase food security, and therefore it was decided to have a rabi crop.* (Palle)

Disaster management activities of SWAD meant enabling people to cope with annual floods, lessen losses incurred by floods, and learn to be resilient to natural disasters. In terms of activities, it meant preparing them to evacuate to safer spaces such as raised mounds of earth, high lands, and create floaters made of plants. It also meant, according to Bandhu, that there will be a plan to deal with post-disaster impact which was shared with the communities through model demonstrations, plan preparation and implementation on a participatory basis by taking villagers into confidence, and ensuring their interventions were village specific, and in accordance to what the priorities outlined by the communities. For example, in Sakhigopal, the stems of sturdier plants were tied together as rafts, and kept in homes for use during floods to enable people and their cattle to keep afloat. In schools such as Padmapur Prathamic Primary

School (PPS), based on their meetings with the school authorities, SWAD initiated planting of Bangeria plants to promote soil conservation and lessen erosion during and after floods.

> *People should know, be able to voice their needs, and their own level of involvement. Simple steps such as raised mounds were created in the villages where people and cattle could perch themselves during floods. Common community spaces such as schools and panchayat offices were also built on higher land patches for purposes of shelter during long term floods, or cyclones.* (Bandhu)

In Gop block, the issue of potable water was a central concern for the communities because the annual floods led to an increase in groundwater salinity, and made it muddy. Through detailed discussions and studies on feasibility, for instance in Gabadiha village, in response to village needs, SWAD initiated a lift-irrigation project. This was directed towards solving problems of irregular supply of electricity, drinking water, clearing the drainage system, supply water to the closest points to people's homestead land and to the school building. The proposal and the feasibility study were submitted to the Odisha Lift Irrigation department through the gram panchayat of Gabadiha village, which gave the responsibility to the community. In Achutapur Kandisahi village, SWAD tackled the issue of salinity and traces of iron in drinking water by first organizing a village meeting and then reaching a solution whereby the villagers dug a well with a depth of 40ft to access clean water. In another instance, under the Sujaldhara Project for accessing drinking water for Satyabadi village, people dug bore-wells, and piped the water to water points built in common spaces (instead of connecting it to homes) where households collect water according to their needs.

One of the important characteristics of sustainable and capable communities is being able to generate finances locally with the ultimate aim of becoming self-reliant. Livelihoods interventions are crucial in disaster preparedness. With the help of SWAD, Sakhigopal village community created the *grama kotha* Fund (village building funds) which enables them to collect funds to clean their ponds, plant coconut plants on community land for local use, and organise cultural activities to keep the community together. The *gram kotha* fund also mobilizes farmers to plant lentils like *muga daali, biri*, and *kolata* between paddy seasons to improve food security in the lean season and

to cope with food needs during heavy monsoons. According to farmer Palle, the community decided to invest in coconut plants which is native to the region and is also widely cultivated by the community, by planting it alongside paddy crops. The wide palm leaves of the coconut plant are used for thatched roofs, fodder and fuelwood, and its fruit shell has varied uses such as capturing moisture and as protection against silting on river banks.

### Caste-based vulnerabilities

In parts of Odisha, vulnerability of the poor had a caste dimension. In Sakhigopal village of Gop Block, for example, all land is owned by Brahmins (high caste), and the farming is done by the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Other Backward Caste (OBC) groups. Sakhigopal is close to the temple town of Puri, and land around this town is owned by the priestly caste (*Brahmins*) which was given to them for services rendered to the Jagannath temple by the erstwhile Rulers of Puri. According to Bandhu, land ownership by the dominant priestly caste also has implications on access to water points, wells, agricultural subsidies, political power, and social status which meant that the lower castes were discriminated against. Furthermore, the proximity to the sea makes it vulnerable to the impact of the super-cyclones, especially flooding (as occurred in 1999, 2012 and 2013). For the SC and OBC communities, flooding meant no work, and thus led to migration in search for livelihoods. Community mobiliser Behera said that SWAD worked at two levels to address vulnerabilities, namely, enabling communities to be flood resilient, and challenging prevalent caste related land ownership and social inequalities.

> B*eing landless and belonging to the lower caste was a double-whammy for those affected annually by floods, and periodically by cyclones. (*Behera)

Grassroots workers in urban slums contend that rural areas are still governed by social taboos revolving around caste, class, gender and ethnic orientations, and this can be challenging for poor families. One of the chief motivating factors for the lower caste communities' migration to the urban slum is to escape caste-based discriminations. Citing the example of *Mochisaahi* (cobblers' slum), Ruchika worker Rashmi argued that the cobbler community decided to shift from the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh to live in dignity, and earn a decent living. While traditionally, making and mending shoes was a lower caste occupation, the cobblers decided to migrate to spaces where caste will not restrict their livelihood options.

> *On the one hand, moving to urban lands to get rid of caste-labels was progressive, whereas on the other hand, living in situations of absolute poverty was an anti-thesis to such progress. However, the mochis' seemed to prefer the move to slums anyway. (*Rashmi)

Caste-related vulnerabilities have many dimensions. In areas such as in Tangi block, vulnerability intersects between caste- and gender-based discrimination. For example, in Badapokhara gram panchayat of Tangi block, a member of Ma Nagajhara SHG referred to the alcohol sellers by their caste, i.e., as *Khandayat* people, selling local arrack illegally in their panchayat. The women of the SHG came together and searched for the hidden arrack-making apparatus and bottles of arrack, which were eventually found by the women in the local pond. In another instance, the caste of the men involved in the illegal arrack business was given prominence by the women in group discussions to discuss its violent impact on the women in their villages. According to the CARD official Prabha, the *Sabara* tribe, having moved from the forests to the plains, have made *ganja* (cannabis) farming their livelihood, and sold it to the villagers in the plains. Although the SHGs and the panchayat leaders have been successful in stopping the cropping of *ganja,* and have shut down most of the local ganja outlets, the illegal selling of ganja continues.

> *It is interesting to note, however, that the SHG women belonged to the Other Backward Castes (OBC), Khandayat caste are lower castes, and the Sabaras' are Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities. The impact of the anti-arrack actions taken by the OBC women meant loss of livelihoods for the lower castes and the STs which may have had greater impacts on the women of those communities. That is unknown to us because we have not looked into it. Thus in many instances, the possibilities of reinforcing existing social biases and inequalities is prevalent.*
> (Prabha)

In the narratives discussed above, caste played an important role in the lives of the women. The blame for gender-based violence, in terms of being physically abused by their drunk husbands, was laid at the doorstep of men of other castes. While recognizing the importance of addressing GBV as a root cause of vulnerability poor women face, this study directs attention to a related issue, that of livelihoods of forest-based scheduled tribes [*Sabara* tribe in this

case] which have been displaced multiple times rendering them vulnerable to caste and ethnic discriminations in the plains.

*Vulnerable children*

In cities such as Bhubaneswar, marginal social groups include children abandoned by families due to extreme poverty, and migration. Drawing attention to the need to invest in protecting, promoting and capability-building of abandoned children, RUCHIKA decided to rescue, feed, and rehabilitate abandoned children.

> *To kill hunger, and escape from their living conditions, many abandoned children are addicted to a glue-like substance which is used to patch and mend punctured cycle tyres because this substance gives a nasha (high). Rehabilitating abandoned and orphaned children by providing safe spaces, meals, and livelihood skills is one of the ways this dependence on substance abuse can be tackled.* (Dwivedi)

The vulnerability of orphaned children is influenced by attitudes and social taboos attached to rehabilitating abandoned children. RUCHIKA faced many problems in housing the rescued children in different localities of the city because social taboos attached to orphaned and destitute children.

> *There are many difficulties in rehabilitating orphaned children, and social attitudes of ordinary people is one such challenge. In 16 years of operation, the Shelter has moved 17 times because neighbours did not want to have street children living amongst their colonies. RUCHIKA is working to transform the attitudes of ordinary people to become empathetic.* (Dwivedi)

After identifying migration and abandonment as a cause of vulnerability of poor street children, RUCHIKA started "Platform Schools" at railway stations. RUCHIKA started 11 such schools, and initiated six crèche programs in the urban slums of Bhubaneswar with an aim to facilitate a safe environment, encourage children to join their classes, and to provide 'running shelters' (open shelters) for those who are willing to stay. According to Dwivedi, there was a critical need for a child-rights-based intervention, because the poor, abandoned children were susceptible to different kinds of abuse, and therefore the first

step in the capability-building of such children was to rescue them and rehabilitate them.

> *Abandoned and orphaned children are poor, hungry and are traumatised by their circumstances. Many children are addicted to a glue-like substance used to patch and mend punctured cycle tyres because it kills hunger and gives a nasha (a high). Rehabilitation of abandoned and orphaned children by providing safe spaces, food, and livelihood skills is one of the ways this dependence on substance abuse is tackled.* (Dwivedi)

RUCHIKA established remedial schools to build capabilities of reading and writing for orphaned children where drop-outs from schools continued their tuitions in subjects such as English, Maths and Science, with funding from various donors. Citing individual cases, Dwivedi described how a boy called Sushant used to sing and beg on the streets till 1990 when he was given shelter and vocational training as a bell boy and room boy in hotels. He was later trained to drive vehicles, and is now a driver for the UK development agency DFID, and saved enough to start his own taxi service. Another boy, Giridhar Rane, was brought to the Running Shelter following the 1999 cyclone where he was provided with food and shelter, and he was able to use the educational facilities provided by the NGO, and eventually joined the Indian Air Force as an officer. A disabled child, Jaani Dushman, with third degree burns was left at the doors of the Shelter. Under the Rehabilitation Scheme of RUCHIKA, he trained in gardening and cane chair making, and is now a gardener at Mayfair Hotel which is a 5-Star hotel in Bhubaneswar. Now, he owns a house and has been able to finance plastic surgery of his face. Another boy opened a stationery shop in Puri town, and according to Dwivedi, such rehabilitation schemes are rights' based as they build capabilities through facilitating rights to education and livelihood of poor destitute children, most of whom have been rag pickers and beggars.

> *Sometimes, poor families leave their children at the doorsteps of the Shelter. Any number of reasons can drive poverty-stricken families to take such a harsh step. Our interest lay in providing protection to these abandoned children.* (Dwivedi)

> *There is a daridrata chakra (a cycle of impoverishment) because lack of food makes people migrate, and migration in turn leads*

> *to further impoverishment and denial of basic rights to their children.* (Mishra)

### Gender-based vulnerabilities

Interviews with NGO workers direct attention to the multiple forms of gender-based vulnerabilities. This section analyses women-specific issues which grassroots NGO workers were actively engaged in during field research.

NGO PECUC began working on gender-based violence in the 1990s, based on the belief that the root cause of vulnerability which women in Balianta block faced was their inability to voice their concerns. Once women were able to voice their concerns in public spaces, they will be able to tackle other socio-economic problems. The founder-director of PECUC, Anuradha Mohanty said she envisioned a community where women could sit at par with men in meetings at panchayat levels and where a woman could safely raise her voice.

> *The task was to mobilize women to collectively demand their entitlements, and therefore we decided to organize them around issues such as domestic violence, conflict resolution, sharing child care responsibilities, and community governance.* (Mohanty)

An important step in advocacy on GBV, for PECUC field coordinator Upma, was the organisation of the first monthly Special Mahila Gram Sabha on 29-30th November 2013 in the Jagannathpur Panchayat of Balianta block. At this meeting, according to field coordinator, Upma, village women collectively, for the first time, demanded that the state government must step-up its action against gender-based violence such as falling child sex ratios, female foeticides, and dowry related deaths. Their demands ranged from deployment of women officials at local police stations to ensuring that free medicines were made available to people. Collective leadership and collective responsibilities of women were primary strategies, used by PECUC, to reinforce social dignity and to challenge existing inequalities.

> *800 women congregated to discuss and take action on gender based violence, female-foeticide, female specific health challenges, and dowry demands. They put forward the daavi/ prastaav that they wanted female police officers in the local police station, and a female Protection Officer at the Block Office. The women also demanded that free medicines be*

> *made available in the local hospitals, especially for women,*
> *and the list of these medicines be hung in the walls of the*
> *panchayat office for people's information and benefit.* (Upma)

Discussing in detail on the reasons behind setting up PECUC, Anuradha said that one of the chief tasks PECUC decided to undertake was to support women's need to generate income for their families, especially in the aftermath of the cyclone. Economic empowerment of women through formation of self-help groups was an important strategy to achieve empowerment.

> *PECUC came into existence to enable women to understand*
> *self-respect, to make women self-sustainable by giving goats*
> *and supporting vegetable farming for own consumption and*
> *selling the surplus, to enable women to deal with financial debts,*
> *negotiate less interest rates on loans, to take responsibility and*
> *get involved in cyclone relief activities instead of waiting for*
> *state help, to enable women to participate in local panchayat*
> *elections, and encourage them to participate in the local palli*
> *sabhas. (Mohanty)*

Self-Help-Groups are used by the state and the NGOs in development activities for communities for spreading information on services and entitlements amongst the people. Getting the women involved in advocacy through trainings on government guidelines and policies related to infrastructure services and relating it the wider SHG federation at the block level is one of the strategies used by SWAD (SWAD 2012). NGO PECUC encouraged and enabled women in Balianta block to form self-help groups in order to generate income to help each other during times of needs such as weddings, hospital expenses etc. According to key informant, Upma, the positive impact of PECUC's advocacy is evident in the in the fact that the Women and Child Development department decided to grant subsidies and contracts to self-help groups created by PECUC because of the sustainability of those groups. Party politics was also a reason behind state support for SHGs, and PECUC made the groups aware of the politics around funds.

> *Sarkaar is running after the SHGs we created in the 1990s to*
> *be able to showcase them as examples of empowerment. For*
> *instance, the Maa Tarini Nari Shakti Swasahajya Goshti*
> *(MTNSSG) in Khunkar hamlet was created by PECUC, but*
> *now funded by the State under the Mission Shakti scheme.*

> *An added bonus was that during elections, the MTNSSG members received Rs.5000 each from the current Chief Minister before elections. It was common practice for political parties to tie up with different SHGs for votes by giving monetary donations under the guise of economic development funds. It was an added bonus for the women, an incentive to do better.* (Mohanty)

According to CARD director, Manju Prabha, gender based violence was most visible in the practice of female foeticide, which had led to a declining sex ratio in the Tangi area. The preference for a male child by many parents had led to the practice of sex determination tests, and female foeticides. Therefore, CARD directed its strategies towards changing attitudes of families towards raising a girl child to tackle gender based discriminations. One such strategy to tackle gender-based violence was to link with international celebrations of women's rights. For instance, the chief motive behind organizing the One Billion Rising (*Umadte Sau Karod*) event in Tangi in February 13th, 2013 was to link with women's organisations internationally to raise local awareness on issues of gender-based violence (GBV), especially female foeticide, child trafficking and dowry-related deaths. CARD had invited young school girls who argued for their right to life, education and employment in a public debate. At the event, the sub-collector of Tangi block furnished the numbers of dowry related deaths of newly married women and argued for the need to educate young girls and see girls as *kanyaratna* (girl gems), stressing the importance of investing in the education of the girl-child instead of investing in dowry collection.

An analysis of this submission shows that CARD gave importance to the finer details of their advocacy such as how and when issue-based events should be organized in order to have maximum impact on the community. According to Prabha, it was important to time the One Billion Rising public event at 2pm because the women would have completed their morning household tasks, the young girls had finished school hours, and the bazaar area was quieter. It was also a low cost meeting because public space was used. A marquee was used to provide shade, as well as created a landmark in the *bazaar* area. As observed during field visit, the event attracted a lot of attention from the passersby and the school children returning home after school. All women panchayat leaders participated in the event although it took them more than an hour to walk from their villages to participate in the event. The event had

numerable slogans on combating gender-based violence, songs stressing the importance of the girl child, and rewards for school girls for their achievements in sports and other activities in the local school. I found it significant to include such details of CARD activities to reflect upon the details which NGOs have are involved in while organizing an event. CARD was also engaged in conducting in trainings for landless women to find courage to speak in their meetings with *tehsildaars* for access to land *pattas*, according to CARD activist Giti.

SHGs have led women to become economically self-reliant, and has also led many to get involved in local political processes such as panchayat elections. Many others have joined the government administration as anganwadi workers.

> *Mulyapari re aasi jaayi thantu jadi eh scheme na thanta. Ebe saahajya paauchu. Kichi sanchay karuchu [we would have become daily waged labourers if it weren't for this scheme. Now we get some help. We are saving].* (SHG member)

In the villages of Tangi block, most women panchayat leaders trace their entry into political forums to their prior memberships of self-help groups initiated by NGOs like CARD. According to Sarpanch Mina Behera, Jaripada GP and Kalakaleshwar GP of Tangi Block, both have all women panchayats since 2012, and most panchayat members have been members of Self Help Groups initiated by CARD. Linking the initial formative years of the Maa Tarini SHG when the women were unsure of their SHG activities to recent panchayat elections, Behera said that their beginnings were humble but it led to long-term transformation of the lives of the women in the group.

> *We began with collecting a handful of rice as membership fees, and gradually collected cash (Rs.10 earlier, and now Rs. 100 per member annually) which enabled us to set up different businesses such as tailoring, pickle making, and other local food business. I remember when SHG Maa Gopaladev took a bank loan and bought goats to rear them for milk and other dairy products, but the goats died and they incurred heavy losses. However, we women never gave up. Maa Tarini SHG joined CARD in 2012, and has been actively participating in all its activities. I was a member of Maa Tarini SHG before becoming sabhamantri of the panchayat, and it is the active engagement in mahila goshti sahayaks (or SHGs) which has*

> *provided me and my saathins the opportunity to understand*
> *the process how to claim entitlements* (Behera)

Discussions with **CARD** and panchayat members at Tangi raised the subject of the need for public toilets for women in rural areas. It was evident that through their political role in the local panchayats women found their voice, and courage to act collectively and demand state-funds for investing in gender-specific needs such as toilets and rest-houses. According to Sarpanch Behera, It also gave them the courage to act collectively against gender-based violence especially combating female foeticide. This is evident in the women-led panchayats specific demand to build toilets and rest houses.

> *We have decided to use the state government funds to build*
> *two Rest Houses with latrines in each panchayat for the use of*
> *women, and ensure these are safe for us to use when we have*
> *to go to a different village for a meeting. Building rest houses*
> *will mean that we do not have to travel back home on the*
> *same night worrying about the night commute, safety and*
> *tiredness.* (Behera)

**CARD** is involved in creating sustainable women's livelihoods by encouraging poultry, goat and sheep rearing which has created valuable assets for the villages. Women have also been trained in alternative medicine practices using herbs, and have formed an organization, *Satej. Satej* runs a health clinic and has been able to check the spread of many local health problems like diarrhoea. The creation of livelihoods from locally available resources focuses on women's capability-building to generate income, and expand their capabilities to healthcare for immediate relief.

> *We have encouraged the plantation of fruit trees and sustainable*
> *horticultural practices. For example, we have promoted*
> *agricultural practices such as land plugging, seeding, use of*
> *organic fertilizers and pesticides using fish tonic which have*
> *enabled poor farmers to harvest crops on time.* (Prabha)

**CARD** has been instrumental in forming women's groups and training them to stand for elections in the local panchayats. Trainings included confidence building exercises to articulate demands of communities in political forums as leaders of panchayats. The underlying motive that if women in rural areas are not trained in politics and administrative affairs, the constitutional

reservation of 50% of panchayat seats for women will become meaningless, according to CARD district coordinator. Evidence from the field shows that empowering women with political authority as panchayat leaders has led to an impact on specific gender-based violence issues such as female foeticide, and domestic violence arising out of excess consumption of local arrack (alcohol). For instance, the women leaders of Jaripada panchayat intervened and saved five female foetuses in 2012 through dialogue with the families of the pregnant women, and by reporting the errant clinic to the police authorities. In another incident of gender-based violence, in 2011, the women of Maa Tarini SHG got involved in an anti-arrack incident whereby they tied up the husband of one of their members as a warning to stop drinking and physically abusing his wife.

> *Poor village women have been given constitutional rights to run village administration, and we think it is our primary duty to support them through trainings on what such a responsibility entails.* (SHG member)

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have discussed identifying root causes of poverty was a core concern of all non-governmental organisation workers. NGOs were specifically concerned with those sections of community that were marginalised by dominant groups. Root causes of poverty are contextual, complex and multi-dimensional. Food poverty, in urban slums, was combined with low levels of living conditions and this makes marginal communities such as migrant labourers more vulnerable to health risks. The vulnerabilities associated with children and women have been identified by other NGOs as more significant in their regions, and in need of long-term rights-based solutions. RUCHIKA focused on child rights to basic needs of food, health, safety and building capabilities to enable abandoned children a chance for a secure future. Evidence from the field points to multiple dimensions of caste related vulnerability of poor people in rural areas and in urban slums as well. In Tangi block, NGOs decided that the root cause of poverty was related to women's subjugation, female foeticide and gender-based violence. During the course of its development activities, the NGO discovered that the intersection of caste, tribe, and gender, complicated the issue of vulnerability. NGOs constantly discovered invisible links between different causes of vulnerabilities of marginal communities.

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# Food Security and Urban Poor :
# A case study of Varanasi

*Reena Baral, Anjoo Sharan Upadhyaya and Ajay Kumar Yadav*

## Introduction

Whereas the total population of India has increased only 2.7 (census of India 2011) times in last 50 years, the total urban population of the country has increased more than 4.5 times (census of India 2011 a). Along with the urban development there is a rapid development of slum population too[1]. According to a recent estimate of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, by 2017 India's total slum population will exceed 104 Million with Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, AP and MP having the largest slum population in the country (Indiaonlinepages 2015) (UP as per the census of 2011 is home to 62 lakh slum dwelling population) (census of India 2011 b). India has the dubious distinction of housing the second biggest[2] slum of Asia (Dharavi) (International Business Times 2013).

In mega cities (i.e. Population having more than 10 million people)[3] (census of India 2011c) of the country, slums have now become a permanent

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1. As per UN Habitat a slum is characterized by lack of durable housing, insufficient living area, lack of access to clean water, adequate sanitation and insecure tenure (http//www.unhabitat). Under Section-3 of slum area improvement and clearance act 1956, of India, slums have been defined as mainly those residential areas where dwellings are in any respect unfit for human habitation by reasons of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangements and designs of such narrowness or faulty arrangement of streets lack of ventilation light sanitation or any combination of these factors which are detrimental to safety, health and morals. A compact area of at least 300 populations or about 60-70 households can be recognised as slum by the Charge officer as 'Identified slums' (Census of India 2011b).

2. Biggest slum in Asia is Orangi in Pakistan

3. Mega Cities: Among the Million plus Urban Areas /Cities, there are three very large UAs with more than 10 million persons in the country, known as Mega Cities. These are Greater Mumbai UA (18.4 million), Delhi UA (16.3 million) and Kolkata UA (14.1million).

feature. The reasons have been manifold. Climate change and the consequent floods or drought, land pressure, ethnic conflicts, land acquisitions or the sheer temptation for the prospects of better earning and living have pushed and pulled populations to move from their usual abode in distant lands to the peripheries of cities. Whereas these populations seemingly remain to be 'outsiders' and their presence is looked upon as defiling the face of the city, they provide invisible fuel for the urban engine to keep chugging.

The slums of India have been categorised[4] under three divisions: Notified[5], recognised[6], and identified[7]. Amongst the three, the position of identified slums are worst in terms of employment, education, food, health, safety and legality as they have no legal status, thus entitlement of a slum according to the UN habitat report, slums have a majority of women who are taking the burden of affliction since long (UN-Habitat 2003). It is a form of cultural violence prevailing in the society that women should endure greater suffering to safeguard their families' wellbeing. Thus they easily become a subject matter of discrimination and injustice rampant in especially poorer population. In this respect food and nutrition are the major concerning areas related to women as undernourished and unhealthy female can't make her family mentally and physically fit to survive in the competing world.

Food security exists when people can obtain nutritionally sufficient and ethnically acceptable food in a manner that maintains human dignity (Beaumier and Ford 2010). The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life" (World Health Organisation 2015).

4. Three types of slums have been defined in Census 2011, namely, Notified, Recognized and Identified.

5. All notified are a sin a town or city notified as 'Slum' by State, Union territories Administration or Local Government under any Act including a 'Slum Act' may be considered as Notified slums

6. All areas recognised as 'Slum' by State, Union territories Administration or Local Government, Housing and Slum Boards, which may have not been formally notified as slum under any act may be considered as Recognized slums

7. A compact area of at least 300 populations or about 60-70 households of poorly built congested tenements, in unhygienic environment usually within adequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities. Such areas should be identified personally by the Charge Officer and also inspected by an officer nominated by Directorate of Census Operations. This fact must be duly recorded in the charge register. Such areas may be considered as Identified slums.

More recently in 2006 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed a more nuanced definition of food security wherein it defined food security and food insecurity under various categories (USDA 2014).

Food insecurity prevails when people are not able to access or secure nutritionally sufficient food that is culturally desirable at the intervals when human body requires. For the present paper, framework of a community case study of Beumier and Ford (2010) has been taken and focused on the capacity and consumption of food of the slum population of particular localities within Varanasi municipal limits.

Much work has been done on the nutrition and health of women in the various slum areas of the country (Kumari 2011; Choudhary 2002; National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau 2003). Food insecurity per se, amongst women of slum areas has not been studied. This study focuses to fill this knowledge gap.

*Methodology*

The Universe of this research is the Nagwa, Rajghat and Bajardiha slums of Varanasi. Out of these two (Nagwa and Rajghat) are recognized slums and, one (Bajardiha) is an identified slum.

Nagwa slum population which is adjacent to the famous Assi ghat, a very popular tourist destination of Varanasi, made all the more popular by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi from where he started his Clean India Campaign. The Bajardiha slum dwellers, mostly Muslims, engaged in either weaving work or rag picking and the Rajghat slum population is of Mallahs (the boat people).

The Nagwa slum population is around 200. Houses are constructed by individual residents on a privately owned land. In its neighbourhood is a recently constructed Ravidas park, but also a big drain known Assi Nullah, the nearby area which is densely populated is surrounded by multi story buildings. The condition of slum becomes miserable in rainy season when the drain starts overflowing due to flood and heavy water flow. In Nagwa, it was found that the average income of the respondents per house hold is 182 per day, one third of this amount was spent on rental for the shanty that they lived in. 53.33% of the women of this locality were domestic servants being paid anywhere between rupees five hundred to twelve hundred per house, per month, 6.66% were small shop owners and 20% were housewives.

The Rajghat New Basti slum consists of around 450 people and is situated at the bank of river Ganga in between Khirkiya ghat and Rajghat. Often their houses are destroyed either by municipal authority or frequent floods. In Rajghat it was found that either the slum women did not have any fixed jobs, were labourers or small shop owners (27.7%). Their employment was basically seasonal and market driven. Some were maid servants (13.88%). The average daily income of the household was around Rs 204.41

Bajardiha slum consist of around 600 people. It is situated near Khojwa market. It has majority of Muslim population. A large population has migrated from Murshidabad and nearby areas of West Bengal due to flood and environmental causes. They are mostly Rag Pickers and are Bengali speaking. Others are born and brought up in Banaras or nearby areas and are weavers by profession. It was found that the Bengali Muslim women and other family members were all rag pickers (61.53%), women from weaver community were engaged in their family business of weaving (11.53%) and others were not working outside their homes (19.23%). The average daily family income was around Rs 205.19

*Figure*



Source: Google maps        *Data Collection and analysis*

A mixed method approach was adopted to identify the food consumption patterns of this population. In the semi structured interviews (n=92) and through focus group exchanges (n=3) and interviews with key informants like store managers, civil supplies officials, education volunteers, Ward councilors (n=5), grocery store keeper (n=4), conducted over three seasons (May,June , October, November, 2016  January and February 2017). The study deciphered food insecurity prevalent in this community.

The research team consisted of four female and two male researchers, led by a tri lingual researcher (not necessitating a translator). Informed consent was obtained by all the respondents and attempts were made to adhere to all the hitherto prevalent ethical norms.

An interview and focus group guide identifying key themes (Table 4) was used to allow for flexibility in questioning while maintaining some structure. Focus groups were conducted to expand on data collected during interviews and to validate preliminary findings, with participants selected from interviewees. Confidentiality was preserved when demanded by the participant. Rigor was established using member checking, respondent quotes and triangulation of informants and methods.

*Table 1 socio economic characteristics orban slmome        n*

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**Table 4 Topics covered during semi structured interviews**

Key Themes          mes s ee

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**Table 3 Household characteristics of participan**

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*Results*

*Experience of food insecurity among slum women in Varanasi*

Participants in this study described experiencing food insecurity on a regular basis. More than half expressed being anxious about running out of food in previous year. 38% noted not having eaten enough at least once in the previous year. 13.04% said that very often they skip meal whereas 57.60 % accepted that sometimes they skip and reduce meals to let other members of their family eat first. 50% of women reporting a decrease in the access and availability of ration from ration shops.

*Determinants of slum women's food insecurity and external stress*

*Urbanization:*

0nly 27.1% respondents were indigenous rest 73% respondents had migrated to the city. The studies revealed a mix of push and pull factors that caused these communities to migrate to the urban areas of Varanasi. Climatic challenges, mostly floods caused 9.7 % of people to leave their usual abode (draught factor was absent, as most of the slum population migrated to Varanasi from the areas which were more prone to floods). Push factors such as poor livelihood (32.60%) worked strongly. Though land acquisition was not the main cause of movement, 11.47% cases of displacement were found. Similarly, in some cases the civil war of 1971 of erstwhile East Pakistan caused these Bengali speaking people to move from their usual place of abode. Pull factors such as better income and employment were other reasons for 40.21 % of the rural dwellers to get settled in Varanasi, as a general notion of Banaras prevailed that it is a place where all can find work as well as food prevailed. Similarly, 14.13 % were motivated by the presence of a family member or friend in the city. Marriage was also one reason for migration of 10 %women to move to the city.

All the respondents live under make shift temporary roofs, around the challenges of untreated waste and very unhygienic conditions. It is enough to find a place to 'hide their heads' as one respondent put it to be concerned about the surroundings.

Thus solid waste management has never been an issue and has not been attended so far. This has resulted in varied challenges like increase of untreated solid waste and a lack of concern for the same. The absence of virtually no

water policy has exposed these settlers to paying extra money towards running water that has almost everywhere been obtained by the land lord exploiting the ground water incessantly adding to the city's woes of water depletion (Upadhyaya 2013).

### *Hunger:*

In this context it becomes important that nearly all the women interviewed, expressed severe dissatisfaction with the quantity and quality of food that they were able to consume or serve their families. Experiencing hunger and having no avenue to satisfy the same was an expression that was used frequently. Hundred percent of our respondents mentioned that they have gone hungry for days in the past. There has also been a trend to keep the children fed anyhow. Dashmi (45 years) said: ".... They cannot go hungry. We are adults we understand....during rainy season there is less work, there are times that we still have to go hungry...there are also occasions that there is food only for the children, and we have to go hungry....When there is sufficient food only then all can eat. Children cannot go hungry. We can....When we came here we were told go to Banaras. There will be work as well as food. But here we had to work with no food" she says. Similarly Madhuchiranjivi Jha (35 years) says "Sometimes there is no food, sometimes I borrow money. If no food is left for me I never cook for myself. Only cook if it is less for my husband and children. Often I go to sleep hungry".

### *Inadequate quantity:*

Though the respondents did not admit of eating less than their requirement, their statements regarding the amount of grocery they buy reveals that the food they eat is less than thirteen hundred calories per person. In an average family of around 5 people having 3-4 children per family, daily consumption of wheat and rice is approximately 1.5 kg in all: Dal around 100 gram, oil 50 gram and vegetables around Rs 30-40 per day which mainly includes potatoes, and sometimes small amount of seasonal vegetables. Almost all respondents agreed that they do not buy milk for feeding their children regularly. They purchase very little quantity of milk daily for making tea etc. Even fruits are seldom purchased. "It is better to buy daal and rice for my children than to buy fruits. This will at least satisfy their hunger" says Neha, 27 years. "We eat properly once in a day only. The second time meal is usually replaced by tea only or chapati with salt and chatni" says Sharada Devi (45 years).

The common refrain is that we can only buy what we can afford. Food habit also depends heavily on culture and society. In Bengali slum families, rice, potato and fish are their staple food. The majority of Bengali women quoted price rise as the main cause of making do with rice and potatoes and sometimes Dal. In a family of ten (husband wife, five boys and three girls) potatoes and rice is consumed. 'We often buy half a kilo of potatoes that lasts us for two days' says Jharna Haldhar (35 years). "Due to inflation, the food intake has been affected a lot. Previously the wages were low but the grocery was cheaper, now it is vice versa. Previously we used to take meal thrice daily but now it has been reduced to twice a day", says Iliyaz Ansari, a local community leader of Bajardiha. The study revealed that 38.04 % women were adversely affected, 48.91 % were slightly affected and 8 % were not at all affected by inflation in terms of their food intake. The only coping mechanism was skipping their meal so that they could save for their family members. 13.04 % said that very often they skip meal whereas 57.60 % accepted that sometimes they skip meal.

Non vegetarian food is more appreciated in slums but due to shortage of money they can't afford it daily or weekly. Even its quality and quantity is not up to mark. "We like to eat meat and fish but can't afford it regularly" says Mala (29 years).

### *Quality of food:*

Quality of food is often very poor, a fact to which all the respondents admit. We no longer eat meat or fish. We just survive on 'ordinary food'.[8] Each day we buy ration. Half a kilo of potato, rice about one and half kilo, thirty gram oil, turmeric for two rupees, salt for three' Dashmi (45 years)' .

'My own income is not more than two and a half thousand. In this small money after the rental we can barely make two ends meet. My daughter who also lives in the neighborhood gives us some fish at times. Though I do not eat meat or fish but for my husband she brings it. Everything has become so expensive. There are also occasions that we sleep hungry" says Ganga (60 years). 'Ofcourse we want to eat nice food. But at times there is no time to eat at times no money,' says Alka Sarkar, (60 years).

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8. Ordinary food is the common refrain. Ordinary food can be anything from Dal and rice, Potato and rice to salt and rice or salt and roti. Good food almost invariably is fish/meat. Yet Carbohydrates remain to constitute the bulk of the plate.

A combination of conventional thinking and limited resources is responsible for the deteriorating condition of women in slums exponentially. As per Hindu tradition a female member of the family has to serve food to other family members before having her own meal and in order to manage monthly budget, she has to sacrifice her meal quite often in a month.

Paro, 30 years says "due to limited food I have to skip meal 3-4 days a month in order to manage my budget". "First I serve to my children then I eat" she adds. Similarly 39.13 % women eat at the end after serving all family members. Usually wife and husband eat meal together though wife is not allowed to eat before her husband. Even the younger generation women have been culturally trained to eat the last. First the children are served, then the men and women get to eat last. 'I try to serve all before I eat. I can do with food or without food too...when I fall sick, the doctor writes me vitamin tablets that I eat' says Anita, 35 years.

However during survey, in Muslim families this tradition was found absent. One of the Muslim male members from a weaver community explains, "We never force our wives to eat after us or with us. This is not in our religion. Usually we tell them and children to eat before we return home as our job has no fixed hours. It is much dependent on the availability of electricity. As long as electricity is there available in our workplace, we work. Sometimes we return home very late. So they eat before us."

Another bad practice which was found to be superimposed on women specially mothers and wives in Hindu families was that women usually do not eat before taking bath yet other family members enjoy their breakfast at the same time. It is so much culturally inherited by them that it has become their routine now and they never find anything wrong in it. Skipping breakfast and large quantities of tea intake on empty stomach is a common practice among the slum women (31.53%).

Long hours of gap between morning tea and lunch, and also between lunch and dinner are very common practice especially as a copping mechanism to manage their food requirements.

## Percentage of types of breakfast
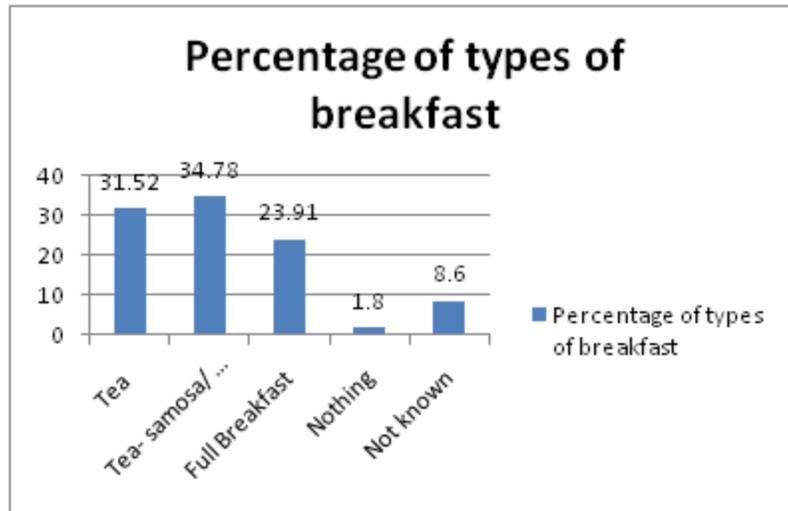


The graph shows that tea only or tea samosa is a common breakfast in slums for women. These type of breakfast commonly responsible for high acidity, gas and indigestion among women in slums of Varanasi.

## Percentage of gap (in hours) between lunch and dinner
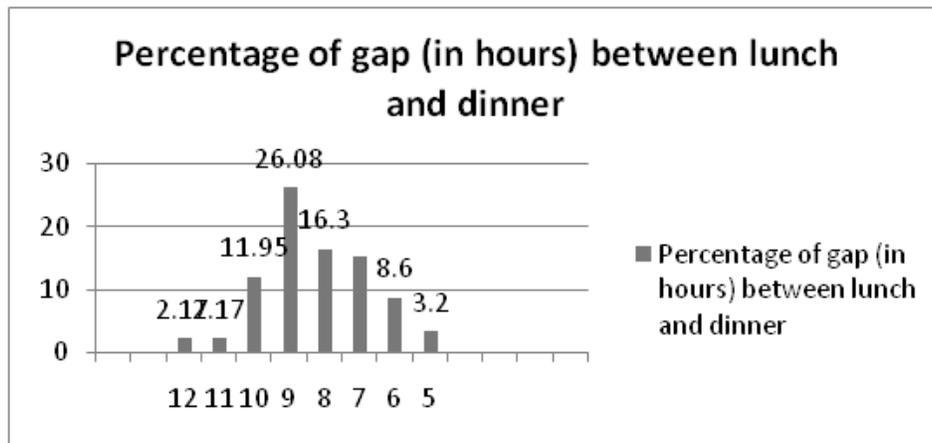


This graph shows that majority of women in the slum have an average gap of 9 hours between lunch and dinner which is a longer period, that causes acidity and other health problems among women in slums.

Majority of people had no money to buy food in bulks, not even from the government supply shops. It needs too much money to buy in bulk, so the purchases are done on a daily basis. "I purchase eatables daily. However, if there is no money we remain without food. Usually we eat the cheapest quality

of food grains" says Phulmati Devi, 40 years. For others the mass purchase of cereals and grains for 10-15 days on an average was quite common with a feeling that this could help them to survive better in the days of hardship. There have been significant price increases of late too. 'Till very recently potatoes would cost us five rupees per kilo. It costs thirty now' says Mamta, 45 years. Buying from the local grocery store for this small amount hardly leaves them the option of making a choice about quality. There were also evidences to show that the women would make their purchases after weighing the costs from comparing them between two or more stores. But it was price that was the decisive factor not the quality of the product that was ever in question.

Cost awareness and its comparison vary from community to community. In Muslim communities men bye the grocery items from local grocery shops as they are supposed to be sharper than women in calculations. Shiv Kumar Gupta the grocery shop keeper at Bajardiha says "although the slum people are uneducated they can calculate very well. Mostly male members or children purchase grocery. Female members come very seldom. Males are more intelligent. They compare the prices everywhere."

### Awareness of nutritional food

Though they can distinguish between 'good food' and 'ordinary food' we found their knowledge of nutritional value of food is limited to the visits they pay to a doctor when they fall sick. 'I was trained as a nurse (she has studied upto class nine), but my husband never allowed me to go work as a nurse. I know it is good to eat greens. You get protein. I do not take much medicines', says Annapurna Chakraborti, 60.

Most of the respondents considered good food as vegetables (42.39 %), rice (33.69 %), dall (36.95 %), fish (9.7%), meat (11.95%), roti (17.39%), milk (3.2%), chicken (7.6%), pudi (5.4%), kheer (2.17%). Most of the respondents considered rice, pulses and green vegetable as nutritional food. But others were either unaware or it was insignificant for them as their biggest issue was to survive rather than being healthy. "Whatever food we get is good for us. We can't judge it as good or bad because we have no other choice available" says Guddan 30 years.

When the respondents were asked to tell what food items they prefer to eat but can't afford due to shortage of money, 30.43% said that they liked but couldn't buy fruits. Similarly for 27.17% Meat, for 25% milk, for 13.04 % of

respondent fish, for 8.69% chicken, for 9% green vegetables, for 3.2% pudi, for 5.4% paneer, for 4.34% egg and dry fruits for 3.2% cream were preferred food elements but they were helpless as they had to manage their resources very carefully.

## Sharing:

In Bengali community despite living in the same neighbourhood for almost all their adult lives, and also belonging to more or less a similar ethnic origin, few (around 13.33%) respondents recalled having shared a meal or a food item in times of need. Our analysis is that the level of poverty is so acute that sharing and caring is no longer practiced. Moreover, there is also a sense of shame that constraints them from sharing or borrowing. However, in other neighborhoods sharing was more common in comparison to Nagwa. In Rajghat it was 28.20% and in Bajardiha 50% respondents practiced sharing. In general 14.16% of respondents said that they share or barrow food and money from neighbors and community. 11.9% said that they share food and money within their relatives or close friends and (57.60%) said that they never shared anything with anybody.

## Solid waste:

"What will our solid waste be? What things do we buy that we will have refuse? What will we keep and what will we throw away? My son works as a labor. There are times he does not get any work. I work as a house maid for six hundred only. Even the fire is lit in my house irregularly. When there will be something to cook only then we will lit the fire" says Durga Sarkar (60 years) when asked about waste management. 97% of the respondents stated that they throw their trash on the road or in the main drain. They were never trained in recycling of solid waste and so there is no awareness of the same too.

## Dignity:

Of all the people that we interviewed the woman who claimed she earned more than five hundred per day would beg on the Ghats and eat where the beggars would get food from some charitable foundation. But all will not take this road. 'In the cities either the beggars can survive or the very rich. I cannot work against my dignity' says Annapurna Chakroborti, 60, who would often go hungry as there is no support for her.' 'I was married off at the age of nine to a man who was 22 years my senior and also blind. I have suffered a lot in

life. May no human being suffer as I did". Similarly Arti, 30 years says "I started begging at the age of 16. My family shifted to Rajghat around 15-16 years back due to land displacement by Government. Even after being married I and my in-laws have to beg in order to earn our livelihood as my husband is not well to do and even shares very less income with family. My husband works as a sweeper in roadways but usually does not give us as more... Life of a woman is not so easy. My husband does not give me money easily. He often beats me and spends his salary on drinking alcohol. Often I can't eat because of tension that how will I manage my household and feed my children" a narrative that is shared by many women.

### Civil supplies support:

About 70% of the respondents had a ration card (yellow) where they are entitled to buy grain, fuel oil, sugar and rice at less than the market price. Daily pressure of work, non availability of enough spare cash and the unpredictability of the supplies all work against the convenience of not being in a position to avail of the facility. More than 30% of respondents were thus reluctant to buy food items from the government ration shop. Moreover, they also did not have the below poverty line cards (white or the AAY pink cards) where the price is low enough to become affordable. 'We have a yellow ration card. Only the rich have poverty line, we have none. Those who have houses they have poverty line, not we. The ration card retailer gives us ration very irregularly. That also we sell in black at times' says Charubala Biswas. According to the government survey twice last year in Rajghat,  those who were found below poverty level were entitled to get rice and grains at cheaper rates though some people claimed that the survey was not done properly and many poor families were deprived of this facility.

In order to have a ration card one needs a proof of residence. 'Having a valid proof of residence is invariably an essential requirement...what do we do of illegally settled people? On the one hand there is humanitarian concern on the other hand there are state regulations', says Rakesh Tiwari, a onetime civil supplies inspector of Varanasi.  'The infrastructure to implement food security bill is nonexistent. There are no government owned PDS shops, not enough godowns, power shortage and non-availability of internet facilities to monitor the working of the system. Even the department of civil supplies is running on its 21% sanctioned strength he adds. According to Babalu Pal the ward councilor of Rajgjat, "People do not get ration from the government shop on

time. There are two reasons for this. Firstly the people do not reach on particular date and time to collect their monthly ration. Secondly the ration in-charge does not inform them properly about the date and time of the distribution. Though I have warned him not to do so however he explained that the ration provided by the government is for approximately 1000-1500 people but there are more than 2000 claimants."

## Drinking water

Drinking water is the major of concern in slums as slum dwellers do not have enough access to water sources. 83% respondents had problems with the drinking water facilities such as hand pump or supply water was unfit for drinking as it had many impurities and heavy metals. Still people were dependent on it as they had no other option resulting in many healths related problems. "Every day we fetch water from hand-pump which is around one km away. The water quality was also not up to mark. "We face immense problem in summer as there is no other source available nearby and water consumption is more in this season. If we go to station which is nearby for bringing water or taking bath the police harass and abuse us," says Jhasi 26 years. "Often we wash our cloths and take bath at the bank of river Ganga for 60 years. This is the major source of water for us but now-a-days it is polluted by sever water," says Sheela Devi.

## Violence

Often the slum atmosphere is clouded with direct violence. About 20% responded that they did not feel comfortable there but as there was no other place available or the rent was unaffordable they were compelled to live in slums. "We are poor people. Though we don't like to live in slum yet we are living to save Rs 1000 or more as the rent," says Mala 29 years. "Due to excessive violence at home I often quit food. My husband and father-in-law drink alcohol daily and create scenes. They also gamble and if I protest they start beating me," says Arti 30 years. "My neighborhood is not a good place. Often there is theft and people including my husband are engaged in gambling and drinking. This atmosphere is responsible for my husband's bad habits otherwise he would have been a good person", adds Arti. Even though there is high violence in the slum society most of the women do not abstain from eating. Of all the respondents 74% do not abstain eating their food during violence. "We are earning for eating only. There is no enmity with food. We eat in any circumstance," says Kalavati Devi 40 years.

*Discussion:*

The food insecurity of slum women of Varanasi is a result of cultural, socio-economic and political conditions. Their plight is multiplied by the fact that being women they are under pressure to be providers, where as their capacities of earning more substantially remains severely limited due to lack of any specialized training or in most cases, illiteracy. There is plenty evidence to show that the problem of drinking is prevalent amongst the male population of this area and so is the related challenge of indebtedness and violence against women. Inadequacies of earning capacities have led to 'new coping mechanisms' that have already had a damaging impact on women's health. Surviving the entire forenoons on simple cups of tea causes acute acidity but that is taken as their physical disposition. Compromising food intake has more adverse impact on health that has not been a part of this paper. However indications are that this affects their health adversely.

Given the vulnerability of these populations there has to be serious policy reconsideration. Ideally women want the government to setup some industry or some work skill that they can work from home. 'We do not like going from one house to another. It does not look decent. It is better if the government can make some arrangements that we can work from home with dignity' says Anita Biswas.

Making a legal residential proof a requirement to extend the below poverty line facility to these groups requires some serious rethinking. Similarly some kind of minimum wages in the domestic work has to be implemented. Moreover, either there has to be a provision for residence for these populations or at least some regulation on the rentals being charged by the land lords is required. Awareness programmes for not only the women but the entire households will also help in making the family realize the need of having more equitable food for women.

This has to be expanded from the current sole concentration on one macronutrient (carbohydrate) to the neglect of others (essential fats and protein) and to the complete neglect of all micronutrients. Policies then need to be put in place which will improve food supply, access and utilization across the spectrum of macro and micronutrients. Their intake of carbohydrates (good and bad) has been excessively high, and saturated fats and transfats too high (in proportion to their diet). Proteins are either very poor or in many cases nonexistent.

Rodents and field mice are the biggest problems in the slums. In the name of religion people refuse to kill them often. Thus health problems are inevitable in slums. "We never kill mice. Some times when they contaminate our food, we eat the same as we can't afford to throw it. Whatever we have, we manage with the same,' said Basmani. Similarly approx 74% respondents agreed to the same fact.

Another interesting fact came out to be that due to ignorance, illiteracy and unawareness women are subjected to many myths and misperceptions easily. Some of the respondents had a perception that a food eaten by mice is not dangerous and poisonous in comparison to food eaten by Dogs and Cats. "We could eat food contaminated by mice but can never eat the food contaminated by Cat or Dog as it causes heart disease," said Arjina, 28 years.

## Conclusion

Urbanization and external socio-economic factors are causing difficulties for women living in these slums in obtaining sufficient food. Given the vulnerability of these slum populations there has to be a serious policy reconsideration. Coping strategies currently utilized to manage food insecurity such as skipping meals and reducing food intake on a regular basis are unhealthy practices that are to be addressed by the local urban council. There is currently a marked difference in the rural and urban resources for food for poor in the country. Thus there is a serious need of intervention by local, regional and central governments to invent, implement, coordinate and monitor strategies to enhance women's food security and make future generations more equal by reducing the risk of their life expectancy.

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# Rise of Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism in Central Asia*

*Manoj Kumar Mishra*

The collapse of the Soviet regime marked the end of centuries of gradual and systematic incursion, penetration and eventual control of the region by the economically motivated, ideologically driven and technologically and military powerful Russian and Soviet powers. Though under the Soviet system, the influence of Islam was contained, yet a vigorous, unsophisticated popular tradition remained. (Vitaly, Naumkin, 1992) Two language reforms — changing from Arabic script to Latin and subsequently from Latin to Cyrillic – were contain to crush Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism. Stalinist purges replaced the old elites by a new local ruling class which followed Moscow conducting itself as a true universal 'Soviet man' '*The Homo Sovieticus'.* After *Perestroika*, Islam served as a symbol of identity and a force for mobilization.

The former USSR had the fifth largest population of Muslims in the world. Since its formation, the state pursued a rigid policy of forcing out religion not only from public and political arena but also from the life of the individual. The ideology of the ruling Communist party was atheistic. Officially, religion was separated from the state, but even outside the framework of the state, the transmission of religious ideas was extremely inhibited, primarily due to the strict limitation of the printing and distribution of religious literature and curbs on operation of religious schools.

According to two French scholars on Central Asia and Islam in the Soviet Union—Halene d'Carrere Encausse and Alexandre Benningsen – despite suppression of national customs and traditions during the Stalinist period, the *Homo Islamicus* emerged like phoenix from the ashes. The liberal atmosphere of the post – Stalin period also contributed to its rise. The Islamic revolution in Iran and the victory of the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan gave further impetus. Helene Carrere d'Encausse argued that the higher birth rate among the Central

Asian Muslims, rising unemployment and the growing Muslim self–assertion posed a serious challenge to the Soviet power in that region. (Kaushik D) Michael Rywkin in his work *Moscow's Muslim Challenge* (1982) hinted at "the existence of growing racial antagonism between two non – integrated communities in Soviet Central Asia." It is believed that the Soviet rule had resulted in the establishment of various sub-types of 'Russified Soviet sub – culture' and that the Soviets succeeded in co-opting the elite who stood alienated from their original ethno – cultural milieu.

### Impact of Perestroika and Glasnost

With the beginning of *Perestroika*, an Islamic resurgence emerged in the Soviet Muslim areas that started under the slogans of religious enlightenment, spreading of religious culture among the Muslim people of the former USSR, building and establishing Islamic traditions. Believers expressed dissatisfaction with Party and state control of religious communities and demanded the abolition of the official clergy. The Grand Mufti of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, Shamsuddin Babakhan was accused of godlessness and violation of Islamic laws and was removed from his post. Alongside the trend of purely cultural enlightenment, the tendency of the politicization of Islam emerged in the USSR's Muslim areas in the mid – 1980s. For instance, call to set up an Islamic state was raised in Tadzhikistan.

Three main blocs of political forces gradually formed in the Muslim republics: former leaders of the Communist parties and the state apparatus who changed their political face, new democratic parties and movements, and Islamic fundamentalists. One of the most popular fronts, *Birlik* (Unity) Movement for the preservation of Uzbekistan's Natural and Material and Spiritual riches was started in November 1988 by the Uzbek intellectuals. In its first public demonstration held on 19th March 1989 more than 12,000 people are reported to have attended.(Warikoo, K., 1992:65) Similarly, one of the political and social activist group set up in Kazakhstan, the *Adilet* (Justice) seeks to preserve the memory of the victims of Stalinist repression who perished in Kazakhstan. Another society *Atmaken* was established to promote language and culture.

The establishment of these informal activist groups, most of which have been recognized as such, contributed to the unprecedented national and religious resurgence throughout Central Asia. Local writers, artists and academicians started openly idealizing the medieval past history, their works of history, art and culture. The process of renaming the places and squares on

old Islamic pattern began. Russian form of greeting (*zdrastyte*) gave way to usual Muslim style of *Asalammalaikum.*

At the popular grassroots level one found a strict observance of Islamic rites and rituals including fasting during the month of Ramzan, religious marriages, performance of daily prayers and large attendance at mosques during the holy festivals. Restoration work of old and neglected mausoleums and tombs was proceeding quite fast and more often with the active participation of local Communist Party and administrative agencies. (Sovetskaya Kultura, 1986) The number of unaccredited mullahs increased and there was proliferation of mosques particularly in rural areas. According to Soviet estimates, the number of mosques had gone up to 5,000 from 160 during these few years. (Kostokov, V.V 1991)

## Revival of Islam

Among the surprises brought by independence in Central Asia was the discovery that Islam proved to have been much more pervasive in Soviet times than previously imagined. The people of Central Asia would identify themselves primarily as Muslims, and only secondarily in terms of tribe, clan and language. The consciousness of having an Islamic heritage was one of the elements which for the Central Asians continued to define their identities – even if a particular individual knew almost nothing about religion and observed none of its tenets.

Independence made it plain that during the seven decades of Soviet domination most of the people in Central Asia continued to observe important Islamic holidays and rites, even if they called these 'national' rather than religious customs and observed them mostly in the privacy of their homes. These rituals included male circumcision and its celebration, marriage and mourning. Even Ramazan seems to have been widely observed, at least outside the major Europeanized cities. It is no doubt for this reason that all the new constitutions of Central Asia, save that of Kazakhstan, specify that Islam has a special place in the heritage of the titular people, even as they also specify that these new states will be non – denominational and secular.( Olcott Martha Brill, 1995:22) As a consequence, Islam has become a feature of all the elites of Central Asia. This 'return to Islam' is most pronounced in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, where Sapurmurand Niazov and Islam Karimov, the respective Presidents, have both undertaken Hajj pilgrimage. Of the two, Niazov's is more public and vocal with the President, sponsoring numerous mosques and madrasas, many of which bear his name. He has even erected a large

statue of himself making pilgrimage, on the site where Ashgebal's main Lenin monument once stood. Even Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbaev, who continues to make his own atheism plan, has praised the historical contributions which Islam made to society, and he has participated in public ceremonies having a religious dimension, such as the burial of his predecessor, Dinmuhammed Kunaev. This new regard for Islam by the Central Asia elite is a reflection of a process which began in Central Asia in the mid-1970s as Soviet life became spiritually and morally bankrupt, many people began to look around for alternate ideologies.

Consequently, the Islamic dimensions of Central Asian life became increasingly evident once again, as an integral constituent of national self – identity. Once Gorbachev began to demand that the leaders of republic validate their positions by parliamentary and popular vote, it became inevitable that the republic's elite would have to mirror, at least to some degree, the growing religiosity of their constituents.

However, during the Soviet times 'official clerics' had managed to retain control of religious life in their respective countries. Certainly such control had been the Soviet intention when the Central Asian Spiritual Directorate of Muslim (SADUM) was established during World War II. This body, fulfilling instructions from Moscow, sharply limited access to religious education, training and worship, and also painstakingly worked out a limited practice of Islam which was compatible with Soviet citizenship. Although they had created SADUM, the Soviet authorities remained suspicious of its leaders. This became particularly evident as the processes of Islamic revivalism intensified in Central Asia, even the Muslim clerics of SADUM were doing nothing to explain that Soviet law took precedence over Islamic law. ( Olcott Martha Brill, 1995:22-23)

One of the things which independence has revealed is that during the Soviet period SADUM and its clerics actually played a far smaller role in Central Asian Islam than the enormous network of unrecognized and frequently untrained 'volunteer' clerics, who established *madrassas*, preserved shrines, presided at burials, weddings and other rituals and in the urban Muslim settings at least monitored the observation of 'traditions' most of which were Islamic. In Uzbekistan this last function was served through neighborhood *mohallas* while in Turkmenistan the watchdogs of traditional Islamic practice were *elates* or kinship groups of twenty to forty families. Certainly this is

consistent with findings by Uzbek ethnographer Nadira Azimova, who claims that in 1985, there were 194 unofficial clerics, each with his own congregation, in Namangan oblast alone. The long list of 'unofficial' mosques, Alexander Bennigsen and Enders Wembush provide, seems to omit at least as many as it contains. (Olcott Martha Brill, 1995:24)

In Soviet times only a dozen or so Muslims annually were granted the right to formal Islamic education, through admission either to the Mir–i–Arab Madarsa in Bukhara, which in the late Soviet period had a total enrollment of about fifty, or to the Imam-al-Bukhari Institute in Tashkent, which had about thirty. The number of clergy required to service the network of unsanctioned mosques, shrines and madrases. A considerable portion of this 'underground' clergy came from the traditional Central Asian elites. Two of the last three SADUM muftis, Muhammed Sadyq Mama Yusupov and his predecessor, Shamsuddin Babakhanov, were from clerical families. Other unofficial clergy were from families known as *Syeds* (descendants of Muhammad), *Khojas* (those whose ancestors had made pilgrimage and in Turkmenistan), *awlads* (alleged descendants of Abu Baker, Uthman and Ali). ( Olcott Martha Brill, 1995:24)

The wide-scale return by most Central Asians to some form of Islamic worship might best be called a general return to Islam, as large number of people attempt to incorporate Islamic practices into lives which remain essentially secular. Although Uzbekistan did not pass a law on freedom of conscience until July 1991, SADUM policies began to change dramatically in 1989, after the appointment of a new mufti, Muhammed Sadyq Mama Yusupov. He was no supporter of secular nationalism, as his speech before the second session of Uzbekistan's Supreme Soviet (in June 1990) made clear. He insisted that the Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Tajiks were historically Muslim people, and that efforts to drive them apart should be viewed with suspicion. As the influence of SADUM grew under Mama Yusupov, Central Asia's secular leaders began to see the role that religion was going to  play in the national revival of their various republics prompting each to try to guarantee that this return to Islam was at least partly under his control. (Olcott Martha Brill, 1995:27)

In Kazakhstan, even though the Islamic revival  was proceeding more slowly than was the case in Uzbekistan or Tajikistan, Islam had become a significant  social force in the republic by late 1989. Accordingly, Nazarbaev formally removed Kazakhstan from the jurisdiction of SADUM in November

1989. Qazi Ratbek Nysanbai, who had been the senior SADUM official in Kazakhstan was called back, a decision formalized in January 1990, at the first Kurultai of the Muslims of Kazakhstan. Nysanbai's authority derives entirely from Nazarbaev, and it is not clear how much support the Mufti enjoys among Kazakhstan's believers. (Olcott Martha Brill, 1995:27)

Religious revival has also proceeded by fits and starts in Kyrgyzstan. SADUM – appointed Qazi Sadyqjan Kamalov as Mufti. During the political unrest of 1990 (following the disturbances in June) the administration of Absamol Masoliev kept Sadyqjan Kamalov under close official supervision. After Akaev came to power in October 1990, Sadyqjan's position improved quickly. He and his followers were allowed to create an Islamic centre in an office building on the capital city's main square. When independence the effective end of SADUM, Kamalov was Mufti of Kyrgyzstan. However, in September 1993, at the first *kurultai* of Kyrgyz Muslims, a new Mufti was chosen. A possible explanation for this was Kamalov's association with Islamic fundamentalists on the Uzbek side of the Fergana Valley. (Olcott Martha Brill, 1995:28)

It is in Uzbekistan that the potential conflicts between official Islam and the secular government have become most obvious. The change in state policy towards religion has made the post of head of SADUM a very powerful one, with the Mufti responsible for collecting and dispensing enormous sums of money. In April 1993, Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov turned against Mama Yusupov, alleging that the Mufti had misappropriated funds. In fact, however, Karimov had targeted Mama Yusupov for dismissal some six months before, when the Uzbek cleric began defending the actions of Qazi Akbar Turajonzade in Tajikistan. It was alleged that the Qazi was advocating formation of an Uzbek branch of the Islamic Renaissance Party. President Karimov spoke out against what he described as "political Islam" and said that he would never allow religious extremism to take root in Uzbekistan. He further said that Islamic extremist centers were spending hundreds of million of dollars to destabilize the situation in Uzbekistan and throughout Central Asia. "They have reached the point where they are trying to recruit our young people to train them at sites in Afghanistan, Pakistan and even in neighbouring Tajikistan". He warned that an Islamic state would throw Uzbekistan "back dozens of years". He further said if a survey were made of the population "the vast majority would be categorically against Islamic forms of state".(SU/3206, G 13, 1998)

The Presidents of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have opposed religious extremism in the Central Asian region. They were addressing a news conference in Astana on 9 June 1998 at the end of the fifth summit of the Turkic-speaking countries. 'We cannot allow the myth to spread that an ideological vacuum has emerged in Central Asia in the wake of the Soviet Union's disintegration and that Islamic or other undemocratic states can appear in this region". Karimov said the fight against "*wahhabism*" a conservative brand of Sunni Islam, "by no means implies fighting Islam in general. Islam is the religion of 70-80 percent of Uzbekistan's population and "is sacred to us". (SU/3251 G12, 1998)

Saudi Arabia has also been at least a temporary current address of another Islamic cleric who got caught in the politicization of religious revival; this is Qazi-Kolen Hojiakhar Turajonzade, who was named Qazi of Tajikistan in August 1988. Turajonzade seems typical of his generation of official clerics, at least in his attempts to reconcile state and unofficial Islam. Turajonzade has also stated consistently that he sees no possibility of establishing an Islamic government anywhere in Central Asia because the seven decades of Soviet rule have so destroyed faith and knowledge among believers that, as he put it, less than three perecent of them can read the *namaz. (Rassiiskaia Gazeta,*1993:1)

What appears to have pushed Turajonzade from clerical activities into politics was the attempt by President Rahmon Nabiev in early 1992 to assert control over the *mutiale*, of which Turajonzade had become head with the *de facto* collapse of SADUM's authority outside Uzbekistan. By May 1992 Nabiev had been forced from office, and an attempt was made to install a coalition government, led by Parliamentary Speaker Akbarshoh Iskandarov, with active participation of the Democratic Party, led by Shadmon Yusuf. The appointment of IRP head Dawlat Usman as deputy premier, however, seems to have convinced both Russia and Uzbekistan that Tajikistan was in the eminent peril of 'going Muslim'.

Since the collapse of the Iskandarov's coalition government and the imposition of the Rahmonov government, Turajonzade had portrayed the civil war as a battle of communists, backed by Russia, against a coalition of democrats, IRP supporters, and representatives of his own *qaziate*. However, Turajonzade was identified by the Rahmonov faction as one of its main enemies, and in December 1992 was forced to flee.

President Enomali Rahmonov stated on 16th May 1998 that the Central Asian region was facing a 'serious threat'. He further said the Islamic Rebirth Party of Tajikistan, the operations of which were suspended in 1993 by the Supreme Court, is holding various events illegally. "Despite statements from party leaders that they are not followers of extremism and fundamentalism, it is clear that all of their political efforts are aimed at coming to power". Rahmonov further added that he could not trust those leaders of the Islamic-led United Tajik Opposition (UTO) who said they had no intention of building an Islamic state in Tajikistan. *(SWB,G-* SU/3230 *1,1998)*

The return of UTO first deputy Haji Akbar Turajonzeda from five year exile in Iran and Afghanistan added more problems in Tajikistan. He wanted to ensure the revival of Islam in the republic, but would not force it on the people. *(SWB,G-* SU/3230 *1,1998)* This prompted the foreign ministers of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to discuss the threat of Islamic extremism in the region during the talks in the Tajik capital, Dushanbe on 3rd March 1998. The ministers also discussed their issue of "preserving a secular state" in Tajikistan. Tajikistan Presidential spokesman Zafar Saidov ruled out any change to the article in the republic's constitution concerning the secular nature of the state. "Article 100 of the Tajik Constitution, which proclaims the secular nature of the republic, is not subject to revision", he said.Referring to remarks made on 27th February 1998 by Haji Turajonzeda, Saidov said that 'certain political group' was trying to revise this article.. He proposed holding a referendum on replacing the words 'secular state' with 'people state', to ensure that the Islamic Rebirth Party of Tajikistan could compete in the election to a new parliament on par with other parties. *(SWB,* SU/3167 G/1)

The official response to Islam in Central Asia seems almost designed to transform the general return to Muslim observance, which characterizes society's attempt to reclaim its lost identity into the sort of political Islam that the present leaders fear will lead to the revival fundamentalism. Turajonzade and Mama Yusupov represent relatively moderate clerical position, with the emphasis upon moral and intellectual regeneration of a society artificially cut off from an important part of its identity.

### External Influences

The rise of Islamic resurgence in Soviet Central Asia is due to the spillover effects of Khomeini revolution in Iran and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The Iranian ideologues adopted a two-pronged strategy exporting revolution

to vulnerable areas. One was the launching of extensive propaganda of Islamic fundamentalism through the mass media and the second was by fomenting trouble and turmoil in these areas by arousing religious passions.

Several reports had appeared in the Soviet press about the religious propaganda launched by Iran in Soviet Central Asia. An article in *Turkmenskia Iskara* dated 14th October 1984 revealed the widespread existence of radio cassettes in Turkmen, Azeri and Russian languages throughout Turkmenistan. Another report published in *Bakiinski Robochi* of 3 February 1985 described the activities of a Muslim religious group in Baku which reproduced religious books and literature in Arabic. *(Warikoo, K, 1992:*67) Fifty million copies of Koran were reported to have been printed during the year 1989 alone. This is over and above the one million copies gifted by Saudi Arabia to the Central Asian Muslim Board. Saudi Arabia is also reported to be sending large sums of money to Central Asia in a bid to re-orient the Central Asian Muslims society and politics in the West Asian mould of Islam. *(Warikoo, K, 1992:*68)

Another influence has been of *Wahabism*, which has especially gained roots in rural areas of Tajikistan, particularly only the Tajik – Afghan borders. This is a fundamentalist religious-cum-political movement. The Wahabi literature that has been smuggled via Afghanistan lays emphasis on religious absolutism and is opposed to Sufism and holy shrines which represent the traditional tolerant trend in Islam. In Uzbekistan the main support has been in the Ferghana Valley, where Islamic customs and values were preserved through the entire Soviet period Islamist groups draw support mainly from the rural people.

That *Wahabism* has struck roots in Uzbekistan as well, is evidenced by the sudden removal of Mukhammad Sadyk, the official recognized Mufti and chairman of the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Central Asian headquarters in Tashkent by the council of Imams. The popular movement of Uzbekistan, *Birlik* too welcomed this move as a 'victory of popular forces'. *(Warikoo, K, 1992:*70) The growing influence of radical political-religious trends like *Wahabism* and *Khomeinism* in Central Asia will be a factor to be reckoned within years to come.

### Islamic Movements in Central Asia Since 1991

The people of Central Asian Republics used Islam not only to reestablish their own ethnic and cultural identity but to reconnect with their Muslim

neighbors to the south, who were cut off ever since Stalin closed the borders between Soviet Union and the rest of the world. The first to visit these independent Central Asian Republics were Islamic missionaries from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and elsewhere, who helped build hundreds of new mosques and distributed free copies of the Koran translated into Russian and other native languages. Millions of Central Asians emotionally seized this opportunity to rediscover their identity and heritage, all of which they linked intimately with Islam.

Religion and ethnicity remain intensely combustible issues in Central Asia today. There seems to be a cultural vacuum in Central Asia, which cannot be filled with imitations of Western culture. By ignoring their heritage, which has given so much to their own people and to the wider, Central Asia's rulers now seek to create a modern national identity based on their own past heritage. They have to accommodated traditional Islam. However, the radical Islamic forces in Central Asia are represented by three major Islamic movements, namely, the *Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami (HT; the Party of Islamic Liberation), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP)*. This section discusses their origins, beliefs, influence and activities. The most important inference that emerges from this discussion is that although these movements began with different ideologies, agendas and support bases, the situation in Central Asia – in particular the government repression – is pulling them together and into the orbit of other radical Islamic movement like the *Taliban* and Osama bin Laden's *Al Qaeda*. (Ahmed, Rashid, 2002:x)

### The Hizb Ut – Tahrir: Reviving the Caliphate

One of the most intriguing questions about the *Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islamic* (popularly known as the *Hizb ut-Tahrir*) is that it is highly secretive. It is a widespread underground movement in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The HT has a vision of uniting Central Asia, Xinjiang Province of China, and eventually the entire *Umma* (Islamic world community) under a *Khilafat* (Caliphate) that would re-establish the *Khilafat-i-Rashida*, which ruled the Arab Muslims for a short time after The Prophet Muhammad's death in 632. HT leaders believe that Central Asia has reached what they call "a boiling point" and is ripe for take-over. As Sheik Abdul Qadeem Zaloom, the current HT leader and one of its most prolific writers, describes the situation: "The issue of transforming the land into the Islamic homeland and uniting them with the rest of the Islamic lands is an objective which the method which ought to be

undertaken to achieve this objective is that of re-establishing Khilafah". (Ahmed, Rashid, 2002:116)

The HT was founded in Saudi Arabia and Jordan in 1953 by diaspora Palestinians led by Sheikh Taqiuddin an-Nabhani Filastyni (the Palestinians). In his famous book, *The Islamic State*, an-Nabhani interprets the life of The Prophet Mohammad, describing how the Prophet first spread the message of Islam secretly, then came open about His aims, and finally preached the call for jihad. Although HT in Central Asia does not advocate a violent over-throw of Muslim regimes, it believes in winning over mass support, believing that one-day these supporters will rise up in peaceful demonstration and overthrow the regimes of Central Asia.

The movement leaders in Central Asia are of the opinion that HT originated in the revivalist *Wahhabi* movement of Saudi Arabia but that the HT is different from the *Wahhabis* on several issues. The elusive HT leader who Ahmed Rashid called Ali, in an interview in 2000 told him, "HT wanted to work with people in each country separately and bring about *sharia* in a peaceful manner, but the *Wahhabis* were extremists who wanted guerrilla war and the creation of an Islamic army". ((Ahmed, Rashid, 2002:118) Ali further explained that the HT operates through secret, decentralized five-to-seven-man cells throughout Central Asia, making its extremely difficult for the authorities to penetrate the organization. The cells, called *daira* (circle), are study groups dedicated to the spread of Islam and the HT message. The cell chief, the only person who knows the next level of the party organization, set out weekly tasks for his members, who are expected to create new cells. The Uzbek police, have recently cracked down on HT, but are still unable to penetrate the chain of command. The biggest success to date was the arrest in Moscow on 29th May 2001 of Nodir Aliyev, believed to be an important Uzbekistan HT leader, by the Russian police Aliyev was later extradited to Uzbekistan.

In recent times the growth of HT in Central Asia has been phenomenal. According to Uzbek officials the movement was not introduced into Uzbekistan until 1995, when a Jordanian named Salahuddin, came to Tashkent and set up the first HT cell with the help of two Uzbeks. The first HT pamphlets appeared in the Uzbek under language ground in 1995-1996. From Tashkent and the Fargana Valley, the movement has spread throughout Uzbekistan and to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Ali claimed that the HT now has more than

sixty thousand supporters in Tashkent alone and tens of thousands in other cities- a claim that is supported by the large number of arrests of HT in all three countries between 1999 and 2001. HT literature is now translated into Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Tajik, and the party magazine *Al-Vai* (Consciousness) and books like *The Islamic State, The Economic System in Islam,* and *How The Khilafah Was Destroyed,* written by an-Nabhani and Zaloom, are available in all three languages and also in Russian. The HT's favorite form of propaganda is the *shabnama* (night letter), which is printed at night and pushed under people's doors like a newspaper.

In Uzbekistan a massive crackdown against the HT began in May 1998 after Karimov's Parliament passed the Law On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organization, which severely restricted freedom of worship. Police questioned all men with beards or having more than one wife, as well as anyone who was traveling to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Women could be arrested for wearing the *hijab* (head covering). Holly Carter, the director of Human Rights Watch for Central Asia, termed the law as one of the most restrictive religious statues in the World. Amnesty International reported that in the first six months of 1999, the courts handed down fifty-five death sentences, and fifteen executions took place – several of them being members of the HT. The US State Department Human Rights Report estimates that between January 1999 and April 2000 some five thousand people were jailed in Uzbekistan. (Human Rights Practices 2000) The Independent Human Rights Organization of Uzbekistan has published the most authoritative figures for political prisoners, which show that there were 7,600 political prisoners in the summer of 2001-of which a staggering 5,150 belong to the HT. The deteriorating human-rights situations in Uzbekistan was highlighted by Human Rights Watch's Acacia Shields, who gave chilling testimony to a US congressional panel in September 2000. "Police routinely plant small amounts of narcotics, weapons, ammunition or Islamic literature on citizens either to justify arrests or to extort briefs. The most frequent victims of this illegal practice have been suspected members of HT", reported The Human Rights Watch.

From its cell in the Fergana Valley the HT movement spread rapidly into adjacent areas of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. More than 150 alleged HT supporters were being held in Kyrgyz jails by the summer of 2001, largely in the Osh region. In May 2000 four HT activists aged 18-25 went on trial. "All the accused do not hide their aim and claim that they are ready to make any sacrifice for their sacred goal to create an Islamic State on the territory

of the Fergana Valley", said Talant Razzakov, head of the Public Security in Osh. (AFP, 2000) Kyrgyz National Guard commander Lt. Gen. Abdy Chotbaev claimed in June 2000 that three hundred Kyrgyz citizens were training in Afghanistan for underground missionary work for the HT. *(Jamestown Monitor,* 2000) In the first three months of 2001, forty alleged HT activists were arrested and put on trial. Kyrgyzstan's President Akayev has admitted that religious extremism is being fuelled by the growing poverty of the people, but he appears to be doing little to end corruption within the ruling elite and to address public. "Religious extremists view Kyrgyzstan as a transit country. Their goal is the Fergana Valley, to extend the geographic range of Islam and even to set up a state – an Islamic Caliphate. They are reckoning on the support of the local population, being well aware that poverty and social problems exist in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It is no accident that country people are following those preaching 'high Islam'. They are being lured by money. Show people a green dollar bill and the people succumb to temptation. We must urgently counter this". Akayev told a Russian newspaper in May 2001. (*Rossiyskaya Gazeta,* 2001)

The HT is also slowly gaining popularity in Kazakhstan, where Islamic radicalism has so far not penetrated. In 2001, for the first time, Kazakh police reported the arrest of HT activists in the south of the country, whilst Kyrgyz police arrested Kazakh HT militants in Kyrgyzstan. On 6th July 2001, HT leaflets appeared in thousands of mailboxes in Kazakhstan's largest city, Almaty, shocking the security forces and the population. The day was chosen because it was the official birthday of President Nazarbayev, who only a few weeks earlier had urged his people to resist Islamic radicalism. In a television interview Nazarbayev had stated, "Some people cherish the hope that the Muslim population of our states will support radicals, that the clergy will take us back to the Middle Ages, put the veil on women's faces and make men grow heard to the waist. This radicalism may start to advance triumphantly in an individual country like Tajikistan or Uzbekistan. But this will be just the beginning. *(Reuters,* 2001)

The HT is becoming extremely popular in northern Tajikistan, despite the war weariness of the people. During the year 2000 more than a hundred alleged HT members were arrested in Tajikistan and put on trial. (US State Department, 2001) In April 2001, some 7,500 books and 1,500 leaflets were found in a garage in Chkalovosk in Sughd Province, and fifteen alleged members of the HT were arrested. Even the capital, Dushanbe, was not

immune to HT activities. Five HT members, aged 26-40, were arrested in Dushanbe on 16th November 2000, for being in possession of 5,000 HT leaflets.

Clearly the Tajik government feels threatened, and in response President Rahmonov has asked the more moderate IRP to begin Islamic preaching and other Islamic educational activities in Sughd Province. Local IRP leaders have urged the public "to refrain from joining illegal parties and movements" and "be vigilant against terrorists", by which they mean the HT. (Jamestown, Monitor, 2000) The IRP leaders admit that a new, younger generation of Tajiks are joining the HT. Moheyuddin Kabir, an IRP leader further says, "but most are young men who were just children during the civil war and are being introduced to Islamic teaching for the first time through the HT".

The aims of the HT are the establishment of the Caliphate in Central Asia. It has simplistic, one- dimensional ideology, imported from the Arab world which is gaining popularity in Central Asia. As Paula Newberg writes, "Many parts of the former Soviet Union are seized by a revolution of diminishing expectations. Armed militancy has grown, not as ideology but as a way to express disagreement when other means are unavailable, or have failed". (Newberg, Paula, 2000)

### *Islamic Movement in Uzbekistan*

The revival of Islamic militancy in Uzbekistan began in a small agricultural town in the heart of the Fergana Valley, a few months before the breakup of the Soviet Union. A 24 year – old Tohir Abdovhalilovitch Yuldashev, a college drop-out and local mullah from Namangan seized the building which housed the headquarters of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan (CPU) after the Mayor refused to give them land to build a mosque. At his side was Jumaboi Ahmadzhanevitch Khojaev, 22, later adopted his home town name and became Juma Namangani – a charismatic, action-oriented man whom the younger members of the group hero-worship for his daring. This incident set in motion a series of events that have reverberated across Central Asia for the past decade.

With Saudi funds and some five thousand young followers, this group began in 1990 to build a new mosque and a madrassah. Outside the mosque a sign read, "Long Live the Islamic State". Yuldashev began to impose strict Islamic practices in Namangan. He then demanded that President Karimov impose *sharia* in Uzbekistan, inviting him to come and debate the issue in Namangan. Karimov arrived in April 1991 to talk to the militants, but the

meeting failed. Karimov left humiliated and told that he would discuss these issues in Parliament. As nothing happened, Yuldashev and his men had attacked the CPU headquarters and set in motion a movement that they claimed was a *jihad* to remove Karimov from the government of Uzbekistan.

Yuldashev's followers are the disillusioned members of Uzbekistan's Islamic Renaissance Party, which refused to demand an Islamic political state. As an alternative they had set up *Adolat* (Justice), which demanded an Islamic revolution. "The IRP is in the pay of the government; they want to be in Parliament. We have no desire to be in Parliament. We want an Islamic revolution here and now – we have no time for constitutional games", (Ahmed, Rashid, 1992)  as Imam Abdul Ahad explained to Ahmed Rashid. Mosques and madrassahs run by *Adolat* sprang up across the Fergana Valley, in Andijan, Margilan, Kuvia,  Fergana  City and even Osh, in Kyrgyzstan, undercutting the influence of the IRP. Other underground militant groups, including *Tauha* (Repentance), *Islam Lashkarlary* (Fighters for Islam), and *Hizb-i-Islami* (Party of Islam), also arose in the Fergana Valley.

For some months the government watched Yuldashev's sway in Namangan. Finally, however, the government cracked down, banning *Adolat* in March 1992 and arrested twenty seven members, although many of the mosques continued to operate. *Adolat* leaders, including Yuldashav and Namangani, fled to Tajikistan. In Dushanbe, Yuldeshev studied for a short time at the *madrassah* run by Qazi Akbar Turajonzoda, the Mufti of Tajikistan and a key member of the Tajikistan IRP. With his heart still set on continuing the Islamic movement in Uzbekistan, Yuldashev began to travel, first to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and later to Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey, trying to learn about Islamic movements and make contact with other Islamic parties.

Namangani fled Uzbekistan in 1992 and arrived in Kurgan Tyube, in southern Tajikistan, with some thirty Uzbek militants and a few Arabs, who were acting as liaisons between Saudi Islamic foundations and *Adolat.* In 1993, Namangani fought one of the biggest battles of the civil war at the Haboribot Pass. When the Tajik civil war came to an end, in 1997, Namangani opposed the cease-fire and the peace settlement. After that he left Tajikistan and settled at Hoit, a small village north of Garm in the Karategin Valley on the main road to the Kyrgyz border, where be bought a large farm. Namangani's farm quickly became a centre for Islamic radicals, as Uzbeks, Arabs, Chechens and

Tajiks arrived and had to be fed and housed. Majority of them were Uzbeks, some were Arabs and other ethnic groups of Central Asia and the Caucasus who supported Namangani's belief that he was an Islamic Internationalist, giving him a sense of power and purpose.

Meanwhile, Yuldashev had travelled back to Tajikistan in 1997 to meet Namangani in his farm in Hoit. This was a moment of decision for the two men. Facing a new political situation in a region that now appeared to be against them, they had to decide on their future course of action. The Uzbek government had launched a severe crackdown, which led to a renewed exodus of Uzbek militants from the Fergana Valley. These guerrillas arrived as refugees at Namangani's farm in Hoit and put mounting pressures on Namangani and Yuldeshev to respond to Karimov's repression. The two agreed. But first they needed a new sanctuary. Tajikistan could no longer be considered a reliable base for their operations. The answer clearly lay in Afghanistan. Yuldashev had been introduced to the Taliban in Kabul in 1997, and the Taliban had every reason to give him refuge: Uzbekistan was backing the anti-Taliban opposition in Afghanistan and Karimov himself was belligerently anti-Taliban. Yuldashev also met Osama bin Laden, who saw in Yuldeshev an ally for the future in a region where he had few contacts . Some Uzbek officials and Tajik IRP leaders say that it was bin Laden who encouraged Yuldashev to set up a distinct Islamic Party whose aim would be the liberation of the Fergana Valley and Uzbekistan from Karimov's rule. There was no confirmation of this, but US officials subsequently claimed that bin Laden was a primary contributor of fund to help set up the IMU. *(Ahmed Rashid,* 1992: 148)

That summer Yuldashev conferred with Namangani in Kabul, and together they announced the creation of the IMU (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan). Yuldashev later set out the IMU's goals in an interview for *The Voice of America,* one of the few lengthy interviews he has ever given. "The goals of IMU activities are firstly fighting against oppression within our country, against bribery, against the inequities and also the freeing of our Muslim from prison... Who will avenge those Muslims who have died in the prisons of the regime? Of course we will. We consider it our obligations to avenge them and nobody can take this right away from us. We do have our declaration of *jihad* against the Uzbek government. God willing, we will carry out this *jihad* to its conclusion". (Tohir, Yuldeshev, 2000)

It was on 16th February 1999, in a span of an hour that six car bombs exploded in the center of Tashkent in an apparent attempt to assassinate the

President. Karimov had left his country residence and was on his way to attend a cabinet meeting when his driver was alerted by the explosion.

Although no officials were harmed, 13 people were killed and 128 were injured. Demonstrating his bravado, a furious Karimov arrived at the square a few minutes later to review the damage, even though explosions were still going on in other parts of the city. *(Ahmed Rashid, 1992:*150)

The government went on a rampage, accusing all opposition groups, including the IMU and other political groups like *Erk* and *Birlik*, of responsibility for the bombs. But the most common hypothesis offered by Uzbeks themselves is that the bombing was carried out by clan and political rivals of Karimov within the regime who had not been accommodated in the power structure and was fearful that Karimov's policies were running the country. Karimov's concentration of power and his favoritism towards his own clan from Samarkand has been a growing cause of resentment. Moreover, Karimov fears that the regional elite of the Fergana Valley may in future stage endorse or link up with the IMU.

Whoever was responsible, the bombing sent shock waves across Central Asia. Throughout the summer, Uzbekistan government arrested IMU members and on the other hand accused the Tajikistan government of harboring Namangani. Although he was there, the Tajik government was not in a position to take on the IMU. Tajik President Rahmonov did exert pressure on IRP leaders in the coalition government to get rid of Namangani, or at least to send him to Afghanistan. Fearing that his forces would be disarmed and disbanded, Namangani asserted himself in August 1999.

He began a wave of kidnappings and killing, following which he left for Afghanistan. On 25th August 1999, the IMU issued an official order declaring *jihad* on the Karimov regime and calling for its overthrow (see the Appendix). The events of the summer of 1999, which were set in motion by the Tashkent bombings, unleashed the IMU as the most potent threat to the Central Asian regimes.

Namangani has now become a major figure throughout the region, even a celebrity, yet he still refuse to be interviewed. He even avoided foreign radio stations, which were desperate to talk to him. He cultivated an air of mystery around him. Soon Namangani was being mythologized in the underground of Islamic militancy, not only in Central Asia but also in Pakistan, Afghanistan

and throughout the Arab world. Karimov and the Uzbek government were deeply embarassed by the speed with which Namangani became a household name across the region. People did not speak so much of the IMU as of Jumaboi- his nickname-whilst his activities, real and imagined, became an obsession amongst Central Asia watchers. *(Ahmed Rashid, 1992:*153)

### Islamic Renaissance Party in Tajikistan

The Tajik Islamicists are unique amongst militant Central Asian Islamic groups. The movement brings together the various strands of Central Asian Islam, which include the "unofficial"    *Ulema* who were forced to go underground during the Soviet period, the registered clergy belonging to "official" Islam, the Sufi *pirs* and their followers in the Pamir Mountains- and a younger generations in Afghanistan and the reassertion of Tajik nationalism following the collapse of the Soviet Union. These groups all joined in the rapid revival of Islam in Tajikistan after 1991- a resurgence that shocked Central Asian rulers. *(Ahmed Rashid, 1992:*95)

The Islamic revival was also closely linked to Tajik nationalism. Tajiks had never forgotten the *Basmachi* rebellion against the Soviets in the 1920's, despite Soviet efforts to portray it in history books as a reactionary movement led by mullahs supported by British imperialism. After independence came, many Tajiks sought to rediscover their side of the story as part of an effort to forge a new national consensus and identity.

It was during the Soviet period, that an underground political Islam had thrived in Tajikistan more than in any other Central Asian state. In the Soviet era, Mullah Muhammad Rustamov Hindustani was the most influential underground spiritual leaders in Tajikistan. He had studied at the *madrassa* in Deoband, India, before returning home to open a clandestine *madrassa* in Dushanbe in the 1970's. Hindustani brought the new ideas shaping the Muslim world and the ideology of Islamic fundamentalist movements in India, Pakistan, and the Arab states to Central Asia, spreading his message to both Tajiks and Uzbeks in the Fergana Valley. In the Soviet regime, the Russians shut down his *madrassa* and sentenced Hindustani to fifteen years' imprisonment in Siberia, where he died in 1989. *(Ahmed Rashid, 1992:*97)

One of Hindustani's students was Abdullah Saidov, known as Sayed Abdullah Nuri, who was born in the town of Tavildara in 1947. By 1974 Nuri had helped form an illegal Islamic educational organization, *Nahzar-i-Islami*

(Islamic Knowledge). Eventually Nuri became the founding member and leader of the Islamic Renaissance Party. Another of Hindustani's student was Muhammad Sharif Himmatzoda, who became a leader of the military wing of the IRP. Nuri and Himmatzoda were already old friends when they helped found the Tajik branch of the Islamic Renaissance Party. The IRP had been established in June 1990 in Astrakhan, Russia, largely by Tatar intellectuals who sought to organize Muslims with the Soviet Union to campaign for the introduction of *sharia* (Islamic Law) to Russia. With *glasnost* in full swing under President Mikhail Gorbachev, the IRP registered as a political party in Russia, but it was banned in the Central Asian Republics by their ruling Communist parties. Tajik representatives who had participated in the Astrakhan meeting and returned home determined to set up an IRP in Tajikistan, faced an immediate ban.

With support from Nuri's youth organization, a clandestine branch of the IRP did emerge in Tajikistan. The Tajikistan IRP's (illegal) inaugural conference was held on 26th October 1991, and it was attended by some 650 delegates, who elected Himmatzoda as the party's first chairman, established an Islamic newspaper, and even approved a coat of arms and a flag. The IRP dedicated itself to spreading Islam, promoting a spiritual revival, and working for the political and economic independence of Tajikistan.

As the political situation deteriorated in late 1991, with the disbanding of the Soviet Union and creation of new Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), political infighting broke out within the CPTJ (Communist Party Tajikistan) and hard-line Communists in the Tajik Parliament eventually forced through the election of 62-year-old Rakhmon Nabiev as President. Mass protests at his election broke out in Dushanbe, as tens of thousands of people camped out in Lenin Square – renamed Azad (Freedom) Square – in the centre of the city. This was a heady time for the IRP, who fed and cared for the people living in the streets, receiving their first taste of mass mobilization and political agitation in the process. No other Islamic movement in Central Asia had ever been given such a chance at mass contact as Tajikistan's IRP was in those years. When the IRP was registered as a political party by the Tajik authorities in December 1991, just before the collapse of the Soviet Union, it already claimed twenty thousand members. *(Ahmed Rashid, 1992:*100*)*

Nabiev was forced to hold a presidential election in the new Republic on November 24th, which he won by a narrow margin of 58% vote. What was

more shocking to the Russian and Central Asian leaders was the opposition candidate, Daulat Khudonazarov. He fought the election with the alliance of democrats, nationalists and Islamcists and won 34% of the vote. Clearly, the Islamic revival was not limited to cultural reassertion, for it was poised for a political challenge to the state of Tajikistan. The controversial election results led to more demonstration and riots in March 1992, which was followed by a severe government crack-down in which many people were killed. By now it was clear that a civil war was imminent, and key IRP leaders took to the mountains to set up military bases in the Kategin and Tavildara Valley north of Dushanbe.

The civil war in Tajikistan lasted from 1992 to 1997. It was during this time the Islamicists working in Dushanbe, related through family, clan, and regional ties, and ensured that the IRP radicals were also in touch with the state-sponsored "official Islam". A key sympathizer was Qazi Akhar Turajonzoda, the grand Mufti (*qazi*) of Tajikistan's Muslims during the last years of the Soviet Union. Born in 1954 near Dushanbe, Turajonzoda studied at the official, Soviet sponsored madrassah in Bukhara before going to Jordon for further Islamic studies in the 1970's. After his return he worked for a time in the Board of Muslims for Central Asia in Tashkent; he was appointed the first Mufti of Tajikistan in 1988. He developed extensive grass-root contacts and encouraged the spate of mosque building that began in the capital in 1990.

By 1991, he had become immensely popular receiving hundreds of people in Dushanbe's main mosque and staying in touch with the IRP secretly. He confidently predicted the fall of the Nabiev government and the oncoming struggle between the government and the opposition. "Islam is strong, while people mistrust the Communists", he said proudly, even as he attended Nabiev's cabinet meetings. *(Ahmed Rashid, 1992:*101)

When the civil war began in Tajikistan, Turajonzoda defected to Iran, becoming a prominent leader of the opposition alliance. During the civil war he travelled extensively around the world, seeking support for the IRP. His official status, his Islamic learning, and his popularity gave the IRP a legitimacy that was unprecedented in Central Asia. At the same time, he viewed the IRP with some suspicion, for its hierarchy tried to undercut his own popular status. Turajonzoda's supporters within the IRP argued that a single party could not bring about an Islamic revolution in Tajikistan; instead, society had to he slowly Islamicized from the bottom up. This attitude, which he revived after the civil war ended in 1997, led to his eventual expulsion from the IRP.

When the civil war ended in 1997, the IRP suffered heavy losses. It was unable to reconstitute itself or to offer an economic or political plan for the country's revival which left the party incapable of institutionalizing political Islam, or even retaining its own appeal. Gross-root support for the IRP and political activism was declining, and its influence over the younger generation has become less significant than it had been five years earlier. Instead, regionalism and clan politics had become more firmly entrenched. During the decade of civil war and its aftermath, Tajiks generally became more committed Muslims, but the radical and political Islamicist overtones of the civil war era were gradually disappearing. While they were deeply respectful of Islam, they were not ready for an overt political manifestation of it. Militant Islam had failed in Tajikistan, but it is still not defeated. In the midst of poverty Tajiks still have acute national consciousness which could unite the clans and usher in greater democracy.

## Quest for Ethnic Nationalism

The main problem in Central Asia today is the search for a new nationalism. During the communist era the party was organized as the Soviet State. The Soviet Constitution had structured the many national identities in Central Asia as an articulated series from the sub-nations of the Autonomous Oblasts like Badakshan in Tajikistan, through the Autonomous republics like Karakalpakia in Uzbekistan and the five nations of Central Asia, to culminate in the Soviet super-state itself. It did not permit the emergence of Central Asia or Turkistan. The party constituted in itself the major portion of the field of political battle. All the political forces we find today have either emerged from the Party or were its interlocutors and partners in the struggle for power. The 'problem' in Central Asia today, for the five 'nationalities' is to establish their independent identities.

But the modernization process in the USSR, led to the growth in self-assertion by the elites of what were essentially new nationalities. The most articulate native elites of the Muslim nationalists were striking throughout the region, although the individual Republics were only created in 1924. Three distinct levels of ethnic consciousness among Muslims of Central Asia were identified by Alexander Benningsen: sub-national, supra-national and national. National consciousness in Soviet Central Asia can be regarded as a form of culture quite as much as a social movement. The 'cornelian term' nationalism is defined here as an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining

autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population claimed by some of its members to constitute an actual (or potential) nation. (Hyman, Anthony, 1993:296)

National identity and nationalism is still much more prominent within the intelligentsia and the nomenclature in Central Asia. Hardly surprisingly, the search for cultural and historical roots, including the repressed religious heritage, is a striking feature of the contemporary intellectual scene there. The changing cultural and political atmosphere is reflected throughout Central Asia in the renaming of squares, streets and parks. Communism and Russian culture alike are out of fashion. Instead the symbols of Turkistan's own proud history are favoured. A natural choice is the Central Asian adventurer Babur, founder of the Mughal Empire in India, who was born in the Fergana Valley in 1483. In the town of Namangan the central park is no longer named Pushkin Garden but Babur Garden. Statute of Lenin has been replaced by that of Babur. And a brand new museum to Babur's memory has opened in Andijan, his birth place in Fergana. (Hyman, Anthony, 1993:296)

Ethnic nationalism, not various brands of Islam, constitutes the main potential threat to regional stability. The government's support the status quo in state borders. But in nationalist intellectual circles there is an enthusiasm to bring about alterations in the 1924 borders drawn around the new republics and unite with their ethnic brethren living as minorities in neighbouring state. (Hyman, Anthony, 1993:296) The influence of nationalist circles should not be dismissed out of hand. Fervent nationalist sentiments among Tajiks and Uzbeks are out in the open. A "Great Khorasan" state is publicly advocated by a group of irredentist nationalist intellectuals recently formed in Tajikistan, the "Great Arian Society". Their dream is to unite the Tajiks of Afghanistan and Tajikistan as well as to regain the 'lost' Tajik lands (of Samarkand and Bukhara) on Uzbek territory. (Hyman, Anthony, 1993:297)

### Pan -Turkic Nationalism

Another gloomy prognosis offered for the future of Central Asia was the evolution of nationhood along the concept of pan- Turkism. Turkey with its secular and democratic form of government was perceived to be the ideal political option as well as the most effective weapon vis-à-vis Iranian religious motives in Central Asia by the West. (Stobdan P., 1995: 64)

Undoubtedly, the concept did evoke emotional response among Central Asian countries. Many leaders, including President Karimov of Uzbekistan,

became advocates of Turkish model. Turkey, on its part made generous offers to assist Central Asian states in their development programmes. Ankara assisted these new states to become members of the United Nations (UN), Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). (Stobdan P., 1995: 65)

Interestingly enough, Central Asians began to take a cautious view of Turkey's interest – especially when they have just freed themselves from Russian "big brother". Not only did they politically reject Turkey's call for a common market but also realized the relative weakness of the Turkish economy. As the Central Asian States became confident of their diplomacy, they, particularly Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, preferred to deal with the Western world directly, without any mediation of Turkey.

The pan-Turkism concept, at the other level, is confronted with the difficulty of regional complexities and the poly-ethnic population in Central Asia. Although it is extremely convenient for us to lump together all the Central Asian states as one entity, in reality these states are anything but homogenous. The prospects for the forces of disintegration are much powerful than the commonalties which can bring them together. Sub-nationalism, regionalism and tribalism may seriously hinder such concepts taking proper shape. Tajiks are certainly not going to welcome such an idea.

Apart form major divisions between Turks versus Iranian ethnic and cultural background, potential fault lines are existing along nomadic versus settled people, urban versus rural, oasis versus steppe, mountain versus valley and so forth. Moreover, both China and Russia, would not like to see either the pan-Islamic or pan-Turkik perceptions gaining momentum in Central Asia.

*Secular Nationalism*

Alongside the growth of an Islamic movement in Muslim Central Asian Republics, there is a development of secular nationalist movement. A series of ethnic riots since 1989 helped to strengthen national identity, and chances of building a Pan-Islamic identity receded. In all the Central Asian States, elections brought to power with popular mandate, secular and former communist leadership. Even in Tajikistan where Islamic revivalist forces are relatively stronger as compared to other Central Asian states, their hold over power was brief and secular forces were able to mobilize popular support to

oust the Islamic leadership who had briefly seized power by force. (Patnaik A.K. :254) The Tajik incidents (1992) have underlined factors that work against the growth of Islamic fundamentalism. It revealed that Central Asians are not one homogeneous group with one overriding identity-Islam. They are not just divided on nationality lines, but there are strong ideological and clan regional loyalties that negate and oppose the unifying appeal of Islam. (Patnaik A.K.)

Islamic revivalism is also likely to encounter resistance may be passive, from many Central Asian women who have seen a progressive improvement in their economic and social position during the Soviet era and who would be required to, and might even be forced to lead a subordinate existence. Some are of the opinion that even at the religio-cultural level Central Asian women were more active in the Soviet period, a role that they seem to be losing with the re-assertion of patriarchal values and revival of Islam. Gilliam Telt, during her field work in Tajikistan, observed that with the revival of Islam across the Republic, men are coming to play an even greater role in Islamic practices. (Patnaik A.K. :255)

Assessing the situation, one can come to the conclusion that in Central Asia today, neither nationalism, socialism, secularism nor liberalism have the capacity to mobilize any opposition to the existing regimes in Central Asia. Only Islam is proving a highly effective ideology of resistance. Islam identified what went wrong in Central Asia in the past century like, secular government, corrupt elites, Communism and in the recent times globalization. It also specifies what must be done to set things right; join an Islamic party become a party activist, *mujahid* or *shahid,* establish an Islamic Republic, enforce the *sharia* and return to the true path of Islam. This has resulted in the adverse relations with the non-Muslim minorities in Central Asia, particularly the Russians, Slavic, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians and Belo-Russians. These minorities now feel threatened and are facing numerous problems in these Republics.

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# Water Security: A Non-Tradition Security Concern

*Kaushikee*

Water is essential for the survival of all living beings. It fulfills fundamental human needs and is used not just for drinking but also for food production, cooking, hygiene, sanitation, individual livelihoods, industry and development. Many poor households use water to earn an income by preparing and cooking food, doing laundry work, cleaning car windows or turning water into ice for sale. In rural areas, water is also used for livestock, for growing vegetables and for making bricks. Besides, water has global spiritual significance and plays an important part in cultural practices. Hence access to sufficient, safe and affordable water is vital for human development and human security. Although water security does not find a direct mention in this list of seven core elements of human security, yet the fact remains that it is inherent in several of the existing elements.

The issue of water security was flagged by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report in November 2006 when it presented a dismal state of affairs the world over with regard to access to clean and sufficient water: (Kevin Watkins, 2006:5:15)

- More than 1 billion people lack access to an adequate supply of water;
- 2.6 billion people lack access to adequate sanitation;
- 1.8 million children die every year as a result of diseases caused by unclean water and poor sanitation;
- Close to half of all ill-health suffered by people in developing countries is caused by a lack of access to clean water and sanitation;
- Illness caused by unclean water or poor sanitation causes 443 million school days to be missed each year globally.

Acknowledging the sorry state of affairs pertaining to water, Peter H. Gleick says, "the failure to provide safe drinking water and adequate sanitation services to all people is perhaps the greatest development failure of the twentieth century. The most egregious consequence of this failure is the high rate of

sickness and mortality among young children from preventable water related diseases." (Gleick Peter H, 2004:1)

The above scenario gives rise to three issues: safety, sufficiency and accessibility to water. All of these can have a bearing on human security. However, it is pertinent to point out that though the three issues are being explained separately here, they are in fact inter-related to each other and should thus be seen as such.

### Safety of water

When human beings use unclean and unsafe water for their daily needs, it leads to bad health, sickness and disease. There are four kinds of water-related diseases: waterborne, water-washed, water-based, and water-related insect vectors. (Gleick Peter H, 2004:8) The first three kinds of diseases are a result of inadequate sanitation and the supply of bad quality of domestic water. Waterborne diseases are a consequence of drinking contaminated water. When enough water is not available for washing and personal hygiene, it leads to water-washed diseases. Water-based diseases are caused by hosts that live in water or need water for a part of their life cycle. The fourth kind, water-related insect vectors cause diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. Such insect vectors breed or feed near contaminated water. Human deaths caused by water-related diseases "are inadequately monitored and reported". No specific figures are available for such deaths but it is estimated that they range between "2 million to 12 million" (Gleick Peter H, 2004:9) annually. Majority of these occur in the developing world for there is a lack of access to clean and safe water in such regions.

Apart from causing water-related diseases, inadequate water services and provisions also lead to "other significant health consequences" which "include morbidity, lost workdays, missed educational opportunities, official and unofficial health care costs, and draining of family resources." However, there is very little understanding about these health consequences as it is difficult to quantify and measure them.

An effort to quantify the "burden of disease" was made by the Harvard School of Public Health in 1993. It collaborated with the World Health Organization and the World Bank to assess the "global burden of disease" (GBD) which initiated a new indicator—the "disability adjusted life year (DALY)—to quantify and measure the burden of disease. "The DALY is a

measure of population health that combines in a single indicator years of life lost from premature death and years of life lived with disabilities. One DALY can be thought of as one lost year of "healthy" life." (Gleick Peter H, 2004:1) According to the data published by the World Health Organization in 2001, annually more than 75 million DALY's are associated with water-related diseases, majority of which are caused by diarrheal diseases.

Realizing the relationship between water and human development, one of the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) announced in 2000, specifically sort to reduce by half the number of people who did not have access to safe drinking water by the year 2015. This target of providing improved sources of drinking water such as piped supplies and protected wells has been reached five years ahead of the deadline. (Ban Ki-Moon, 2012:3), This essentially means that 89 per cent of the world population, viz., 6.1 billion now have access to safe drinking water. (Ford, Liz, 2012) But more work needs to be done in this area for it is projected that in 2015 more than 600 million people would still be using unimproved water sources in the world. (Ban Ki-Moon, 2012:3)

### Sufficiency of water

Water is a finite resource. Although two-thirds of the earth's surface is covered by water, only 2.5 per cent of this is fresh-water, of which the total usable freshwater supply for ecosystems and human beings is less than one per cent. (Global Environment outlook) Thus the popular adage, "Water, water everywhere, not a drop to drink" summarises the situation aptly. On the one hand, fresh-water supply, fit for human usage is already less in quantity and on the other even this is getting scarce by the day, thus magnifying the problem.

In many parts of the world, population growth, migration and the gradual destruction and increased pollution of fresh-water resources create widespread water scarcity and threaten the sustainability of adequate clean water reserves. Water scarcity is exacerbated by inefficient use of water, increasing demand, particularly in the industrial sector and a lack of public awareness and education about the need and the ways in which to safeguard water resources.

Environmentally destructive development models are also depleting domestic water sources, for example, those involving industrial pollution of water, deforestation, the building of dams, diversion of rivers or construction on floodplains. As a result, the competition among the different users of water

is growing more intense. In the developing world, this has resulted in increases both in the number of people without access to water and sanitation, and in the costs of providing and purchasing these basic necessities.

*Conflicts over water*

The supply of natural resources such as fresh water is finite and the world population has increased tremendously over the last century. As a result there is severe pressure on water bodies which "may lead to conflicts both within countries and between countries: some of these conflicts may be acute and violent." (Iyer Ramaswamy R, 2003:206), Such conflicts and violence over natural resources further threaten human security.

According to Peter H. Gleick, "Water resources have rarely been the sole source of violent conflict or war" but "there is a long and highly informative history of conflicts and tensions over water resources." (Gleick Peter H, 2004:234) Gleick gives the following classification (Gleick Peter H, 2004:235) of conflicts over water resources:

- "Control of water resources", wherein the main cause of tension between or among state and non-state actors is access to water;
- "Military tool", where water resources/systems are used by states as a "weapon during a military action";
- "Political tool", where water resources/systems are used by state or non-state actors for achieving political goals;
- "Terrorism", where non-state actors use water resources/systems as "tools of violence or coercion" or target them;
- "Military target", where state actors target water resources/systems during military action;
- "Development disputes", wherein water resources/systems are sources of "dispute" between or among state and non-state actors in the background of "economic and social development".

Vandana Shiva says that conflicts (her book is called *Water Wars* but by 'wars' she means 'conflicts') over water can take place between the rich and poor, between urban and rural areas, between locals and multinational groups, between state and civil society groups, between political units of a country, between countries etc. Her main concern is "corporate 'wars' against the people, i.e., the taking away of both individual and community rights to land and water by the state and/or by these domestic corporate private sector, and the

subordination of all these rights, as well as those of the state itself, to those of foreign or multi-national corporations under the regime of the WTO." (Iyer Ramaswamy R, 2003:207)

Shiva's concerns about corporates encroaching on individual and community right to land and water are already proving to be real. A case in point is the dispute between Coca-Cola Company in Plachimada and the Perumatty Panchayat, both parts of the state of Kerala, India.

In 2003, the Perumatty Panchayat in its order noted that "excessive exploitation of groundwater by the Coca-Cola Company in Plachimada is causing acute drinking water scarcity in Perumatty Panchayat and nearby places, it is resolved in public interest, not to renew the license of the said Company." This decision by the Panchayat was challenged by Coca-Cola, and after a series of legal cases, the appellate bench of the Kerala High Court asserted that it did not find a sufficient reason to rule against the multinational's right to extract water, nor did it find the extraction of excessive natural resources to violate the law. The court further reasoned that Coca-Cola had properly exercised its property rights to extract water from its own property. The case is pending with the Supreme Court of India.

The two multinationals, Coca-Cola and Pepsi, own 95 bottling plants in India, out of which Coca-Cola owns 57 and Pepsi 38. Each bottling plant extracts up to 1.5 million litres of water a day from the ground. (Shiva, Vandana, 2005), Nine litres of clean water are required to manufacture a litre of Coke. The processes used in manufacturing soft drinks like Coke and Pepsi are therefore inherently dangerous to human security.

### Groundwater

Groundwater forms not just the source of drinking water and the source of irrigation for agriculture but also the source of industries in several developing countries of the world. The incessant and mindless extraction of groundwater has depleted water resources and this is no longer sustainable. "Many of the most populous countries of the world—China, India, Pakistan, Mexico, and nearly all of the countries of the Middle East and North Africa—have literally been having a free ride over the past two or three decades by depleting their groundwater resources. The penalty of mismanagement of this valuable resource is now coming due, and it is no exaggeration to say that the results could be catastrophic for these countries, and given their importance, for the world as a whole." (Moench Marcus, 2004:79), Thus the "availability and

reliability" of groundwater are critical concerns and it is the poor who bear its maximum brunt, for they are deprived of their right of access to clean water.

There is this widely prevalent notion that future wars will be fought over water. Iyer, however, calls the "thesis" of 'water wars' "implausible". He believes that "countries are much more likely to cooperate with one another and enter into agreements or treaties, or embark on joint projects for water resource development and utilization, than go to war." (Iyer Ramaswamy R, 2003:202) One example of this cooperation can be witnessed in the case of India-Pakistan. Though the two neighbours have been at loggerheads over all sorts of issues but they have largely cooperated with each other on the water front under the framework of the Indus Water Treaty of 1965. So although, we are unlikely to see an all out war over water, the fact that conflicts and disputes are taking place over it cannot be denied either. Such conflicts are likely to continue in the future.

### Equal Access to Water

In principle, all human beings should have equal access to clean and safe water. However, in reality, poor households are routinely excluded from receiving adequate water services by inequitable market structures, insensitive institutional rules and poor people's lack of legal entitlements. During water scarcity, poor communities frequently suffer disproportionately from water supply restrictions. So even when poor households are connected to formal water service networks, poverty and seasonal water scarcity can force them to use unsafe water sources, such as unprotected wells and streams.

Lack of access to water by poor people is being exacerbated by water privatization policies that inadequately protect access by poor individuals and communities. When water is privatized, the poor cannot afford to pay the high prices. If they end up paying the high costs, it impoverishes their family further in a cycle of poverty. Water-selling is a lucrative business, and with increasing installations of private water supply networks, lifeline has been cut off from the poor. Poor people are also particularly affected by policies designed to save public expenditure on public goods such as water, whether arising out of a shift towards privatization or a general cut in social expenditure.

New Delhi, the capital of India, sponges off water from its neighboring states. While the neighboring states reel with water shortages, New Delhi enjoys the highest per capita water consumption in the country. Even within the capital, hotels and posh areas get regular water supply while poor colonies and slum

areas get rationed water.  Thirty-five 5-star hotels in Delhi consume 15 million litres of water daily, which is enough to meet the daily requirements of 36,000 households or 1,80,000 people. (Singh, Darpan, 2013: Cover Page)

### *Water and Women*

While lack of water and exposure to water-borne diseases affect men and boys as well as women and girls, the latter's disadvantaged health status and their traditional role in water collection in many societies, leave them particularly vulnerable. In many societies, water and fuel collection is seen to be a role solely for girls and women. The obligation to provide these necessities for domestic use, particularly in conditions of increasing environmental degradation, can place a massive burden on poor urban and rural women and girls.

Where water for domestic use is not available in or near the home, the burden of water collection is compounded by the distance that women may need to walk to reach their source. "A 2002 UNICEF study of rural household conducted in 23 sub-Saharan African countries found that a quarter of them spent 30 minutes to an hour each day collecting and carrying water, and 19% spent an hour or more." (United Nations Department on Economic and Social Affairs, 2004:4)  The time taken for water collection impedes women's productive activities and frequently robs children, particularly girls, of an education.

Though females are primarily responsible for providing water for domestic usage in most parts of the world, they have "no voice and no choice" with regard to the decisions that are made for providing water facilities and services.

### *International Efforts for providing water security: The Right to Water Campaign Evolution and Growth of Policy and Political Commitments*

Tackling the problems of a lack of access to water by poor people has long been on the development agenda. At the same time, the need for action to reverse the trends of over-consumption, pollution and rising threats from drought and floods have engaged the environmental community. Over the last three decades water has been addressed in a series of international conferences dealing with development and/or the environment. There have also been a number of conferences focusing specifically on water. All these conferences have recognised that water is a basic human need and some have explicitly confirmed the right to water.

The Geneva Conventions of August 1949 and their Additional Protocols of June 8, 1977, not only provide protection to combatants and civilians but also provide for the supply and safety of basic needs such as water. The UN Conference on Human Environment organised by the UN Environmental Programme in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972 emphasised the mutual relationship between man and the environment, expressing concern about man-made harm to the environment such as dangerous levels of pollution in water and calling for assistance to developing counties in promoting, *inter alia*, sanitation and water supply. In 1977, the Mar del Plata Action Plan stated that "[a]ll people have a right to have access to drinking water".

The right to water has been explicitly recognised in two core international human rights treaties – the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also forms an implicit part of a number of other rights, most obviously the right to life (protected by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (both protected by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979, Article 14 (2), obliges states to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas and ensure to such women the "right to enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communication". Under Article 24 (2) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, states are obliged to take steps to ensure the realisation of a child's right to health and in particular to take appropriate measures: "to combat disease and malnutrition, including within the framework of primary health care, through, inter alia, the application of readily available technology and through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking water, taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution". States Parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, recognise by Article 11: "the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing and to the continuous improvement of living conditions"

Subsequent conferences confirmed the right to water and stressed such human rights principles as universal access, participation and empowerment such as the New Delhi Declaration of 1990 adopted at the Global Consultation

on Safe Water and Sanitation for the 1990s. Recognising the importance of participation and the role of women, the International Conference on Water and the Environment, Dublin, 1992, recognised the importance of participation and the role of women. In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, dedicated a whole chapter of its concluding document, Agenda 21, to the development, management and use of water resources. It also used rights language, recommending that governments could "promote community ownership and rights to water-supply and sanitation facilities".

At two UN world conferences, the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994 (177 states participated), and the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II, Istanbul, 1996 (171 states participated), the community of states unanimously adopted international declarations which stated that the right to an adequate standard of living includes water and sanitation, in addition to food clothing and housing. Target 7(ii) of the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which was adopted in the year 2000, specifically deals with the provision of making safe drinking water available to the people who still do not have access to the same.

General Comment No. 15 on the right to water was adopted by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at its Twenty-ninth session in November 2002. The Comment provides guidelines for states on the interpretation of the right to water under two articles of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - Article 11 (the right to an adequate standard of living) and Article 12 (the right to health).

The 43 member Council of Europe recognized the right to water in 2001. The World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002 called on states to: "Adopt policies and implement laws that guarantee well-defined and enforceable land and water-use rights and promote legal security of tenure ..." The 118 members of the Non-Aligned Movement recognized the right to water respectively in 2006. The Asia Pacific Water Forum, composed of 37 Asian countries recognized the right to drinking water and sanitation in 2007.

On February 28, 2008, the UN Human Rights Council, the primary UN body for human rights adopted by consensus a resolution on 'Human Rights and access to safe drinking water and sanitation". Through this resolution, the

Council established on March 28, 2008 a new 'Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation'. This means that the UN human rights system now has a separate mechanism exclusively dedicated to issues related to the right to water and sanitation. The resolution also confirms that governments have obligations to ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation under international human rights law. In its February 2008 resolution, the Human Rights Council, did not proceed as far as explicitly referring to the 'right to water and sanitation' as a right contained within the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights but the creation of an Independent Expert mechanism and clear recognition of human rights obligation relating to the right to water and sanitation are important breakthroughs. The resolution firmly placed the right to water and sanitation on the Council agenda.

### Implementation and Impact

Over the last few decades, the preparation of global conferences has prompted unprecedented co-operation between inter-governmental, governmental and non-governmental organisations worldwide. Additional activities around the conferences have provided an important platform for the concerns of deprived communities to be voiced. This has had a considerable influence on changing perceptions and shaping the analysis of issues from a people-centred, human rights-based perspective.

The adoption of a number of international policy commitments and declarations on water issues represents global consensus on agreed priorities. These policy commitments provide a basis for holding governments politically accountable for their action and inaction, even though the commitments have not yet been turned into legal commitments enforceable in a court of law. At the same time, the right to water is being increasingly relied upon as a policy imperative by water development organisations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) throughout the world.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have established a Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) to keep track of progress in meeting the MDG goal on water and the Johannesburg Target on sanitation. On the 21st November 2006, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was requested by the Human Rights Council (HRC) to conduct a detailed study on the scope and content of the human rights obligations related to the equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation under human rights instruments taking into

account the views of States and stakeholders to be submitted prior to its sixth session.

*The World Water Council* was established in 1996 by renowned water specialists and international organisations, in response to an increasing concern about world water issues from the global community. It has nearly 300 member organisations representing more than 50 countries. The World Water Council aims to reach a common strategic vision on water resources and water services management amongst all stakeholders in the water community.

The Alternative Water Forum was established in March 2003, to present an alternative strategy to challenge the privatisation of water and promote people-centred policies. The Forum is open to local representatives and people responsible for local communities, to people and institutions from the world of education, communication, and cultural creation, government ministers and of representatives of the private sector, as well as to the general public. The Alternative Water Forum aims to "develop and promote institutions and public policy that will provide access to potable water for all human beings, in a manner which is democratic and sustainable".

The first Alternative Water Forum took place in Florence in 2003, and the second, in Geneva in 2005. The 4th World Water Forum held in Mexico City in 2006, provided a critical forum for advocating water as a human right. The Sixth World Water Forum concluded in Marseille, France in March 2012 and the Seventh Forum is going to be held in May 2013 in the Republic of Korea.

The year 2013 has been declared by the United Nations General Assembly as the International Year of Water Cooperation. This cooperation is meant to view all aspects of water holistically so as to make water resources "truly sustainable". It aims to raise awareness about the need for "increased cooperation" and the need to face the challenges of water management jointly.

### In conclusion

The relationship between water and security is complex and multi-dimensional as it is not just a basic human need but also has socio-cultural significance. Besides, providing clean water and sanitation creates a virtuous circle of better health and rising wealth. According to WHO, each $1 invested in water and sanitation would bring an economic return of between $3 and $34. On the contrary, if the current crisis in water and sanitation is allowed to continue it would cost many times more to resolve the situation. Cooperative

and coordinated efforts thus need to be made to invest in water, so as to make humans secure.

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# Globalization : Visions  of Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru

*Bagisha Suman and Prashant Kumar*

## Introduction

Globalization despite its variegated meanings and interpretations provided by different scholars has become the reality of the day and bears a ubiquitous presence in every part of the world. While debates on its novelty or uniqueness in the current phase are still going on, there is no denying the fact that it is the logical continuation of an ongoing process marked by the spread of liberal-capitalist driven development trajectory embraced by the larger part of the world. Globalization in essence is marked by interconnectedness, integration of societies, cultures, economies for which liberalisation and privatization became the key instruments. However, there are people who don't consider globalization as a path-breaking happening of the last century, for them, the history of globalization is as old as the human history itself. Amidst this ongoing debate regarding the chronology of this phenomenon, there is no denying the fact that the current phase of globalization whose distinctness lies in the high velocity with which the products and ideas are transferred, the ever-growing volume of consumers and products and their variety, and the resultant increase in the growing visibility of this process (Chanda 2007) is marked by many problems. These problems are growing inequality, poverty, marginalization of the third world countries, the reassertion of identities owing to the homogenized culture promoted by it. All this has been leading to the emerging of new kind of civil strifes and crisis of governability and myriad other challenges like the question of the nation state system and hence the debate on nationality, nationalism and meanings and notions of internationalism follow in such circumstances created by globalization's expansion.  All these issues appear in our everyday life in one form or the other. India being the part of the developing world as well as the country which has witnessed these issues on its own land especially after its entering into the LPG era actually has seen both aspects of the globalization. On the one hand side there is the glittering side of rich people, shopping malls, flyovers and the other hand there is the India of slum-

dwellers, the poor, deprived, starved sections who have been continuously been sacrificing for making the other India shine. India in fact entered into growth-centered model in this process creating and widening the gulf between the haves and the have-nots. All this leads many of us into wondering if this country (which was ideologically and intellectually shaped in its conscience by many empowering ideas of visionaries since the time of India's struggle for independence against the foreign rule) still can rely on their (the visionaries') notions of how the country should be governed. In fact, in this very context of the current situation and the prevailing crises, the three thinkers whom the author considers as the most relevant in this regard (owing to the widespread and profound influence they have on the collective conscience of India in general, and owing to the critical vision through which they looked at the crisis of their time and based on which they provided many foresighted thoughts which till date are important), are Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Though these three influential personalities of the pre-independence era had mutual disagreements, dissents over many areas of their thoughts and style of critiquing, the given circumstances open up many issues which are till date connected to our problems in this globalized era and their solutions are such that even a common man can connect to them easily. In the background of all these, the purpose of this paper is to first, connect globalization and the problems and tendencies generated by it in the contemporary phase with the tradition of Indian thought especially with reference to these three thinkers, second, to find in their thinking and critiques the relevance for the contemporary world in general and India in particular, third, to showcase through the major areas of their concern like the criticism of western civilization, capitalism, nationalism, internationalism, egalitarianism that these issues are even more pertinent in the current period and need to be looked beyond the ways in which we are habituated to look at, i.e., through going back to our rich legacy of Indian thinking tradition. In this process the paper will present the basic thoughts of the three thinkers, their critique and their mutual points of departure on the same.

Globalization has rendered open debates like whether the present process is inevitable or not, whether the current process is in the interest of all, whether this process of the global expansion of capitalism has an alternative or not. These are directly or indirectly linked to questions of equity, nationality, technical gap or digital divide etc. whose mention is found in the thoughts of

these thinkers, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly. To begin with, Gandhian thought and its major reflections have been taken up in this paper in order to make a connection with globalization. Gandhi in his seminal work, "Hind Swaraj" emerged as one of the most vocal critiques of the western civilization at a time when the west and its preaching was catching roots. World has moved much far ahead since then but problems have only persisted and taken some new forms, the difference being that the west styled modernity for which globalization has proved as an effective carrier is now an accepted fact of our life.

### Gandhi and Globalization

While connecting Gandhi and Globalization, an automatic thought that runs one's mind is that if Gandhi would have been alive, would he support it in its present form? Though Gandhi himself was a globally very well-connected man of his time in terms of the exchange of ideas with people of diverse regions, cultures and ideologies but when it came to his own country, he believed in indigeneity and reserving and respecting the local and not following the west blindly. This presents before us a classic sense of being global at mind but being essentially local in deeds. Thus Gandhi's thoughts present an interesting study of all the major debates surrounding globalization in the present times, e.g., modernity, capitalism, consumerism, mass production, problem of haves and have-nots, upliftment of the downtrodden people which is directly linked to the social deficit created by globalization. All these questions are addressed by Gandhi in his critique of modern civilization. For Gandhi, modern or western civilization was a 'mode of conduct' with its origins in the Enlightenment, and more particularly, from the Industrial Revolution. Thus, as Gandhi points it out that 'Let it be remembered that western civilization is only a hundred years old, or to be more precise, fifty' (CW 8:374). As Parel (1997: xviii) remarks in the context of Gandhi that,

> *The industrial revolution for him was much more than a mere change in the mode of production. As he interprets it, it brought into being a new mode of life, embracing a people's outlook on nature and human nature, religion, ethics, science, knowledge, technology, politics and economics. The satisfaction of the desire for economic prosperity came to be identified as the main object of politics.... The industrial revolution altered the concept of labour, now accepted mainly for its ability to produce profit, power and capital. Manual*

*labour was looked upon as fit only for the unlettered and the backward. With the technological revolution that followed the industrial revolution, machines, hitherto allies of humans, seemed to assert their autonomy.*

For Gandhi, civilization was a moral enterprise. In his own words as he speaks in Hind Swaraj "Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty". (Gandhi 1909) Hence it is the very basic ethos of this modern west that Gandhi sets himself against. According to Gandhi, there exist two unscrupulous principles guiding the very core of the western civilization, viz, 'might is right' and 'survival of the fittest'. While the first principle is known to legitimize the politics of power as expounded earlier by Machiavelli, the second one idealizes the economics of self-interest as proposed by Adam Smith." In the west "with rare expectations, alternatives to western civilization are always sought within its own basic thought system." (Heredia 1999)

Gandhi's relevance can be better understood in the contemporary world by looking at the three persistent themes in Hind Swaraj which has been discussed by many scholars. These three prominent ideas reflected in his work are colonial imperialism, industrial capitalism and rationalist materialism. Gandhi has very emphatically asserted in the seventh chapter of Hind Swaraj that "the English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength: but because we keep them" Thus the ingenuity of Gandhi's thoughts is in the fact that he was one of the first to comprehend and explain that colonialism had to be overcome in our own consciousness first in order to realize the freedom in its true sense. Moreover, Gandhi pointed it out that capitalism was the force running behind colonial imperialism. Thus, Gandhi's rejection of capitalism is based on a deep disgust to a system of profit–making economy which values machines more than humans and leads to the degradation of labour. In this system, mechanization is the preferred option over humanism. It was this type of dehumanized set up created by the capitalist production led colonial system which motivated Gandhi to give his famous statement in the chapter 19th of Hind Swaraj which also seems to be somewhat of an overstatement in the present times that "Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilization; it represents a great sin" (Gandhi 1909)

However, Gandhi's understanding and opinion on machines and mechanization start seeing a change since the 1920s. And he slowly starts to accept some helpful characteristics of machines like time and labor-saving,

however he keeps warning against the detriments of concentration of wealth and dislocation of workers promoted by such a system. This critique of capitalism can be directly linked to the phase of contemporary globalization which has proved to be the most visible outcome of this capitalist ideology.

The liberal-capitalist dominated world has for the first time in the human history been known to combine the "internationalization of trade, finance and production."(Went 2004) In the words of Went (2004: 341), this internationalization of these economic processes does not automatically involve trade, finance and production (the three circuits of capital) in the same manner. Thus, the decades preceding the World War I, which are often compared with the phase of contemporary globalization, it was only trade and finance which were strongly internationalized. Thus, it is the accelerated internationalization of production capital since the decade of 1980s which has added the newness to the contemporary globalization in addition to the combination of international trade and international capital flows. And this has been an unparalleled instance in the evolution of the ideological as well as material path of the world dominated by the capital.  Thus, in what is now seen and aspired as "a perfectly integrated world economy, individual nation states have to focus on being as attractive as possible to international markets." (Went 2004) Thus, the space for autonomous and divergent decisions with regard to policies in a country has been curtailed, and issue areas such as distribution of public goods is subject to the whims of traders, investors, speculators and other big players on the integrated global market.

Thus Thomas Friedman (1999) deftly elucidates this. In his own words,

> *When your country recognizes(...) the rules of the free market in today's global economy, and decides to abide by them, it pits on what I call 'the Golden Straitjacket.' The Golden Straitjacket is the defining political-economic garment of the globalization era. (...) On the political front, the Golden Straitjacket narrows the political and economic policy choices of those in power to relatively tight parameters. That is why it is increasingly difficult these days to find any real differences between ruling and opposition parties in those countries that have put on the Golden Straitjacket, its political choices get reduced to Pepsi or Coke – to slight nuances of policy, slight alterations in design to account for local traditions, some*

> *loosening here and there, but never any major deviation from the core golden rules will see their investors stampede away, interest rates rise and stock market valuations fall (Friedman 1999: 86-8).*

The above given discussion about the contemporary globalization points towards its peculiarity as well as the advancement of capitalism through this which has generated problems like monoculture, consumerism and the declining capacity of states to deliver on issues of social justice on account of adhering to the free market principle. These are some the issues which ask for a detailed thinking and interrogation on our part vis-à-vis the critiques and insights given by visionaries like Gandhi. It is important because the types of questions asked by Gandhi nearly a century ago are the ones which are now appearing before both "the under-developed and the post-industrial societies caught up in a deep upsurge confusion and disillusionment."(Sethi 1979)

Thus, in order to better contextualize and interpret the relevance of Gandhi today, (whether this be with respect to politics in the globalized world, use of modern technologies in our present times, or the prevailing culture of our times), the real limitations of Gandhi's critique have to be recognized.

Thus, Gandhi unlocks many pertinent and ethical issues which are relevant till date such as the relations and issues of inequality between between "the colonizer and the colonized, the dominant and the dominated, the oppressor and the oppressed." The globalized world has brought such questions into focus again and again for the world. Thus, in our own country, this broadening of gap between the haves and the have-nots hold up and encircles us even more daringly than ever before. The new economic path followed by India in the post-LPG era steadily epitomizes a completely new vision of society which has internalized the internal colonialism (talked about by Gandhi much earlier) we are facing presently. Thus, as Roy (1986:185) marks, Gandhi had sought to undo the damage done to the collective Indian psyche through his "redefinition of courage and effective resistance in terms of, or through non-violence".

The philosophy driving the globalized era and nations which are part of this globalization spree is the same as that which was behind the industrial capitalism (in the context of which Gandhi wrote), which is the market mechanism and profit. Gandhi's critique was actually a disapproval of these very ideas and philosophies. Thus the new consumerist society I dehumanizing

in many ways. Gandhi's idea of trusteeship also holds hope for the inequity and injustices prevailing in the present day global world.

Thus we can summarize this whole discussion on Gandhi and Globalization by saying that though Gandhi was not adverse to Global ideas and influences, he was certainly critical of the modern, capital civilization which makes us to conclude that he would certainly not support the contemporary globalization in mass production propagated by high technological, machine-centered drive, the consumerist culture, homogenized monoculture, the social deficit created by it. To quote Gandhi,

> *I would categorically state my conviction that the mania for mass production is responsible for the world crisis. Granting for the moment that machinery may supply all needs of humanity, still, it would concentrate production in particular areas, so that you would have to go in a roundabout way to regulate distribution, whereas, if these production and distribution are both in the respective areas where things are required, it is automatically regulated and there is less chance for fraud, none for speculation. (Gandhi 2001)*

### Tagore and Globalization

While Gandhi had rejected the modern civilization by calling it the 'satanic civilization', Tagore stands in contrast to him who talked of amalgamation of the good virtues of the east and west, and this is what makes him an 'internationalist' or a 'cosmopolitan' as well as global in today's sense. Though both Gandhi and Tagore were great lover of their motherland and witnessed the same plight of their country, their divergent views though championing the same cause makes their study interesting especially when here we are to grapple with the questions generated by the globalization debate.

Globalization which is about the openness of the economies, societies, cultures and their integration to an extent that each one has repercussions for another has been seen as both as boon and bane. But certainly for the large, underprivileged masses it has brought more suffering. It has generated debates of identity, nationality in a globalized world, cultural homogeneity, about particularism and universalism etc. which in some way talked about by Tagore, who is seen widely as a great internationalist and cosmopolitan thinker of his time and went ahead of his time when going against the narrowness of

nationalism, which he called a west-borrowed concept. Tagore's critique of nationalism, and his call for cosmopolitanism can be a good way to look at the tasks ahead in the globalized era. Tagore's views on nationalism are dictated by the immense importance he attributed to freedom in the broadest sense of the term. His attitude to politics and culture, nationalism and internationalism, tradition and modernity can all be seen in his strong belief of living and reasoning and freedom.

Vital and myriad changes have occurred in the world in over seven decades since the death of Tagore. Many of these changes have been profound in their impact. Thus, the world is now more integrated through globalization. The world as a whole has been said to become a 'flat earth' (Thomas Friedman's terminology) due to the massive technological developments in information technology, communications and transport. However, this economic growth has hardly reached hundreds of millions living in extreme poverty in the underdeveloped countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America as their development indicators of literacy, life expectancy and child mortality remain very low. Disparities among nations, and within nations, continue to be great. The spread of democracy and human rights have been uneven. Environmental degradation, climatic change, and international terrorism have emerged as major concerns.

Tagore is known to be proud of the age of science and technology during his times. However, even though he really valued the benefits of science, he agreed that it was not sufficient in itself. And that the hopes and desires of the humanity could be fulfilled only through a universalist and democratic framework. This gets us to his important views on humanism, culture, nationalism and internationalism which are as much important presently.

Nationalism in Tagore's words was "a great menace". Thus he described it as "a cruel epidemic of evil that is sweeping over the human world of the present age, and eating into its moral vitality." (Tagore 1917) Nationalism according to Tagore was an imported category from the west. It was not based on the spirit of social cooperation but on conflict and conquest. According to Tagore, imperialism was also a making of nationalism. Tagore was of the belief that the adoption of the western concept of nationalism by the Indians in their fight for freedom meant submitting to the outsiders yet again even though it promoted their cause for fighting against the imperial rule. Thus, Tagore while accepting and supporting the need for an anticolonial struggle

actually had rejected the modern notion of nationalism. It is interesting here to point it out that Tagore was an also against the non-cooperation movement from the outset. He contended that the Indians should apply their energies in constructive efforts such as in the spread of education and social reforms rather than in such destructive activities such as burning of foreign cloth which were the hallmark of Swadeshi and non-cooperation. Also, according to Tagore, the boycott of British goods promoted under the non-cooperation meant rejecting everything that was western. Tagore urged the Indian people not to completely boycott everything western but to integrate the best of the west with their own values in order to be able to create a self-reliant country. Thus, he points out the difference between "constructive and destructive swadeshi" in his work *Ghaire-Bhaire* or "The Home and the World" which was written in the aftermath of the Swadeshi movement. (Radhakrishnan and Roychowdhury 2003)

Tagore had immense faith in human cooperation as the cure for individuals and for India. In his views, it was disunity and wealth from cooperation which is the cause of human poverty. He held that through cooperation, one could convert individual weakness into strength. He considered the idea of non-cooperation a path of negation. Alienating the west, he believed would result in "spiritual suicide" (Moolchand, 1989: 170). However, Gandhi refuted Tagore's views by saying that the non-cooperation was not intended to erect a Chinese wall between India and the West, but pave the way for voluntary cooperation. He said that, "The non-cooperation struggle was against compulsory cooperation and against the armed imposition of the modern methods of exploitation" (Radhakrishnan and Roychowdhury 2003: 34).

Gandhi and Tagore were united in their thoughts and goals as they both wanted to see India as self-sufficient and independent by ending its dependence on the foreign rule. However, both of them differed in their methodology. Gandhi has been known to have encouraged the use of *charkha* which in his views would serve as an important role in letting India achieve self-realization (Sen 1997: 58). However, Tagore believed that use of charkha was economically not viable on large scale and it would only end up serving the purpose in partial ways and means. In his views, industrialisation was the need of the hour and foreign clothes represented better quality clothing which had no harm in itself so far as it catered to the needs of the Indian masses.

Thus, while Gandhi's advocacy of the indigenous spinning wheel or Charkha was evocative of his observance to indigenous or native ideas and institutions and his refusal of the Western civilization. For him, to wear foreign cloth was a sin and therefore burning of foreign cloth was a crucial part of the freedom movement. However, for Tagore, hand-spinning was only a form of another type of extremism. He asserted that Swaraj (home rule) couldn't be thought of in terms of adopting cheap clothing or apparel only, nor was it possible to have achieved Swaraj by involving everyone in spinning the wheel and burning the foreign cloth. Thus, in Tagore's views, spinning of charkha catered only to a small section of the market for high quality homespun fabric didn't sound feasible economically. In his views, hand spinning as a widespread activity could only be survived with the help of heavy government subsidies (Sen 1997: 58). And he was foresighted, rational and practical enough to foresee this. Also, being a great advocate of rationalism and liberalism, he also believed that hand-spinning was a drift away from modern industrialism, which India greatly required, and that over-emphasis on spinning wheel would promote superstition in place of science in economic matters. Thus for Tagore western ideas, particularly science and technology, were important for the development and revival of India's political and economic destiny.

Tagore's idea of internationalism is located in the interactions of the colonial and post-colonial, East and West, tradition and modernity and it contains the seeds of cosmopolitanism. Instead of pitting nationalism and cosmopolitanism against each other, Tagore shows how one grows out of the other. He sees colonialism as a two way process. In the context of the British colonialism in India, Tagore observes that on the one hand, "colonialism steers nationalism into becoming imperialistic, but on the other hand colonialism also presented a chance through which West came to be experienced by India and thereby introduced a channel of learning and exchange." (Bhattacharya 2009). For him, independence lay both in denunciation of imperialism and the retention of the channel of learning and exchange. It is in this double-move of Tagore that the roots of cosmopolitanism can be found. This aspect of exchange and interaction contained in colonial and post-colonial experience, indicate a cosmopolitan pattern inherent to it.

Thus Tagore can be seen as an open-minded thinker for whom the borders between countries, societies and cultures were but not good. He was a true humanist, believed in the unity of humankind. His whole philosophy can be linked to the globalization debate in the sense that while globalization

is also a process known for integrating societies, cultures, economies, where would actually Tagore stand in viewing Globalization in its present form. In the view of the author presented through an analysis of the thoughts of Tagore presented here in this paper, he would surely be in the favour of cross-cultural, global interactions and for inhibited openness among the nations but when it comes to problems of livelihood, inequality generated by globalization which is to look at the economic side of the phenomenon of globalization, definitely Tagore would not have supported the way globalization is being led by big corporations and according to the whims of international financial institutions and other big players to hijack its benefits.

## Nehru and Globalization

Nehru being the one who shaped the Indian nation-state since it achieved its independence, one vital difference that accounts for between him and the two thinkers we discussed is that while the two had their thoughts on different issues on the personal sphere, Nehru's thoughts could also see their manifestation at the implementation level. Progress has been the creed of the thoughts of Jawaharlal Nehru. Progress in his conception was two-dimensional: while material welfare or economic development provided its one dimension, development of the human personality provided the other. For him, the two dimensions belonged together and were mutually concomitant. To Nehru, the problem of development was basically a problem of scientific orientation of the nation's attitudes and the progress of the country was not possible without training her population in rational models of thought. In his views, the Indian culture was rich but static and its social framework was oppressive and non-functional. Moreover, he was only modestly optimistic about India's economic and industrial resources, and was frightened at the rate at which some other countries of the world-notably the USA were consuming the limited resources of the world. He was also opposed to free enterprise as the dominant form of economic organisation, but at the same time did not approve of a fully-controlled economy. He chose to steer the middle-path, and adopted for his country the framework of a mixed economy. He further observed that "the strongest urge in the world today is that of social justice and equality.", and came to the conclusion that any social structure based on the possession of land and capital by a few with "the others living on the verge of existence" stood self-condemned and had to be changed (Nehru 1960:39)

For Jawaharlal Nehru, it was the need of every state to have a 'national philosophy' and a 'national ideology' in order to hold it together and give it

unity and a sense of direction and purpose. In his view, the need for such a philosophy was particularly great in a new country like India whose people were divided on religious, ethnic, linguistic and other grounds, and were economically undeveloped, socially static and politically inexperienced. (Parekh 1991) As such they desperately needed a shared public philosophy to unite them and provide them with a set of clearly defined 'goals' and 'objectives'. As India's first Prime Minister, he took it as one of his most important tasks to develop such a national philosophy. Like most nationalist leaders, Nehru was convinced that India had become deeply degenerated and turned the corner in the nineteenth century by comprehensively reorganizing themselves along the lines required by the modern industrial civilization. For Nehru 'modernisation was India's national philosophy and involved seven 'national goals', namely, national unity, parliamentary democracy, industrialisation, socialism, development of scientific temper, secularism and non-alignment. (Parekh 1991)

Thus, in sharp contrast to Gandhi, modernisation and scientific development were the crucial instruments through which Nehru wanted to shape India. He promoted industrialisation through heavy industries in India, but at the same time talked of protecting the cottage industries of the country. Unlike Gandhi, he saw the economic progress of India not through agriculture but through industries. But, certainly he never intended to ignore agriculture. Unlike Gandhi, he was convinced that India could not permanently eliminate poverty and satisfy the legitimate aspirations of its people without large-scale industrialisation. More importantly, the modern world was industrialised, and a country that failed to keep with it remained weak and vulnerable to foreign domination. As he put it: "It can hardly be challenged that, in the context of the modern world, no country can be politically and economically independent, even within the framework of international interdependence, unless it is highly industrialised and has developed its power resources to the utmost. Nor can it achieve or maintain high standards of living and liquidate poverty without the aid of modern technology in almost every sphere of life. An industrially backward country will continually upset the world's equilibrium and encourage the aggressive tendencies of more developed countries." For centuries India had remained scientifically and technologically primitive and carried on with its centuries old mode of production.  That was why it fell an easy prey to industrialised Britain. Now that it had learned the 'painful lessons' of history, it must speedily 'catch up' with the advanced western nations." (Nehru 1985)

Thus, Nehru was all for the scientific and industrial growth in India, however he was also a leader from the third world who championed their cause and struggle against imperialist tendencies of the west, he also stood as a doyen of south-south cooperation. Despite the inconsistencies cited by his critiques in his critiques in his thoughts and action, Nehru was no doubt the architect of modern India. Though it is very difficult to predict if he would support the LPG reforms in India or India ushering into globalization era because it was something which was the demand of that time, but certainly he would have stood firmly for the kinds of dilemma and problems the process of globalization has generated for the people and countries at the marginalia.

Thus, this paper attempted to look at the modern Indian thinking tradition through the prism of globalization, thus looking back at the issues addressed by three of the most influential and internationalist thinkers of modern India and linking their major thoughts to the contemporary debates on globalization.

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# Peace Movement in Contemporary Rajasthan

*Narendra Nath and Bajrang L. Saini*

The land of Rajasthan has been endowed with rich traditions of multiculturalism since ancient times. (Shah, Ganshyam 1998)  We find that it is a traditional state with age-old social structure giving way to changes brought in by the market forces through the engine of liberalization. In a way, one could say that the exploitative elements of both traditional as well as modern society are present in the socioeconomic structure of today's Rajasthan. In Rajasthan, social evils like Sati system, dowry system, girl infanticide, domestic slave system, buying and selling of women, prostitution, bonded labour (sagri system) etc., are some of the social evils this state has faced the brunt of. (Sharma, K.L, 1986) Despite its not-so-clean history, the Rajasthan society has incessantly made attempts to create a peaceful society through emphasis on justice, equity, and rights in the social and political spheres. The wave of social renaissance, which blew in the entire India, also affected Rajasthan. As a result of the ongoing movement under the aegis of Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, etc., fundamental change started taking place within the traditional religions, and their preachers and followers. (Jain, Pratibha, 1985)  If the social evils had got multiplied in numbers, then there was no dearth of reformers in the land of Rajasthan, as well. The British period of colonial rule actually triggered many socio-reform movements. As it was true for the entire India, in Rajasthan too, because of the contact with the British, there was both inward looking tendency as well as learning tendency directly from the occidental values. Of course, Rajasthan being a princely state, these tendencies were limited to the extent of their restricted contact with them. Rajasthan State was a heterogeneous conglomeration of separate political entities with different administrative systems prevailing in different places.

The State is characterised by a non-nucleated, dispersed pattern of settlement, with diverse physiography ranging from desert and semiarid regions of Western Rajasthan to the greener belt east of the Aravallis, and the hilly tribal tracts in the Southeast. (Bhalla, L.R, 2004)  Set within this diverse

geographical terrain, Rajasthan encompasses a wide range of livelihoods. The State is home to, on one hand, prosperous "Green Revolution" peasantry in Ganganagar, and, on the other hand, subsistence farmers in Dholpur. Other contrasts are between the small artisans engaged in traditional crafts and the trading empires of the Marwari community, as well as the nomadic herders of sheep and camel to the dairy producers relying on stall-fed milch cattle. (Bhalla, L.R, 2004:45)

Given the wide variations in terrain, social structure, livelihoods and cultural patterns within the State, no un-dimensional measure of growth such as income can be adequate. A more comprehensive, people-oriented approach is needed to capture dynamics of local economies and social transactions and provide a vision of the direction in which the State and its people can develop. In this context human development approaches and measures, which go beyond income to include dimensions related to human capabilities such as quality of life, are indispensable. (Saxena, H.K, 2005) Today's Rajasthan The table below gives us a bird's eye view about the shape of the state in all significant aspects. Table- 1(Official link of Govt. of Rajasthan)

The social economy of Rajasthan is characterised by diversity in terms of livelihood sources and consequently low level of income poverty and unemployment. More than 60 percent of the State's total area is desert, with sparsely distributed population, entailing a very high unit cost of providing basic services. Agriculture continues to be dependent on rainfall. Failure of the monsoon causes severe drought and scarcity conditions. Growth of population continues to be high, with decadal rates being the highest in India. Growth in labour force outpaces employment generation. Rajasthan is deficient in water (surface and ground). Ground water at many places is unfit for human and livestock consumption. Various sectors of the economy share common constraints of low levels of technology, high levels of risk, and poor credit and market infrastructure. Land inequality is compounded by ecological fragility. Low productivity of agriculture and the dimension of ecological risk make food security and subsistence the primary concern of farmers. High levels of urban poverty, with trends consistently higher than rural poverty levels, are a salient feature of Rajasthan's poverty profile. This problem assumes greater proportion given the high rates of growth of urban population (40 percent between1981-91), in contrast with that of rural population (22.9 percent). A gender bias is seen in the current trends of employment diversification and increased "feminisation of poverty". (Rajasthan UNDP Report, 2002:19) In

the sector of health and survival, Rajasthan shows that, despite the creation of extensive healthcare infrastructure, health outcomes lag behind global norms and national commitments. The progress made since independence in terms of infant mortality, case fatality rates of various diseases, especially those related to reproductive and child health, is less favourable compared to other states. Rajasthan's problems of malnutrition and lack of sanitation are also severe. (Joshi, Hemlata, 2007) The growing incidence of HIV/AIDS requires urgent attention. So, the status of health in Rajasthan, despite progress made since 1949, is quite poor both in absolute and relative terms. The health targets set at Alma Ata have not been realised till date. (Rajasthan UNDP Report, 2002:82)

Primary health care has not reached a large number of poor people, especially women, dalits, and communities living in remote areas. The health scenario in Rajasthan is still characterised by gender imbalance, low vital rates (lower than the ones for the nation) and an uneven health care coverage. Global prescriptions for health sector "reform" have focussed on privatisation of curative health services as well as on a public-private mix in primary and secondary care. However, the challenge of ensuring universality and affordability has not been addressed thus far. An appraisal of the current health situation and the disease profile of Rajasthan vis-à-vis goals of universal health care shows that there are substantial shortfalls in the efficacy of the     public health system in the state. In the early 1950s, the health profile of Rajasthan compared favourably with that of other Indian states, and with the national average.

Today, Rajasthan's health indicators are among the poorest in the country, indicating that the state's performance in terms of improvement in vital statistics and case fatality from various diseases has been comparatively lackluster. The persistence of ill health in Rajasthan is strongly correlated to social variables, in a context of patriarchy where expectant mothers and girl children are neglected, and women as a cohort are more vulnerable to diseases that afflict the population in general. This is borne out by an examination of indicators such as life expectancy, infant and child mortality, fertility and other vital rates, as well as of the state's disease profile. Expectation of life in Rajasthan is amongst the lowest in the country. (Rajasthan UNDP Report, 2002:85) The Human Development Report 2002 discusses the condition of Rajasthan in terms of Human Development Index (Indrayan A., et.cl.,1999). In the field of education, the literacy level, especially for girls, is among the lowest in the country. Other social and economic infrastructure is also deficient. (India,

2006) Despite the high decadal growth rate, the challenge of Education for All is still substantial especially for rural areas, women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. (Jain, Ajit Kumar, et.cl., 1999) Thus the education scenario is doubly constrained: not only is the achievement level relatively low in absolute terms, but also its distribution across social groups is highly uneven. (Joshi, Hemlata, 2003) Therefore, some people suffer more than others in educational terms. That is why large-scale inequalities are observed in the literacy achievements of groups located at the polar extremes of the socio-economic prosperity scale. For example, in 1991 the literacy rate of 79 percent for men in urban areas and only about 5 percent for Scheduled Caste women in rural areas represents two practically incompatible realities and raises serious doubts about the equity effects of the state's education system. (Rajasthan UNDP Report, 2002:44-68)

The atrocities against women in Rajasthan, as registered under I.P.C have always been higher in incidence when compared with the national average. The Rajasthan average percentage was 8.74 as against national average of 7.83. In 1995, the registered cases of crime against women were 9422 that increased to 13451 in 2006. Similarly, around 30% of the population is constituted by the SCs and the STs. There has been a long record of atrocities in the state against them. Due to a long feudal set-up in the state, a radical change in their condition cannot be possible. The statistical interpretations indicate a decline in the incidence of crime against. Them but their complete amelioration demands a drastic change in the social mindset. (Official link of Rajasthan Police)

Hence, here we observe that the people of Rajasthan today are in a living condition wherein the basic minimum needs are not available to them. We see that if the civic life of a citizen here is deplorable, then the socio-economic conditions are not better either. The political rights are there but more in principle than in practice. The constitutional rights and remedies are only scantily available for the obvious reasons. We also know that in India, (and hence in Rajasthan also), poverty operates in a vicious circle wherein the poor is condemned to face multiple deprivations once he is trapped into it. The basic issues are of man and environment, displacement and degradation of social and tribal groups; human rights abuse, and ultimately the displacement and reduction of economic man from his native cultivation and production process to the condition of a degraded human labour in the urban development process. People in underdeveloped areas have been demanding basic irrigation

facilities, drinking water, transport, primary schools, housing, health, and loan facilities through banking system, basic employment, and minimum wage, conditions. So, as per our definitions of peace (as enumerated in previous chapters), we can say with utmost humility that the life in this state of India can be termed as being far from peaceful. In sixty years of independence, our efforts so far have not been up to the mark. A civilized society essentially has to be peaceful. What efforts the State and the Civil Society have made thus far in this regard? (Pawar S.N., et.cl., 2004)

In modern Rajasthan, we find that there are a rich variety of movements, which have been there to secure peace to its people, in real sense of the term. (Sharma B.M., et.cl., 2004) They collectively create conditions of peace. There has been a renewed resurgence of such movements. They may be recognised as new social movements since they qualitatively differ from the old movements. They are considered to be new because they have a participatory, nonhierarchical pattern of organisation. More importantly, their activities have or are in the process of developing a far-reaching critique of the existing political, economic, and social order. They also strive to change social values as well as public policy. (Ponna Wignaraja, 1993:122-23)  They collectively focus on the quality of human life, that is, life in peace. More crucially it is this framework, which locates these movements as part of the process of social transformation, which is new. (Guha Ramchandra, 1989:12-15) They are anti-war, anti-nuclear movements, ecological movements, human rights movements, movements of indigenous peoples and other survival related movements. Though varied in approach and conditions, the issues raised by these movements are interlinked and the problem of peace gets reflected as part of this linkage. (Cohen  Robin, 2000)

They together provide some of the creative responses to the challenges of our time. The role and meaning of the peace movement in Rajasthan, as in India, emerges on the ground that each social movement is related to other movements and, more importantly, functions as a component to the holistic view of peace. The peace movement that has arisen here, as it has in India, is more than the sum total of these traditions or the organisations that represent them. These movements may remain, in physical and organisational sense, fragmented and scattered. But they are no longer restricted to specific situations or particular places. (Puri H.K, et.cl., 2000) They provide, in fact, continuity over time and connection from region to region. They have begun to share and learn from the experiences of other situations. The increasing integration

of movements struggling in response to political, economic, ecological, social, and military conditions, despite the diversity is due to their common concern for future that is seen as threatening, more so in the wake of the L.P.G phase which India embraced in the early nineties. (Khanna Kewak, 2003) Of the numerous such movements, we shall be enumerating some of the most illustrious ones around which the peace movement in Rajasthan has the potential to emerge shall be discussed. Before that, it becomes almost obligatory to discuss the State efforts through Rajasthan Human Rights Commission. It would be pertinent to comment here that the state agencies and the new social movements are complementary to each other, and a comprehensive peace operating in totality warrants such complementarities.

### Rajasthan Human Rights Commission

In a state like Rajasthan, where the social problems have persisted through the ages, the feudal set-up stubbornly ingrained into the society, where millions of humans are still struggling to eke out a sober living for themselves, the role of State Human Rights Commission is indispensable. The main mandate of the State Commission is to function as a watch dog for human rights in the State. Under the 1993 Act, human rights are defined in Section 2(d) and are those justifiable rights, which can be enforced in a court of law in India. Most of the universal human rights as defined in the UN Charter of 10th December, 1948 are included and are being vigorously enforced. Keeping in view the significance of human rights, (Singh Nagendra K, 1986) the Government of Rajasthan is committed to the protection of human rights and has taken several steps in this direction. Rajasthan is one of the few distinguished States in the country to have a State Human Rights Commission since 1999. The commission monitors human rights in the State and looks into the complaints received in connection with the violation of human rights and ensures appropriate corrective action.

Hence, the State Human Rights Commission can be seen doing its bit.This is highly inadequate, keeping in mind the social and economic predicaments of the people of Rajasthan –even if other state agencies and commissions like Women Commission, SC/ST Commission, Minority Commission, OBC Commission, etc. are taken into account. Therefore, the necessity of new social movements and other civil society actors for the meaningful, non- violent transformation of the society of Rajasthan and India is almost compulsory.

## *Eco-Religious Movement: TheBishnois of Thar Desert*

The Bishnois are known as the conservationists to whom the preservation of animal and vegetable life is a religion and has been so from the early 15th century. The basic philosophy of the  Bishnoi religion is that all living things (including animals) have a right to survive and share resources. It is astonishing that more than 450 years ago, a simple villager from a remote desert area, without even the basic education, clearly understood the importance of preserving bio-diversity. He not only understood it himself, but also had the wisdom to influence generations of people to preserve it by weaving it with their religion. The Bishnoi tribe of the western Indian state of Rajasthan has, over centuries, made a unique blend of ecological sense and religious sensibility their faith's cornerstone.( The Bishnois)

The Bishnois worship nature in all its manifestations. Not the ripe, yielding nature of ancient pagan societies, but the ruthless and demanding desert where a desolate horizon meets a blazing sky. Here, women suckle motherless deer, die to save trees, go hungry to provide food for animals and live a strictly sattvik (simple) life advocated by their guru Jambhoji. Guru Jambheshwarji, or Jambhoji launched the Bishnoi religion in 1542 AD as his followers affectionately refer him to. He was a great saint and philosopher of the medieval period. He was disillusioned by communal antagonism between Muslim invaders and the native Hindus. However, instead of wallowing in despair, he went ahead to form a religion of peace based on 29 (bish: twenty, noi: nine) principles that included compassion for all living beings, cleanliness, devotion, vegetarian diet and truthfulness. Thus, the Bishnois came into being. The tenets were tailored to conserve bio-diversity of the area but also ensured a healthy eco-friendly social life for the community. Out of the 29 tenets, 10 are directed towards personal hygiene and maintaining good basic health, seven for healthy social behavior, and five tenets to worship God. Eight tenets have been prescribed to preserve bio-diversity and encourage good animal husbandry. These include a ban on killing animals and felling green trees, and providing protection to all life forms. The community is also directed to see that the firewood they use is devoid of small insects. Wearing blue clothes is prohibited because the dye for coloring them is obtained by cutting a large quantity of shrubs. The Bishnois are presently spread over the western parts of Rajasthan and parts of Haryana and Punjab. They are more prosperous than the other communities living in the Thar Desert, probably because of their eco-friendly lifestyle. Their villages are easily distinguishable with plenty

of trees and other vegetation, and herds of antelopes roaming freely near their homes. The fields are ploughed with simple ploughs using bullocks or camels and this causes minimal damage to the fragile desert eco-system. Only one crop of bajra is grown during the monsoon season. The bushes, which grow in the fields, protect the loose sand from wind erosion and provide the much-needed fodder for animals during a famine. The Bisnois maintain groves, locally known as orans, for the animals to graze and birds to feed. Organizations serve as important recharger of rain water in the aquifers in the desert, where every single drop of water is precious in most orans, particularly in western Rajasthan. The rainwater is stored in underground tanks called 'tankaras' which is being used for only drinking purpose. The chemical fertilizer usage in their agricultural fields is very low and they are using natural manure (cow and buffaloes dung). They use only cow-dung flakes for their cooking. The Bishnois keep only cows and buffaloes as rearing of sheep and goats, which devour desert vegetation, is taboo. They store water during the year in under-ground tanks by collecting rainwater, as it is precious in this dry desert area. The Bishnois are environment friendly people of a brilliant order. Though they are Hindus, they do not burn their dead but bury them to save precious wood and trees.

In 1737, when officials of the king of Jodhpur started felling a few Khejri trees in Khejerli village, men, women and children hugged the trees that were being axed. In all, 363 Bishnois from Khejerli and adjoining villages sacrificed their lives. Later, hearing about it, the King of Jodhpur apologized for his action and issued a royal decree engraved on a copper plate, prohibiting the cutting of trees and hunting of animals in all Bishnoi villages. Violation of this order by anyone including the members of the ruling family would entail prosecution and a severe penalty. A temple and monument stand as testimony to the sacrifice of the 363 martyrs. Every year, the Bishnois assemble there to commemorate the extreme sacrifice made by their people to preserve their faith and religion. The Bishnois aggressively protect the khejri trees and the antelopes, particularly the blackbuck and chinkara, even now. (Desert Shinto, 2006) According to them, if a tree is saved from felling at the cost of one's head, it should be considered a good deed: "Sir Saate Roonkh Rahe, To BhiSastoJaan". They not only protect antelopes but also share their food and water with them. In a number of villages, Bishnois hand-feed the animals.

It's for this environmental awareness and commitment that Bishnois stand apart from the countless other sects and communities in India. They have

learnt, with time and hardships, how to nurture nature and grow with it instead of exploiting it. So, we see in the form of this community a sort of peace movement being run in the western part of Rajasthan. Ecology, biodiversity, non-violence towards living creatures, are all part of the peace agenda. Peace here implies survival amidst natural hardship. The Bishnois do not command the level of respect they ought to—the reason being that they often also get violent in their penchant towards environment and living beings. The formation of Bishnoi Tiger Force, a self-styled formation of the Bishnoi youth is an institutional expression of this. Though their argument is genuine as its leader RampalBhawad believes-"Because of the ongoing 193 famine, the encroaching hunters, non-cooperation from the forest officials etc. have forced them top take such an extreme step. (Dainik Bhasker, Feb. 16, 2007)

### *Anuvrat Movement*

ANUVRAT GLOBAL ORGANIZATION, with its widely publicized acronym 'ANUVIBHA', is a non-profit socio-cultural organization dedicated to peace and non-violent action. Founded in 1982, mainly to disseminate the message of ANUVRAT MOVEMENT globally, ANUVIBHA has created a worldwide network of thousands of people spread the world over, which believes that all conflicts should be resolved through nonviolent actions. ANUVIBHA is also formally approved by the United Nations for its association with its Department of Public Information. In pursuance of ANUVIBHA'S avowed objective of popularizing ahimsa at the global level, it has so far organized a series of international conferences on different aspects of peace and nonviolent actions.( Anuvrat Global Organization(Anuvibha):A Profile) One of its aims is to extend support to U.N. and its agencies in their endeavor to achieve world peace. It also launches peace initiatives from time to time with a view to educating people and preparing them to face the challenge of violence under the leadership of the internationally revered nonviolence crusader and the spiritual patron of ANUVRAT MOVEMENT.

The Anuvrat Movement, started by the great Jain Saint Acharya Tulsi in Rajasthan in 1949, is a positive evidence of the vitality of the Jain religion as also of the presence of the life – and world - affirming elements in it. It contains, therefore, the vows and beliefs traditional to Jainism but against the background of the corruption of man and society that had come about at the time the movement was thought of and launched and of the immediate necessity of rebuilding of character felt at the time. (Gopalan, 2000:33-39)

Acharya Tulsi believed that the aim of Jainism (from an empirical standpoint) is the development of the individual character. He emphasized the fact that the ills of society automatically get cured by means of the process of self-purification and self-control. From this point of view, he maintains that the view sometimes expressed that the function of religion is the control of society isincorrect. By developing the character of the individual, the level of social morality is made to go up but the latter is not the main aim of religion.

The movement was not confined to India merely as it spread to other countries as well. The success of a movement is to be measured by the results it produces. Of course the Anuvrat Movement has in no sense failed. In fact it has succeeded in all places. It has left its imprint on the Indian psyche and has effectively contributed to a moral renaissance. Success encourages more action. New vistas opened as people of different classes and categories got attracted towards the Movement. It grew in new directions. Different vows were fixed for students, businessmen, government servants, teachers, workers, etc. From time to time students' weeks, government employees' weeks, businessmen's weeks and prohibition weeks were celebrated. Anuvrat Student Councils were formed at Delhi and many other places. The Anuvrat Committee was formed to coordinate various activities of the Movement. It started the publication of the fortnightly 'Anuvrat'. The Anuvrat Thinkers' Forum was started. Anuvrat activities are not confined to towns; they are carried on in villages also. As a matter of fact, efforts are on in a few cases to change whole villages into anuvrat villages.

Whether these efforts to make the Movement popular were adequate is not possible to say. As a matter of fact full advantage was not taken of the widespread contacts that had been made, of the attraction of the people towards the Movement and of the almost magical effect of Acharya Shree's personality on the people. There were also other weaknesses like lack of proper organization and absence of direction before the fieldworkers. A situation developed in which the mellifluous voice of Acharya Shree flowed like a torrent wherever he went but lost its momentum for want of an adequate follow-up. Consequently the results were not commensurate with the efforts. Again, in the absence of adequate preparation the anuvrats cannot have any meaningful effect on life. The life of the masses is so shackled with cramping traditions, that without breaking them it would not admit of anything new. For this reason, Acharya Shree gave the following message to the people: "The rituals observed at the time of birth, wedding and death must be given up, dowry must be put

an end to and the use of the veil must be discontinued. Once these basic problems are resolved a new way of progress will open itself." Even today the Movement is engaged in many-sided activities aimed at the welfare of the people. It is going on thanks to Acharya Shree's inspiration, active work by the monks and the nuns and the devotion of sympathetic householders. If it succeeds in creating a band of dedicated workers, India, will once again earn the right of preaching morality to the world. Anuvrat and Preksha Meditation Mental tension has emerged as a dreadful disease of the age of industrial progress. To remedy it, the Anuvrat Movement has been added with a new chapter in the form of Preksha Meditation. Through its practice thousands of people have had a profound experience of both physical and mental peace. An organized programme to include Preksha Meditation as the science of living (JeevanVigyan) in the fields of administration and education has also been undertaken. The possibilities of future growth are in fact immense. The organized activities of Anuvibha are organization of International Conferences, holding RashtriyaAnuvratShikshakSansad (National Parliament of Anuvrati Teachers), developing Gramodayas (Centres for a phased programme of improving the quality of life in one hundred villages each), launching Balodayas(Projects for moral and spiritual transformation and all-round development of children). Among other important wings of Anuvibha are Pragya Research Centre (to conduct research on causes of violence and their elimination); Anuvrat Centre for Intenational and Multicultural Understanding (to develop strategies for promoting cultural conciliation and world friendship); International Anuvrat Council for Ecological and Environmental Ethics (to evolve a new culture embedded in ecological lifestyle); Centre for Inter-religious Dialogue and Interfaith Education (promoting religious reconciliation and unity and diversity); Centre for Sustainable Development Through Nonviolence (for discouraging excessive consumption and exhibitionism); Anuvibha Poverty Elimination Council, etc. It has also constituted an Anuvibha Award for International Peace for honouring people committed to ahimsa.

### Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS)

The work of Tarun Bharat Sangh, and its founder Rajendra Singh in the districts of Rajasthan can easily be over-simplified as water-shed management whereas, it is in fact a revolution in regenerating life and society in denuded and deserted lands. The birth of TBS took place in 1975, when a group of likeminded colleagues, who wanted to operationalise the Gandhian philosophy, got together at Jaipur. Among them was a young activist Rajendra Singh, who

was stirred by the movement launched by Vinoba Bhave and who was guided by Gandhi's teachings of local autonomy and self-reliance. TBS first became active in rehabilitating a group of poor laborers whose peaceful existence was gutted in a fire. From there, their work started to spread to other people, areas and problems.

In 1985, TBS started their work of water conservation in Alwar district of Rajasthan having a meagre 620 mm average rainfall and where animal husbandry and agriculture were the main occupation. (T. Chandini, 2004) For rapid progress, they rediscovered traditional methods of rainwater harvesting. By 1995, over 4000 water harvesting structures had been built by the local people with the support arranged by the TBS. A geographical area of 6500 sq.kms comprising 750 villages had been turned into "white zone" from "Dark zone". By June 2002, another 111 villages out of the 850 will also become drought-proof, thus taking the total to 201. This is clearly the only example of its kind in the whole world. New changes are almost always faced by challenges. TBS fell in the same category. In initial stages, people did try to oust the TBS, there were confrontations with the government agencies, and local administration chief brought outsiders to be resettled on the villagers' community land. The 'mining Mafia ' was encouraged and forest preservation laws were ignored. However, TBS faced all these with Gandhi means like undertaking protest march, demonstrations and networking with other NGO's in search for peaceful solutions. (Agrawal Anil, et. cl. 2001)

The focus throughout remained firmly on rebuilding johads (a traditional pucca rainwater storage tank) and on generating and managing their flow. From this activity all other progressive activities flowed viz. water generation, water management, its conservation and economical use, etc. These activities highlighted that water-protection; support systems like afforestation and hill slope protection are all inter-linked. The johads were rebuilt in the parts of the contiguous districts of Alwar, Dausa, SawaiMadhopur, Karoli and Jaipur districts. Johads and the other appropriate water structures have also been built in the districts of Jaisalmer, Ajmer , Udaipur and Bharatpur. As a result of these efforts five seasonal rivers in the northeastern Rajasthan area, that had nearly dried up have now become perennial. These rivers are Ruparel, Arvari, Sarsa, Bhagani and Jahajwali. For every Rs.100 invested in small earthen check-dams known as Johads, the economic production in villages has risen by Rs. 400. And all this prosperity has come through the use of only three per cent of the total rainwater. However, after the regeneration of these rivers, the

Government of Rajasthan gave contracts for fishing in certain stretches of ArvariRiver . To oppose this policy and to protect fish and other riverine life forms, a three-month long Satyagraha was organised for not allowing any fishing. This Satyagraha resulted in reversal of govt. policy. To sustain this unity and the river in future a decentralized power model has been structured among the 70 villages of Arvari River, i.e., the ARVARI PARLIAMENT. All these efforts were motivated by the desire to maintain an ecological balance between the nature and man. This is, of course, an ongoing process. The prime motivation of TBS is to be vigilant and togetherness. Since then TBS has also hosted many international and national deliberations to further understand these issues. Employment opportunities have increased and migration has reduced substantially. Studies have shown manifold increase in the enrollment of students in school and output of food grains and milk production."Several hundred villages in the Alwar district of Rajasthan have achieved water self-sufficiency and increasing agricultural stability through water harvesting structures promoted by the Tarun Bharat Sangh." (Kothari Ashish, 2007)

### The issues

(1) Environmental Degradation
(2) Government Resistance
(3) High Costs & Low Benefits
(4) Inadequate Finances & Lack of Information

### The strategies

The TBS strengthened by constant contact with the villagers thus beginning to evolve a method of working with the people. Their strategy gradually crystallizes into five themes. The first was the effort to be a collective one from the villagers in which all would benefit. The second was that this collective wisdom could be conceived in an atmosphere where informal communication took place. The third was that all decisions would be strictly enforced. The fourth was that each person in the collective community would be individually responsible to carry out the tasks. The fifth was that the community would only use outside help as a catalyst for their guidance. After discussions with the villagers, they found that they could provide most of the materials required, except technical help. TBS always insisted that in some way or another, the community would have to bear at least 25 percent of the cost of repair, and after they worked out the benefits, the community would always agree.

The foremost benefit of the water harvesting structures is conservation of rainwater, which helps in Recharging of ground water by harvesting each single drop of rainwater. This not only preserves water for use during the drought but also leads to rise in the water table in the adjoining areas of the structure especially in the wells existing in the fields. Easier availability of the water in these drought-affected regions results in drastic improvements in the life of the people of these areas. This makes irrigation possible throughout the year and opens new avenues of the income for them. This is indeed an effort towards reducing poverty that emphasizes poor people to become self-reliant. Agricultural production has also increased. Further, time devoted earlier in search of drinking water by people, especially females are now used in other productive works. Now lesser males migrate to other area for employment as laborers. Instead they cultivate their lands, which earlier was uncultivable. At least 5 rivulets which were dry during the last 50 years have become perennials. Watershed work has been undertaken in more than 850 villages. Of these, 90 have been made drought-proof. This means, that even if these villages receive less than 3 inches of rain per annum they will face none of the hardships of drought. The only awareness that they will need to have is not to take crops, which consume too much water, and not to waste any water.

In view of the emphasis given by the Human Development Report 2006 on water, and the slogan of 'Water Wars' emerging on the horizon, the efforts of Tarun Bharat Sangh have a real message to give to the entire world.

### The MazdoorKisan Shakti Sangathan and the RTI Movement

The most important feature that distinguishes the movement for the people's right to information in India from that in most other countries, whether of the North or the South, is that it is deeply rooted in the struggles and concerns for survival and justice of most disadvantaged rural people. The reason for this special character to the entire movement is that it was inspired by a highly courageous, resolute, and ethically consistent grassroots struggle related to the most fundamental livelihood and justice concerns of the rural poor. This inspiring struggle in the large desert state of Rajasthan was led by the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), as part of a people's movement for justice in wages, livelihoods and land.The story of the MKSS, enables a deeper understanding of why the movement for the people's right to information in India has developed as part of a larger movement for people's empowerment and justice. Some struggles of weaker sections appear to be very small struggles

at first glance, but they have the potential for much wider social change of great significance. If this potential can be tapped properly at the right time and linkages established with wider issues, then results can be achieved which are far greater than the issues involved in the immediate struggle. A clear example of this is a struggle for minimum wages, which took place in Rajasmand district of Central Rajasthan in 1989-91. This entire effort had a very small beginning in Dev Dungri village of Rajsamand district (the nearest town is Bhim on the Ajmer-Udaipur highway). This small group lived an austere life and worked without any institutional funding, obtaining just an occasional research or writing project to ensure survival. Their dedication and openness soon attracted a large number of villagers and their organisation was named Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS). One of the first challenges the MKSS faced related to payment of legally fixed minimum wages. In the precarious rural economy of Rajasthan, the workers are supposed to play an important role in protecting rural poor from the worst forms of deprivation, particularly drought years. However apathy and corruption had badly eroded this role of relief work, as was evident in the open and large-scale flaunting of legal minimum wage laws. Despite the administration's heavy-handed methods, the movement succeeded in drawing attention to the issue of non-payment of minimum wage at rural employment works. This prolonged struggle against corruption led further to the idea of several jansunwais or public hearings against corruption. These public hearings also provided a good example of how the participation of various sections including officials, media persons, social workers, elected representatives and other prominent citizens was obtained to expose the shocking levels of corruption in rural development works. This entire difficult and prolonged process convinced the MKSS that one of the most effective methods of fighting village-level corruption is to provide people the right to obtain copies of official records (such as muster rolls, bills and vouchers) relating to rural development and anti-poverty programmes implemented in their areas. This soon became a central point in the demands being raised by MKSS. Meanwhile the struggle for the enaction of right to information legislation in Rajasthan continued which culminated in the enaction of this legislation in 2000. Side by side MKSS activists have continued to play a very important role in the national campaign for right to information and effective legislation on this right at the central level. At a time when the right to information campaign is spreading to many parts of the world, a special strength of the Indian experience is on show, thanks largely to MKSS. It was closely linked up with the struggles of the weakest sections. MKSS was involved in the

movement for minimum wages of workers at relief work sites in a drought-prone area, and it was in the course of this struggle that the importance of information right was realised. Poor peasants got the strength and the confidence to go to meet the highest officials (they even went to meet the President of India who received them most cordially) because they had realised the importance of this right while breaking stones in the parched land of their drought affected villages. The moral force of MKSS campaign increased to such an extent that at jan-sunwais organised recently in some villages, the persons who faced charges of corruption from people agreed on the spot to return the money so that it could be used again for welfare of people. While there are many campaigns against corruption, such success is extremely rare. It is not enough to expose corruption, on the constructive side we should present examples of how honest panchayat representatives can give better results. Therefore MKSS candidates fought and won sarpanch elections in Tadgarh village of Ajmer district and Kushalpura village of Rajsamand district. Although there are extensive checks and balances built into the functioning of all public bodies, but traditionally these have been based on supervision by superiors within the hierarchy, audit by specialised bodies within government, judicial scrutiny and accountability to the legislature. However for the first time the movement for the right to information has paved the way for audit and supervision also directly by the people, of which some major steps can be abstracted. Here one can see a working model of how honest and entirely transparent elected representatives work, leading to much better results than before and much closer involvement of people in development tasks. However, the RTI movement has still a long way to go! The movement has achieved what was unimaginable.

### People's Union of Civil Liberties (PUCL)

The doctrine of PUCL is to ensure the sanctity of the rights of the individual, consistent, as it always must be, with the rights of others, for only then can we aspire to call ourselves a truly democratic country. With the broad area of concerns that PUCL has and its reach in almost all the States of India, it has been involved with and acted in a variety of matters ranging from the deprivation of rights of the disadvantaged, poor and subjugated both in the rural and urban areas, who would otherwise have no say, women's rights, corruption in our polity, preservation of human rights, independence of the Judiciary and freedom of the press, and the likes. PUCL has through various actions and interventions, worked for these issues.

When acts like TADA and POTA, which are basically anti-people, are framed, the Government sees to it the rules for the act are also framed along with the act. But, when acts which are framed for the welfare of the people viz., Child Labour Abolition Act, Bonded Labour Abolition Act and Family Courts Act, the rules are not framed immediately and for certain acts the rules have not even been framed so far. For the Protection of Human Rights Acts, so far no Act has been framed despite the directions given by the High Court. The Government is now making steps to frame certain Preventive Detention Laws. With growing emphasis on "privatization" in all walks of life, the rights of poor people have come under severe stress. Protests due to rising rural and urban poverty and shrinking employment opportunities are met with laws that limit the scope of protest. The state has not only been showing insensitivity but also a degree of intolerance in this regard. This is a serious challenge for PUCL. The task becomes more daunting because it involves launching systematic campaign to educate those who matter in influencing public opinion and are not adversely affected by these policies. The state has been dealing with terrorism as a law and order problem without considering the socioeconomic factors. Its actions have become more strident after the 2001 September 11 attack in the U.S. Anything in the name of anti-terrorism is condoned such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), which has been used against the people selectively.

Similarly, the number of cases of "encounter" deaths in various parts of the country has risen; many encounters were allegedly faked. Much of the civil liberties problems in India revolve around non-adherence to the rule of law. The police lacks autonomy of action as it remains under the influence of politicians. The police investigation process remains problematic in terms of professional standards. Recommendations for police reform by the Police Commission have remained unimplemented. Similarly, millions of cases are pending in courts. As a result, victims do not get justice. The country urgently needs a campaign to reform its criminal justice system so that adherence to the rule of law is ensured and the civil and human rights of the people are protected. Legal action is one of the means that can be used, in a democratic political system, to hold the state accountable to its responsibilities. It is in that spirit that People's Union for Civil Liberties (Rajasthan) went to the Supreme Court in April 2001 to seek legal enforcement of the right to food. The "public interest litigation" (PIL) initiated by the PUCL petition is a complex plot with many actors. (Shiva Vandana, 2004)

Over the time, the scope of this PlL has considerably expanded. Today it covers a wide range of issues related to the right to food, including the implementation of food - related schemes, urban destitution, the right to work, starvation deaths and even general issues of transparency and accountability. PUCL has also been spreading awareness through road march especially on female feticide. It raised voice against the peacefully illegal disposal of sting operations conducted on various clinics where ultrasounds were being used for sex determination. PUCL is also observing the 'right to food' as mid day meal in various schools.

### Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement

After having achieved freedom, the Indian leaders took little time in abandoning the Gandhian principles. Nonviolence gave way to the use of India's armed forces. Heavy industries were called as 'the temples of modern India'. The new leaders discarded Gandhi's vision of a decentralized society—a society based on autonomous, self-reliant villages. These leaders spurred a rush toward a strong central government and an industrial economy as found in the West. Yet all did not abandon Gandhi's vision. Many of Gandhi's "constructive workers"—development experts and community organizers working in a host of agencies set up by Gandhi himself— resolved to continue his mission of transforming Indian society. Like Gandhi, Vinoba believed that the divisiveness of Indian society was a root cause of its degradation and stagnation. After India got independence, Vinoba advised that, now that India had reached its goal of Swaraj—independence, or self-rule—the Gandhians' new goal should be a society dedicated to Sarvodaya, the "welfare of all."Bhoodan (Land-gift) and Graam-dan(Village-gift) are actually practical applications of the philosophy of Sarvodaya. They collectively were'trusteeship in action'. Connected with Bhoodan and Graamdan, there were other programs. Important of these were Sampatti-Dan (Gift of the Wealth), Shramdan (Gift of the Labour), Shanti Sena (Army for Peace), Sarvodaya-Patra (the pot where every household gives daily handful of grain) and Jeevandan (Gift of Life). Over a period of twenty years, he walked through the length and breadth of India persuading landowners and landlords to give a total of four million acres of land to the poor and downtrodden. His Bhoodan (Gift of the Land) movement started on April 18, 1951.He attracted the attention of the world. Untouched by publicity and attention, Vinoba had continued his efforts for a just and equitable society. History of Bhoodan-Gramdan movement in Rajasthan Siddharaj Dhaddha, a veteran Gandhian from Rajasthan, and a close associate of Vinoba was greatly inspired by his Bhoodan Gramdan movement and brought the idea to

Rajasthan for its successful implementation. He invited firstly Vinoba to a remote village in Dholpur, where he was presented with a small gift of land. So, Bhoodan in Rajasthan took its first practical shape in 1951. With this started the Bhoodan-Graamdan campaign in Rajasthan. Meetings, contacts, publicity campaigns, newspaper appeals,etc. created a conducive environment for Bhoodan. In Feb.1952, in a conference, an ad hoc committee was formed for planning the Bhoodan-Gramdan movement. District conveners for Bhoodan program were appointed. The leadership of the movement shifted into the hands of Gokul Bhai Bhatt. Gandhi's close associate S.D. Jaju's frequent visits to various parts of Rajasthan guided and shaped the movement. Various padyatras (or foot marches) by famous personalities and their followers kept the movement 'alive and kicking'. National leaders like J.P., Dada Dharmadhikari, Vimla Bahin Thakar, Shanta Narulkar, Sant Tukodi Maharaj, Congress President U.N. Dhebhar, Sriman Narayan etc. contributed heavily towards the cause of Bhoodan-Graamdan movement in Rajasthan. In 1954, the reigns of this movement were taken over by Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh.

### Achievements

The first governmental initiative came in the form of donation of one lac acre land. This gave a tremendous spur to the movement. Other related activities like publishing literature, involving educational institutions in its fold were part of its constructive program. In this year only, Bhoodan Act was introduced and promulgated. Rajasthan Bhoodan Board was formed in 1958 on the lines of similar boards in other states. Maharaja Amar Singh of Bikaner donated the single largest share of 142393 bighas of land in Chhatargarh. The Bhoodan-Gramdan movement reached its peak at this time wherein 8150 donors in Rajasthan gave away 422245 acres of land out of which 50902 acres of land was distributed among 7098 families. Landless farmers and Scheduled Castes were given priority. (Gram-Swaraj Udbodhan, 2000) But it turned out that it was far easier to get a declaration of Gramdan (Bhoodan later on merged into Gramdan in a way) than to set it up in practice.

Still, the Graamdan movement left behind no mean achievements- what could be procured under the force of Land Reforms Act was very less when compared to what was obtained from Bhoodan-Gramdan movement through non-violent and peaceful means. There were more than a hundred Gramdan "pockets"—some made up of hundreds of villages—where Gandhian workers settled in for long-term development efforts,. These pockets today form the base of India's Gandhian peace movement.

*National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM)*

National Alliance of People's Movement (NAPM) is a network of over two hundred people's movements in India with a clear ideology against corporate globalisation, religious fundamentalism, discrimination of any kind and struggling for people's right over natural resources, for dalit and women's rights, for true internationalism and for a just and egalitarian society. (Giri Ananta K, 1998) NAPM is a coming together, a process of like-minded groups and movements who while retaining their autonomous identities, are working together to bring the struggle for a people-oriented development model to the centre-stage of politics and public life.

NAPM brings together struggles of various marginalized sectors into inter sectorial alliance, which asserts the primacy of natural resources ownership to communities, who live and sustain by those resources. The bringing together of these traditional communities also brings with it a new politics of natural resource ownership and control. It is understood that such an alliance, emerging with a definite ideological commonality and common strategy, can give rise to a strong social, political force and a national people's movement. (Cohen Robin, 2000)

The Organisation has both short term and long term goals. While it plans to turn around the development paradigm in the long run for an equitable, gender just and participatory development, in the short term it aims to bring justice to those groups affected by the present socio – political system and ensure more voice and visibility to their struggles in various national and international fora. It uses mass mobilization along with advocacy lobbying and networking with like minded groups to achieve these ends. NAPM in its organizational form tries to integrate not only sections of marginalized communities but also their supporters with individual membership. It attempts to link between the struggling rural masses, urban civil society, laborers students and intelligentsia. Within its structure, it aims at a democratic functioning and also consensus-based decision making. Sharing of resources and access to relevant governmental and non governmental resources has been one of the prime features of this network with organizations with more experience and resources helping newer struggles to break new paths. (The Hindu, 2004)

They struggle along with Dalit, Adivasi, women, fisher communities, minorities and other marginalized groups to bring about social, political and economic justice based on Equality (SAMTA), Simple Living (SADGI) and

Self-Reliance (SVAVLAMBAN). They believe in non-violent means of struggle, people's democracy and respecting the individual identities of diverse people's movements. 'Struggle along with Reconstruction' through alternative politics is their vision. The Genesis Millions of marginalized people of India are struggling against the present methods of development based on oppression, injustice, exploitation, destruction, displacement and discrimination. They are struggling to protect their livelihood resources, and to shape an alternative social political and economic vision of sustainable, humane development with equal right to livelihoods. NAPM also aspires to develop a discourse of harmonious relationships among various communities based on true democracy and pluralism, and against the threat of fundamentalism and communalism.

The struggle has sharpened due to imperialist globalization based on neo-liberalism, new economic policies and the onslaught of religious fundamentalism. The movements can no longer fight the battle alone on their own issues at their own geo-political situations. Thus, many movements have felt the need to come together as   a collective while retaining their individual identities to struggle against the imperialist global forces. Thus was the genesis of the National Alliance of People's  Movements in 1992, by various movements in India including Narmada BachaoAndolan, National Fish Workers Forum, Samajwadi Jan Parishad, Ganga MuktiAndolan, Shoshit Jan Andolan, SarvaSevaSangh and many others. It was based on common strategies, programmes and common minimum ideological understanding while respecting the diverse ideologies that influence the people's movements including Gandhian, Ambedkarite, Lohiaite, Feminist and Marxist. NAPM's ideology is an ongoing and evolving process, constantly changing and adapting to situations around us. It challenges the various organisations such as the World Trade Organisation, World Bank and IMF. It stands out as a unique force of people's politics that challenges present corrupt and criminal electoral politics in India. They believe that social transformation needs a multi-pronged strategy. NAPM thus uses four tools to bring about social change: Values and Thought, Struggle, Reconstruction and Electoral Politics.

NAPM in Rajasthan NAPM is a network of diverse people's movements and organizations that resist across India against injustice, subjugation and inequity. In Rajasthan, it has been activating local organizations and movements. During and Godhra controversy, the people's movements and civil society groups in the state became acutely aware of the need to seriously mobilize and strategize against communal and fascist politics. Various people's organisations

and civil society groups in Rajasthan have embarked on a series of mass contact programmes, workshops for activists and strategy meetings. Women's Day Celebrations this year, in most parts of the State had the theme Right to Work, Communal Harmony and Equal Citizenship. When the Desh Bachao-Desh Banaoyatra initiated by the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) passed through Rajasthan Over a perod of three days more than seven big public meetings were held between Udaipur and Jaipur against communalism and against Globalisation. The Jan Morcha, a people's front has been suggested to contest elections, much on the lines of its national equivalent, Lok Rajnitik Manch, floated by NAPM. (The Hindu, 2004) On the success and the progress of NAPM depends the future of the new social movements and ultimately the peace movement in Rajasthan. The MKSS, Akal Sangharsh Samiti, a coalition of some eighty organizations in agitating for the Right to Food and the Right to Work, have great promises to make and NAPM has the credit to it. The creation of Vividha Feature Service, as an umbrella organization of small newspapers in Rajasthan is yet another welcome development to add to the cause of NAPM, and ultimately the cause of peace movement in the society of Rajasthan.

## Brahma Kumaris

The Brahma Kumaris seeks to help individuals re-discover and strengthen their inherent worth by encouraging and facilitating a process of spiritual awakening. This leads to an awareness of the importance of thoughts and feelings as the seeds of actions. The development of virtues and values-based attitudes creates a practical spirituality, which enhances personal effectiveness in the workplace and in family life. An understanding of the spiritual context of human existence is offered, helping to make sense of contemporary issues. Based on the principle that the roots of change lie within, the university encourages individuals to live by their highest values, vision and purpose. It holds that this commitment to self-transformation will create peace and a better world for all. What does 'Brahma Kumaris' mean? Brahma Kumaris means 'daughters of Brahma.' Seminal to the vision of world renewal was the revelation of the important and prominent role of women as spiritual teachers.

The main principles in the Brahma Kumaris way of life. There are four main principles:

Study – The daily study of spiritual knowledge provides nourishment to create a healthy and stable mind.

Meditate - The practice of soul-consciousness creates inner strength to overcome negative self-beliefs. Connecting to God in a personal relationship removes blind faith and instills a deep sense of trust. The relationship charges the battery of the soul and fills it with love, peace and power.

Practice - To live a life dedicated to improving one's character by imbibing universal truths and higher motivations in thoughts, words and actions. Serve - To share with others on the basis of one's own life experiences.

## Conclusion

In this research paper, we gathered that there are a number of insurmountable problems facing the common man in Rajasthan. The natural and man-made problems of the state have social, historical (of course imperial too), geographical and other significant dimensions. The Rajasthan of today is the result of a complex interplay of these vital dimensions. But we also found that this observation may not be as striking as is the potential of the movements going on there. We found that the State in Rajasthan attends to its problems dutifully —and both Constitutional and extra-Constitutional mechanisms support it fully, yet it leaves much more for other actors to do. Thankfully, we also find here that there is no dearth of such actors in Rajasthan. The state is actually known for a number of people's movements, which are going on in full swing, and they have an excellent future here. A healthy development in this regard has been that now the government is, apart from being forthcoming in establishing commissions like human rights, women, etc., encouraging the NGOs, which can be termed as the catalytic agents of these movements. These Civil Society actors have now more acceptability in the powers of corridors and there are more projects jointly taken up by the government departments and the NGOs, active in the state. This can be explained by the fact that in the new world order, the international watch agencies are more active, economic sanctions against human rights violation are rampant, and foreign direct investments are threatened on these grounds. So, people are not just passive targets of development assistance but active agents of change. Rajasthan is among the states of the country that has witnessed several important initiatives involving voluntary groups, issue-based citizens' action, and democratic decentralisation. India is referred to as an "NGO power country", and the activities of many NGOs account for 2.5% of the service share to GDP, according to the Voluntary Action Network India (VANI). It is, however, very difficult to ascertain the real number due to the varying styles of registration, the differences between the authorities concerned and so on.[1] The voluntary

or the NGO sector in Rajasthan has emerged as an effective "third sector" after the government and the private sector. This has been a result of some local and professional initiatives taken by institutions and individuals in the mid-seventies and early eighties. In the light of the growing positive impact of the NGO grassroots projects and in response to the international and academic opinion in favour of their greater involvement in government programmes, in the 1980s the State Government opened up new frontiers. As a result erstwhile small experimental initiatives were substantially scaled up.

The NGO is seen as the way towards greater community participation to foster sustainability of development programmes. We have discussed here a few of them yet there are many, which could not be discussed in detail. Actually, the VidyaBhawan Society and SevaMandir in Udaipur, the Social Work Research Centre in Ajmer, and Urmul in Bikaner are some of the illustrious movements, which have done commendable work in different parts of Rajasthan, and served the cause of peace. Apparently these movements appear to be sprinkled and isolated when taken into account singly, but considered collectively, and keeping in mind the convergence of interests and ideologies, and the growing coordination network, they are increasingly registering their conspicuous presence in the social scenario of Rajasthan. A strikingly noteworthy emergence and sustenance of a growing network of over two hundred people's movements in India, National Alliance of People's Movement (NAPM), with a clear ideology against corporate globalization, religious fundamentalism, discrimination of any kind and struggling for people's right over natural resources, for Dalit and women's rights, for true internationalism and for a just and egalitarian society, is a definite indication that people's movement may not remain scattered and weak, in the days to come. The peace movement in Rajasthan is a solid possibility, beyond doubt.

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1. For example, according to VANI, the number of NGOs is estimated at approximately 1.2 million while the Voluntary Organisation Database of the Planning Commission shows the number at 16, 430 as of June, 2006

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# Heritage and Environment: Visions of past and future in the Indian temple town Vrindavan

*Samrat Schmiem Kumar and Elida Jacobsen*

## Introduction

In contemporary India, temple towns and religious-spiritual centres such as Varanasi, Puri, or Vrindavan are gradually becoming important destinations for national and international tourism. In a time of rapid changing of milieus, we still grapple to understand the social and cultural dynamics and realities that underlie process of urbanization and socio-environmental changes in Indian cities. In this article, we investigate such processes in the Indian temple town of Vrindavan, asking first how new forms of tourism and urban development lead to contemporary environmental challenges, and secondly how different agents respond to these changes locally? To this end, we focus on the narratives of past and future by people from local environmental and heritage conservation NGOs, religious elites, middle scale entrepreneurs and ordinary citizens.

The article refers to some concrete examples of development and socio-environmental changes within the town, such as the construction of a transportation bridge over the Yamuna river at *Keshi ghat* and the increasing amount of tourists and pilgrims' visits, requiring better infrastructure and housing facilities. First, we describe the present-day environmental and socio-economic situation of the town with the changes in tourism patterns. The construction of the bridge has been the latest in a series of events that evoked debates around urban development and tourism influx in Vrindavan. It was opposed by local initiatives, such as environmental NGOs, who see these developments as an intervention into and irreversible socio-environmental damage of the 'sacred landscape', whereas most of the residents, who have been interviewed, seemed to be in its favour. We begin the article with analysing the recent development of increasing tourism and development in Vrindavan from a sociological perspective.

Finally, we address the fragmentary processes of modernisation and development of Vrindavan and the environmental challenges that come with them. Urban development and tourism in the Indian temple town are shaped by socio-economic and socio-cultural processes that arise both from 'within and outside' of Vrindavan. These processes and events evoke different responses by local agents, thus highlighting the various existing parallel narratives and imaginations of the city, which, as they do not speak to one another, thus fail to reconcile the contradictory stands on uncontrolled urban development and issues regarding sustainable environment. The processes that influence Vrindavan's socio-environment, e.g. religious tourism, industrialization, infrastructural and housing development, are infrequently conducted in consultation with the local community, and the local populations seem not to be prepared to deal with the environmental consequences that are implied with these processes.

### Religious tourism in Vrindavan

Vrindavan is a Hindu pilgrimage town in the federal state of Uttar Pradesh (UP) in today's Mathura district situated on the banks of the Yamuna River and 160 kilometres south of New Delhi. The city and its adjacent region, known as the *Braj* area, are considered to be a significant pilgrimage and religious site for millions of people inside as well as outside of India. The significance of Vrindavan as a place of cultural and spiritual pilgrimage has rendered it a *dham*, a place of divine revelation within Indian religion, thought and folklore. India is Vrindavan has a special mythic significance for Hindus all over India. It is considered to be the terrestrial habitat of the Hindu god Krishna and the representation of his celestial abode, *Goloka Vrindavan*. Many of the important places in the region are associated with one or other story connected with the Krishna legend (Entwistle 1987). Vrindavan and the area of Braj are considered, in their oral and scriptural-mythological representation, as a replica of the earth, the 'footprint of ecology of the earth' (Haberman 1994; Sullivan 1998).

Religious tourism is a term widely used in theory and practice to refer to contemporary travel patterns to pilgrimage sites. It is 'closely or loosely connected with holiday-making' (Tomasi, 2002, p. 19). The destination for religious tourism is generally a sacred site, a pilgrimage site or a religious heritage site. It combines two opposite ends of the binary — sacred and profane — as reflected in the pilgrimage–tourism dichotomy (Nolan and Nolan 1992; Smith

1992 in Shinde 2009). Often, the key aspects of pilgrimage — the motivation for the trip, form of the journey and a sacred destination — are used to explain religious tourism where leisure and holiday activities occur as supplementary opportunities within the need for religious travel (Tyrakowski 1994 in Schinde 2009).

In the last two decades India has witnessed an increasing number of middle and upper class citizens travelling to pilgrim sites and demanding spiritual encounter with urban amenities. The new patterns of travel by upscale clientele, including young professionals, rich non-resident Indians as well as foreigners reflect the increasing use of hotels and resorts and services offered by tourism enterprises. Integrated townships, enclosed luxury apartment complexes, modern infrastructures (i.e. express highways, flyovers and bridges) have mushroomed within a short amount of time. Presently Vrindavan has a population of approximately 65,000 but at present annual visitation exceeds more than six million visitors (Shinde 2012). The population of Vrindavan has experienced a high rate of growth in the last decades, attributed to increase in the pilgrimage activity and resultant in-migration from surrounding region due to economic potential of providing employment opportunities in the tertiary sector, as almost 90% of the town's economy is dependent on pilgrimage and related services (Shinde 2009: 38). The daily "floating population" is reported to be around 20,000 and it rises to 150,000 during important festival days and these occur almost every month (Shinde 2009).

Vrindavan mirrors these wider trends. From a modest 5000 annual visitors in 1950, the number increased to more than 6 million in 2005 (Shinde 2012). Vrindavan as a pilgrimage site, thus, has become a convenient and easily accessible destination for visitors from the nearby cities such as Delhi, Jaipur and Agra, and serves as a weekend getaway for middle and upper class citizens coupled with religious and leisure activities. With the construction of new express highways, bypass and flyovers in the region, such as the Yamuna Expressway, roads are built with the idea to reduce the travel time between New Delhi and Agra and other destinations such as Mathura and Vrindavan significantly.[1] Indeed, the number of visitors in Vrindavan has significantly increased since the 1990s. Traditionally, pilgrim towns have been small centres

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1. The Government of Uttar Pradesh has been working proactively to improve the connectivity of the National Capital Region (NCR) to improve tourist attraction of Taj Mahal at Agra through the new 6 Lanes highway. of U.P. The expressway has been operational for public traffic in August 2012 making it the preferred route from Delhi/ NCR to Agra.

of religious activities occasionally hosting big festivals. However, over a period of time some towns gained prominence and are being transformed into urban centers due to increased and regular visits by pilgrims and religious tourists. Vrindavan has for example grown from 4.1 square kilometres to 15.8 in the within a few years (Shinde 2009).

Pilgrimage as a spiritual journey is essentially an economic activity for the resident population in the town. Most of the residents earn their livelihood directly or indirectly from the 'pilgrimage industry'. The high volume of tourists and pilgrims visiting the town creates a perception of economic opportunity, but a privileged few have already laid claim to the market for visitors' goods and services, leaving no room for newcomers to secure living incomes (Banerjee 2004). Most of our interlocutors are employed or work within branches that provide services to the pilgrim and tourism industry, such as shop owners at the local bazaars, people working in the transportation service, people who provide direct services to temple and ashram residents and visitors (flower sellers, money exchangers, carpenters, electricians, craftsmen, gardeners, sweepers, cooks and musicians). Vrindavan is marketed in a similar way as a holiday destination, attracting tourist and capital; the new forms of entrepreneurship are manifestations of new patronage relationships (between residents and middle-class urban visitors) that establish the contemporary framework for religious tourism.

In Vrindavan, certain groups in society, such as small scale business men, entrepreneurs, merchandisers, and people working in the tertiary sector, all seem to profit from the recent developments of growing tourism and urban development. Most of the entrepreneurs and merchandisers in town earn their livelihood from providing services to the religious pilgrims/tourist industry and to local temples and ashrams.[2] Another group, who has strongly profited from the increasing number of tourists/pilgrims and urbanization, are religious institutions, such as temple trusts, maths and the priestly class, known as Goswamis. Most of the temple trusts own, next to temples, also guesthouses and large portions of land[3]. At the same time they are regarded as religious

2   We have interviewed shop owners, who are running their shops in the two main bazaars of Vrindavan (Loi Bazaar and Gopinath Bazaar) as well as entrepreneurs who provide services to the temples. ashrams and guest houses (i.e. Taxi owners, florists, money lenders, tourist guides, carpenters, craftsmen, etc.). Most of them belong to the old traditional India middle class, yet at the same time they are increasingly connected to a modernized capitalistic logic, acting on local and global markets. Another group, we have interviewed, are members of temple trusts and of the priestly class (so called Goswamis) in Vrindavan.

3   Approx. 70% of the land in Vrindavan belongs to temple trusts (Shinde 2011).

authorities and as influential players in the political affairs of the city (Shinde 2009; Sharma 2012).

## Environment and Heritage

Temple towns in India face environmental degradation due to the pressures exerted by an increased number of visitors, coupled with uncontrolled urban growth and driven by demand of supporting residential amenities and infrastructure. The changing of milieus (urbanization and development) combined with activities of religious tourism have led to considerable degradation of environment in pilgrim towns (Nagabhusanam 1997 in Shinde 2009). The character of traditional Vrindavan pilgrimage, which is intimately connected to the land and myth of Braj and Krishna, has, like other pilgrimage locations in India, become altered by the increased character of tourism and uncontrolled urban development. Such a shift has also been seen in pilgrimages in other locations and through the process of religious commodification (Gladstone 2005; Kitiarsa 2008). As a result, the many forest, groves and meadows, for which Vrindavan is famous for in popular images, have turned into housing and infrastructure developments. Pilgrimage to and contemplation in these groves are what attracted pilgrims to Vrindavan in the past. At the same time, the ancient temples in the older regions of the town have become increasingly dilapidated, the streets clogged with human and vehicle traffic, the general ambience of the town has become extremely disturbed and the environmental conditions within the town are poor.

The high influx of visitors in the last 20-30 years has put enormous strains on the environment of the town. Questions about the environment, sustainability and environmental change are especially critical in India where more than 100 million people travel to about 2000 pilgrimage sites annually (Gladstone 2005). In many pilgrimage sites, commonly reported environmental problems include unhygienic conditions resulting from overcrowding and strain on physical infrastructure, deforestation, land use changes and increased pollution of natural resources. Contemporary Vrindavan is confronted with a number of social and environmental problems, including unemployment[4] and poor overall public infrastructure; poor sanitation and civic facilities, spiralling population densities, deforestation and overdevelopment of real estate; loss of biodiversity and natural habitat; increased energy consumption, increased

4 Fewer than one third of the residents of Vrindavan, India have regular work. Of those who do, many make less than a dollar a day (Humphreys and Varshney, 2004). Rural families attempting to escape the abject poverty that confronts them in the countryside migrate to Vrindavan as well.

production of waste and pollution; water security and solid waste management issues; health issues from water-borne illnesses, and an acute lack of drinking water[5] (Banerjee 2004). In addition, the Yamuna river is highly polluted due to industrial runoff from factories upriver and due to all the sewage and wastewater of Vrindavan that drains into her. The problem is so serious that the Government of India has declared the Yamuna's water unfit for drinking and bathing (Haberman 2006). Vanishing forests, dusty roads, open and choked sewers, overflowing drains, dumps of garbage and noisy traffic, are a regular sight in the city.

### 'New' and 'old' Vrindavan

Over the last 30 years Vrindavan has undergone substantial physical expansion mainly due to changing equations of demand and supply of land, physical resources, necessary for development of infrastructure for both pilgrimage and religious tourism economy. The outskirts of Vrindavan have been sub-divided into several housing colonies. The town has become visibly divided into two main parts: the old centre with its medieval temple and bazaars, the other part with modern residential flats, hotels and newly constructed temple sites, also referred to by locals as 'New Vrindavan'. New Vrindavan distinguishes itself in architecture, spatiality and temporality from the old town. Both parts are linked through roads and through flows of pilgrims who wish to see both sides: the new marble temples and statue parks pompously exposed on the main road, and the old decayed temples, *ghats* and bazaars hidden in the narrow streets.

Vrindavan has also witnessed an increasing state led urbanization and expansion. The U.P. government and the regional development agency, Mathura Vrindavan Development Authority (MVDA)[6] have been undertaking a multitude of construction and development projects in recent times and allotting infrastructure and residential projects to private companies.[7] The

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5   The lack of adequate drinking water is acute in Vrindavan and the area's ground aquifers are polluted daily because sanitary conditions and inadequate solid waste disposal leach untreated pathogens into the substrata, contaminating the underground water that is meant to serve the town. The outlets of individual toilets and septic tanks are illegally linked to overflowing sewer lines or directly joined to open drains.

6   Mathura - Vrindavan Development Authority was constituted in 1977 by the Uttar Pradesh Government. The authority is responsible for the urban development of the two cities and its adjacent regions as well as developing their infrastructures.

7   Omaxe, for instance, one of India's leading real estate developers, has received approval for layout plan from Mathura Vrindavan Development Authority, Uttar Pradesh for the construction of an integrated township "Omaxe Eternity at Vrindavan". Spread over an

U.P. government has further assigned the regional development authority to implement a Tourism Master Plan developing and boosting tourism in the region of Vrindavan. The Master Plan includes identification and selection of heritage sites important from the tourism angle identification of different sectors in district Mathura depending upon proximity, viability and accessibility, identification of infrastructural facilities needed to encourage tourism, river front development on Yamuna on desired locations, operation of transportation system dedicated to the augmentation of tourism, identification of locations for tourist resorts, prioritization of monuments/site for renovation, identification of required accessibility links of the sites, recommendable route-charts for tourists etc. (MVDA 2012).

Many spiritual leaders *(gurus, acharyas)* with their foreign and urban national followers have also over the last decades began to reside in Vrindavan. Building of new ashrams and temples became necessary in order to accommodate the newcomers. And with the financial help of their wealthy Indian and foreign devotees some gurus have constructed large and ostentatious temple sites in Vrindavan, mainly on the outskirts of town at Chattikara Road. In February 2012, for instance, Vrindavan witnessed the inauguration of the largest and most expensive temple complex in recent times. From all over India and abroad thousands of people came to the city to be part of the historical opening of the *Prem Mandir* (Temple of love) of the Jagadguru Kripalu Parishat, a world-wide Hindu-Vaishnava movement. The costs are estimated to be around 1 Billion USD (Vrindavan Today 2012). The entire building is made out of white Italian marble. The temple symbolises the new era of religious tourism and urbanization that has 'enchanted' the city. The construction of the temple has been accompanied by the building of new luxury apartment complexes and townships in the nearby area, promoting the it as a 'new Vrindavan', a modern temple city, which will grant you religious experience combined with unique flavours of luxury and comfort. According to the Information centre of Prem Mandir, the temple management had already received 2200 confirmed booking requests by followers of the movement, who wish to purchase or rent residential flats in the vicinity of the temple.[8]

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area of approx. 74.2 acres, Omaxe Eternity will be developed with an investment of approximately Rs. 250 crores.

8    Interview with Information desk staff, Vrindavan, 25.2.2012.

*Narratives of past and future*

In narratives about contemporary Vrindavan and its local milieus, notions of a past heritage are often evoked, both in order to express an environment of rapid change, but also to incite activities to improve the situation. In many of the local organisations, the tension between the 'sacred' Vrindavan and the 'physical' Vrindavan drives the discourses and subsequent actions for protecting the town. The notion that Vrindavan's contemporary ecological and cultural aesthetics of the city ought to be different to what it is today, thus guides much of the activism; on the one hand it "used to be better" in previous times, and on the other the mythological representation of Vrindavan is filled with notions of a magnificent and pure environment, vastly different from what is experienced in present-day Vrindavan:

> *We went for parikrama [walking on sacred path that circumambulates Vrindavan], I remember it was very beautiful. A lot cleaner than it is now, it was rural, definitely you could not get the food and filtered water as nowadays [... it has developed so much, materially speaking [...] spiritually it stays the same, it becomes materially more covered, more concrete roads, those were not here before, only village tracks; if you today drive out to the rural areas of Braj it was like that; this was Vrindavan in the early 1990s[9].*

While the myths and legends associated with Krishna and Vrindavan remain attracting crowds of pilgrims and devotees, the forests and groves a have vanished; 'sacred rivers and ponds' have depleted and are contaminated. Many residents notice the increasing deterioration and urban development. In their personal narratives and stories they often relate, when confronted with questions of *pariveshavad* (environment) and *vikas* (development), to earlier times when the town was peaceful and quiet, surrounded by idyllic groves and forests, no heavy traffic, a clean Yamuna river.

*When I was small I recall Vrindavan being a small place in the jungle. Places like Kailash Nagar and Gaur Nagar had been jungle [...] today these places have become residential flats [...] my father told me that 30 years ago nothing was here, it was totally a jungle[10].*

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9  Interview with Gopal, Vrindavan, 14.2. 2012

10 Interview with Guddu, Vrindavan, 8.10 2011

Today the image of Vrindavan an outside visitor gets is of a congested, polluted, noisy, densely populated town, with neglected and run down temple sites, and with little green cover. Through housing development and infrastructure the nearby circumambulation path surrounding the town, the *parikrama marg*, has been sealed, leading to increased vehicle traffic and the deforestation of previously remote areas. Every day hundreds of residents and pilgrims walk on the *parikrama marg* as constitutive part of their daily ritual, as it is denoted by locals as one of the main sanctuaries of the town, and thus as in the case with the visiting pilgrims, it has become an inherent part of their pilgrimage duties. Along the path, pilgrims will find numerous *lila stahlis*, [sacred spaces], that are linked to the stories and mythic event of Krishna. Recently, parts of the *parikrama marg* have been renamed by the local authorities to the 'VIP road', a signifier for a modernizing city. It is a combination of flyovers and concrete roads that enable, foremost upper class tourist, a more rapid and more smooth passage from the main roads and other parts of town to the new residential and touristic hub. Local residents, like Shyamsundar, a 33 year old farmer, who lives on the *parikrama* path, are unhappy about the present situation:

> *Thousands of pilgrims walk on the parikrama marg on festival days, full moon and ekadashi [fasting day] and all these cars from outside think it is just another normal road, and the people walking on the road are perceived as a nuisance and are honked off the marg [...] the sacred vocation of Vrindavan is being destroyed by this kind of development[11].*

The process of modernization, improvement in transport, accommodation and communication has turned some places of pilgrimage to towns of modern tourism. On weekends and during festival days, the town is crowded with tourist, mainly from the nearby cities, like Delhi and Agra. The main roads to and from Vrindavan are clogged with traffic and people, the narrow lanes of the old part of town are filled with pilgrims on foot, on rickshaws or in cars on their way to temples for darshan. Girahi Lal and Bankey Lal two brothers, running a steel and brass shop in the main bazaar of town, also view the development of tourism with critical eyes:

> *Before [pilgrims] used to come once or twice a year, now they come throughout the year, and they are building all these*

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11 Interview with Shyamasundara, Vrindavan, 27.2.2012.

> *modern flats which only people from outside are buying [...]*
> *now Vrindavan has become a picnic type place for visitors[12].*

Several physical environmental studies have reported on the environmental degradation of Vrindavan. According to reports of non-governmental and environmental organizations, spiraling population densities combined with visitor flows during pilgrimage events and poor sanitation and civic facilities, alongside real estate speculation, remain the root cause of several environmental problems in the city (Singh and Vir 1994; Shinde 2009; Sharma 2012). A further concern, one finds in those reports, is that the town has become badly deforested and the area is rapidly turning into a desert such as is to be found in Rajasthan. Friends of Vrindavan (FoV), one of the city's earliest environmental NGOs, founded in 1997, stresses the rapid and dramatic deterioration of the town in the last 15 years. "Vrindavan is moving towards an ecological disaster [...] day by day you see how its getting worse"[13].

Some NGO's and civil societies groups have taken initiatives for environmental sustainability, yet the majority of local residents, as most of our communication and interviews are indicating, have limited concerns for the environment. Many local initiatives, except The Braj Foundation, lack the resources or political support to realise their (sacred) visions, and do not receive massive support from the citizens or religious institutions. The concern and activism for environment and heritage conservation, rest within the informed knowledge and international funded environmental NGOs.

For environmental and cultural activists of Vrindavan, modernisation harms the ecology and devalues the spiritual meaning of the experience and the importance of the rituals for visitors, and negatively affects the sanctity of the place. They point out that the increasing urbanisation of the town and swelling numbers of *picnic yatris* has reduced Vrindavan to the status of a religious marketplace. Yet it is 'modernity's child' itself - environmentalism-that can reverse the impacts of pollution and urbanisation. Environmental awareness, on the one side, does not appear to be a major priority of local residents as well as visiting pilgrims; on the other side a few NGO and local activists take the 'battle' against modernisation with strategies that are infused with modern techniques of eco-activism and mythic images of the sacred, eternal. In the social imaginaries of environmental activists in Vrindavan, nature

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12 Interview with Girahi Lal and Bankey Lal, Vrindavan, 10.11.2011

13 Interview with Jaganath Poddar, managing director of FoV, Vrindavan 12.10.2011.

is perceived as sacred and thus the concern for the environment is build upon an ontological balancing of mythic and (modern) scientific elements which are then composed into a *self made social reality.*

Given the changing environment in the temple town, numerous activities and plans are made to address environmental challenges and protect and renovate its cultural heritage. One example is the comprehensive plan that is being drawn to revive the cultural festivals of Braj to integrate it further into the national religious tourism circuit. The Braj Foundation, a non-profit organization, established in 2005 by eminent industrialists of India and abroad, has received the contract by the Mathura-Development authority to implement the Tourism Master Plan for the region. The organization aims to restore the environmental and cultural heritage of Braj by defying the intertwined relationship between environment, ritual and culture (The Braj Foundation 2011). In a short span of 5 years the Foundation has spent over Rupees 10 crores on restoration and research. It acknowledges that the region of Braj has a distinct and unique ecological, architectural and cultural heritage. Its employees in Vrindavan are very optimistic about their work to restore Braj's and Vrindavan's cultural pride: "We want that the government gives us authority to enact a plan for the city [...] to make one part of Vrindavan a heritage place, to take down the buildings and construct building in one same structure; an old Vrindavan as it used to be"[14]. The Foundation, according to the office staff wants to create an image of Vrindavan as found in the popular mythical and scriptural imaginations:

> *We want that people come and see the real beauty of Vrindavan, as they imagined in their dreams, but when they come today they see how deteriorated most places are [... our aim is to restore Braj as it was at the time of Krishna; when people come from far away, they should recognize that it is truly the Vrindavan of the scriptures... it is the same Yamuna as described in the popular songs and texts, the same forests and kunds.[15]*

Hindu mythology is profusely linked to India's geography - its mountains, rivers, forests, shores, villages, and towns. It is arguable then that the 'imagined space' created in Hindu mythology is far more culturally powerful than that

14 Interview with Omakanth and Mansur, staff at The Braj Foundation office, Vrindavan, 6.4.2012.

15 Interview with Omakanth and Mansur, staff at The Braj Foundation office, Vrindavan, 6.4.2012

displayed on the official map of India. For residents of Vrindavan their living space has for centuries provided a meaningful 'organic ontology', connecting the world of observable phenomena with a transcendental world of a 'metaphysical reality'. Most mythological narratives on Vrindavan give an image which is hard to find on the external terrain of the town. For many of Vrindavan's residents an engagement with social and environmental concerns is ontologically negotiated and contextualised through Vrindavan belonging to the transcendental realm and being translated into the spatiality of the *dham* (Stewart 2011). It is very much an imagined space, an 'utopian' narration maybe, that creates faith in the sacredness of the totality of Vrindavan and that, eventually for the pilgrim and resident, seems to bridge the gap, or in other words, seems to reconcile the discrepancy between the distant and the far, the sacred and the profane, the visible and non-visible, the transcendent and the immanent.

The Foundation acknowledges that by virtue of its location within the 'Golden Triangle for Tourism' in north India (that includes Delhi, Agra and Jaipur as its major destinations) and its heritage of temples, Vrindavan has also emerged as a destination for religious and cultural tourism. The town offers many tourists from the big cities a blend of a medieval and modern temple town, whose potential, in the eyes of the national and regional tourism agencies, has yet to unfold fully (UP Tourism 2009). Vrindavan is thus embedded in the larger national religious-cultural tourism and development circuit, and pilgrimage and tourism have become the main sources of income, yet simultaneously sources of pollution and environmental deterioration. Following the directions set out in the National Tourism Policy regarding the promotion of pilgrimage sites for cultural tourism and heritage tourism, the Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation has identified the Braj region's festivals and sites as prime cultural tourism products for the state. The corporation has two main objectives. The first is to promote pilgrimage sites as tourism destinations and the second is to work with the travel industry and private tourism operators to create 'tourism circuits' and encourage them to provide comprehensive package tours that include transport, accommodation and visits to cultural performances and events in these circuits (U.P. Tourism 2009).

## Conclusion

Contemporary urbanization and religious tourism in Vrindavan are shaped by broad and narrow socio-economic, religious and political processes that arise from 'within and outside' the town. Narratives on these processes

both evoke visions of a past heritage and environment, as well as forming visions for how Vrindavan ought to be. At the same time both the processes and the responses of the people living in the city are fragmentary. NGOs and well informed citizens link the meta-developments on the national plane with the processes on town level, whereas most of the residents direct their attention towards the local events of development and environmental challenges, and the various ways in which they impact their daily life practices. Thus it appears as if today's environmental degradation is not severely affecting the daily routines of religious practitioners and residents in the town and residents continue their life practices without interruption or alteration. People direct their attention towards immediate events that intervene in their daily lives, whereas NGOs and elites seem to connect events and their responses to the broader socio-political processes of the country.

For environmental and cultural activists of Vrindavan urbanization and tourism affect the ecology and devalues the spiritual meaning of the experience and the importance of the rituals for visitors, and negatively affects the sanctity of the place. Like the members of the Braj Foundation who want to create the environment of Vrindavan as it is found in the popular and scriptural imaginaries. They point out that the increasing urbanization of the town and the swelling numbers of *picnic yatris*[16] has reduced Vrindavan to the status of a religious marketplace. In similar lines, while the Yamuna expressway and other road projects are promoted by the state government to open up avenue for industrial and urban development of the region and to provide the base for convergence to tourism and other allied industries, its construction has been opposed by local initiatives who see these developments as a violent intervention into and an irreversible damage of the sacred landscape. The mythic image of Vrindavan's pristine and pure environment, thus, is inscribed into the eco-activism in town. Environmentalism in Vrindavan, then, features both the transcendent and the immanent, as Haberman (2006) has argued elsewhere.

In the eyes of those actors the meanings of religion and religious institutions have changed considerably over time. Pilgrimage and activities have become a commercial occupation, a commodity, to profit the business sector

16 A term which we have encountered several times in interviews with residents of the town. It bears a negative connotation, and is used by locals to refer to the middle and upper class pilgrims and visitors from the nearby cities, 'flooding' into Vrindavan on the weekends and on holidays.

in town. These images and views are strongly embedded in the discourse of several environmental NGOs and individual activists in Vrindavan. The degradation of the environment is connected to socio-economic, religious and political processes within the town itself (micro) as well as within the larger context of the Indian state (macro). Vrindavan is embedded in the larger national religious-cultural tourism and development circuit and pilgrimage and tourism have become the main sources of income yet simultaneously of pollution and environmental deterioration as well. Environmental awareness does not appear to be a major priority of local residents as well as visiting pilgrims. Historically, the socio-spatial and environmental changes in Vrindavan have always been and continue to be related to religious needs, the cultural economy of pilgrimage rituals, and broader socio-economic, religious and institutional processes occurring within and externally to the city (Shinde 2012). Although tourism and economy have always been central to pilgrimage sites, now a new kind of space, associated with leisure and tourism consumption, is being produced.

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# Book Review

*Sunita*

Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of
Nonviolent Conflict, Author- Erica Chenoweth &
Maria A J. Stephan

Publisher- Columbia University Press, New York,

This book is a well evidenced argument in favour of non-violent resistance. It expands various cases of civilian resistance in situation of occupation, secession and regime change campaigns. The effectiveness of nonviolent struggle encourages scholars and policy framers to seriously think over the role of civilians in actively pursuing conflict without resorting to violence.

Mass participation in a non-violent campaign, according to the author is open to female and elderly population also. When community observes open mass support and collective acts of defiance, the perception of risk seemingly decline, reducing the constraints of participation. Because these common protest activities are by ordinary people who are often law-obeying, non-violent resistance can potentially mobilize the entire aggrieved population without the need to face moral barriers. Participants retain their life they came back in their routine life but in armed struggle they often lose their life. The authors cites example of the Iranian revolution wherein the resistance became mass resistance and nonviolent popular struggle replaced guerrilla violence as primary mode of resistance. Accordingly, the long term protest by participants fundamentally alter the relationship between ruler and ruled. Mass participation campaigns are much more likely to succeed them small campaign. As membership increases, the probability of success also increases. Similarly, in Lebanon and Palestinian territories mass non-violent resistance worked well where violent insurgencies failed. In Lebanon 2005 Cedar revolution involved more than a million Lebanese demonstrator foreign Syria to withdraw its armed forces. First Intifada moved the Palestinian self-determination movement

further than the PLO's violent campaign that preceded it. The author has drawn insights from various instances of civil resistance including  Gandhi's salt march, mass protests at Tiananmen square and mass sitting in Maidan square in Kiev during the orange revolution, Cedar revolution, and the massive gathering of people in Tahrir square during the 2011 revolution.

The study also draws from various case studies, wherein resistance campaign's commitment to nonviolence is one important factor to encourage large scale mobilisation, whereas the use of violent methods discouraged participation civil resistance movement, is basically a civilian support for mobilisation, more than 90 per cent of the movement execute their campaigns without the direct financial assistance of any foreign regime. Non-violent campaigns attract a larger number of more diverse participants, thus this diversity of the campaigns offers the advantage to tactical innovation. A specific type of tactical diversity of non-violent resistance is a shifting between methods of concentration and methods of dispersion.

Methods of dispersion involves acts that spread out over a wider area, such as consumer boycotts stayaways and go slow action at workplace. Examples are consumer boycotts in S.A. labour strikes by oil workers during Iranian revolution, the banging of pots and pans by Chileans during the anti-Pinochet movement.

Non-violent campaigns are always successful in both democratic and autocratic regime. Iran and the Philippines have major success by civil resistance. In comparative studies of violent and nonviolent resistance author concludes that civil resistance actually leads to desirable long term social outcomes such as civil-peace, and democratic governance. Even failed non-violent campaigns are more favourable to democracy and civil peace, than protracted violent successful campaigns. Successful nonviolent movements are never followed by socio-political polarisation, or intense political competition, Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution' is the example for this case. Scholars argue the democracy requires a liberal culture. The way to which power transition occurs predicts the way the new regime will rule. Democratic transitions are often driven by an interactive process involving elites and grassroots civil-elements and resistance campaigns serve as the catalyst for such transition.

Democratic regime in post war context is a prerequisite for the duration of civil-peace. Author has presented several examples of the violent revolution

which failed in long term peace building and developmental process because of recurring civil war. for instance, 1917 revolution of Russia, Afghanistan civil war in 1989, Maoist Revolution followed by bloody Cultural Revolution in china, Cuban Revolution followed by class war. Studies found that civil wars create weak governance and civil society institutions, increase the probability of international conflicts, and create more specialists in violence than politics. Further mass-participation in non-violent political change encourages the development of democratic skill and fosters expectations of accountable governance, which is least possible in violent opposition author stresses that nonviolent campaigns are more likely to use consent, leading to the establishment of more democratically oriented parallel institutions that might aid in transition to a democratic system he has cited the example of 'Truth and Reconciliation commission followed the non-violent anti-apartheid campaign contrary to the armed insurgencies of Cuba and Afghanistan installed a secretive dictatorship.

Author has provided data of nonviolent and violent campaigns to support his view, those 218 violent insurgencies since 1900, and democratic governments succeeded only about 5 per cent of victorious insurgencies. Thus non-violent transitions that have succeeded contain inherent potential to continue to maintain accountability of the new state through civil society using non-violent, means, contrary to that violent insurgencies have premade violent civil society norms and organisations that are antithetical to democratic practices. Shared expectations between rules and ruled in new regimes enhance certainty about laws and institutions. Successful democracies requires the commitments to resolve domestic conflicts using non-violent, institutional mechanism. Civic engagement, civil resistance enhances government accountability and responsiveness. Non-violent protests and civil disobedience are routine activities in nature democracies popular reliance on extra-institutional extra legal means to resolve conflicts may be emblematic of democratic weakness. In an analysis of the effect of resistance type on probability of democracy, author found more than 50 per cent than the violent campaigns, and a country with a successful nonviolent campaigns is about 82 per cent likely to remain a democracy after the campaigns ends people in non-violent insurgencies or conflicts are more likely to codify emerging norms of non-violent bargaining and conflict resolution after the end of the conflict and even if the non-violent resistance campaign fails, still there is a potential for democracy and democratic values. Author also asserts that contrary to

theorists who emphasize structural factors in determining whether a conflict will succeeded or fails, nonviolent campaigns succeed against democracies and nondemocratic weak, and powerful opponents conciliatory and repressive regimes. Conditions can shape but do not determine the capacity for non-violent resistance to adapt and gain advantage under even the direst of circumstances. He has cited the example of American Revolution against the British who used armed insurgency against British forces as guerrilla warfare but again they were preceded by a decade of parallel democratic institution building , nonviolent boycotts , civil disobedience, non-cooperation and other nation building methods.

Thus, the author concludes that nonviolent civil resistance impacts the strategic objectives and long positive effects on the societies which are involved in the resistance movements on the other hand violent resistance have very dismal impact on societies. Although this book focuses on state opponents but civil resistance also effectively confronts the violent non state actors as well. Civil Resistance enhances citizenship skills and societal resilience in ways that elude armed campaigns. Indeed, the civil resistance is an enduring force for change in the international system according to the authors.

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