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Book Reviews

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INTRODUCTION

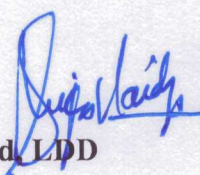
Book Reviews aims to identify the books published recently on all the subjects relevant to NCERT.

Book Reviews have been selected from Learned Periodicals & Newspapers received in LDD during the month of *April 2021 to June 21*

Book Reviews are arranged under broad Subject Headings. Details about the Author, Title, Place of Publication, Name of Publisher, Year, Pages, Price, ISBN followed by analytical review with exact reference to periodicals in which reviewed appeared. It will be our endeavour to bring out this Book Selection Reference Tool.

Book Reviews will be useful to our faculty members in selecting / recommending relevant books for our library and also to keep abreast of latest publications in their specialization.

We eagerly await to receive your views and comments.


Head, LDD

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The Dynamics of Nature Conservation

NEEMA PATHAK BROOME

Nature Conservation in the New Economy: People, Wildlife and the Law in India is a compilation of nine papers and an introductory chapter. The compilation is an attempt towards understanding underlying reasons behind unprecedented stresses on air, water, land and wildlife, despite over five decades of stringent conservation laws, policies and programmes. The book presents an in-depth analysis of events post economic liberalisation in the 1990s, a period significant for emergence of federal politics, rights-based legislations and decentralisation on the one hand; and rapid cultural, socio-economic and environmental changes due to rising consumption, population, urbanisation and globalised aspirations on the other.

The book takes a multidisciplinary approach to bridge the gap between largely polarised writings on conservation, so far either focused on nature and wildlife conservation from a purely naturalist point of view or on issues of equity and justice. As the editors explain, "a deeper treatment of the subject of nature conservation necessarily involves dialogues across ... ecology, anthropology, history, political science and economics." The chapters in the book refreshingly bring about an understanding of "nature and wildlife conservation in a way that adequately bridges the biological sciences—social sciences—humanities divide." The need for such an approach cannot be overemphasised in the current times.

The book argues that the underlying causes affecting conservation goals are multidimensional involving institutional, legal, scientific, political, social, anthropological and historical constraints, and therefore cannot be addressed by employing unidirectional analysis, approach and mechanisms. Consequently, conservation policies and practices have been ineffective, more

Nature Conservation in the New Economy: People, Wildlife and the Law in India edited by Ghazala Shahabuddin and K Sivaramakrishnan, Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2019; pp xx + 291, ₹895.

so in the face of economic liberalisation and push for globalisation-induced economic growth. The book links emerging debates and discussions on historic developments in wildlife conservation in India, highlighting continued distrust within the administration of the local people; inequity, injustice and exclusion of multiple actors, mainly the local people in decision-making; consumption patterns fuelled by unsustainable growth model scientific research and its political connotations; deteriorating quality of air, water, land and consequently quality of rural and urban human society.

It traces the sharp shift in debates, policy and practice from the needs of conservation to that of "development," leading to rapid diversion of forests, grasslands, wetlands, coastal and marine ecosystems for industrial projects, including from protected areas (Sanghera and Shetty 2020). It brings out that this shift has also pitted against each other the indirect resource needs of "urban votaries of industrial and infrastructural growth" against the direct and visible needs of the ecosystem-dependent people and wildlife, while at the same time creating complex aspirational debacles among both. Dilution in environmental regulatory frameworks and lack of independent assessments indicate heavy tilting of the decision-makers in favour of corporate and urban consumptive needs. They are also shifting advocacy attempts from holding the law, administration and legislators accountable to judicial interventions.

These arguments repeatedly present and illustrate themselves in uniquely

diverse and thoughtfully selected chapters representing different geographies, ecosystems, socio-economic, cultural and legal contexts. Each chapter brings out years of knowledge and experience of the authors with the issues, geographies and ecosystems and is consequently, comprehensive, multifaceted, revealing complexities yet retaining depth and clarity.

Conservation and Customary Law

Ambika Aiyadurai in her paper "Hunting in Northeast India and the Challenges of Implementing the Wildlife Protection Act" examines why implementation of the Wildlife Protection Act is near impossible in the north-eastern states of India. She brings out the sentiments of the local people, strongly contending that natural resources and wildlife can be better conserved using customary law. Top-down approaches could lead to over-exploitation by causing diminished sense of local custodianship and ownership as is already happening in parts where customary practices have been replaced by dominant religious belief systems or globalised urban culture. Her paper brings out the clash of the two world views: that of the local people seeing humans deeply embedded in the surrounding nature and related to its spirits and animals, within which hunting is integral and based on intricate knowledge, ritual and taboo systems.

This contradicts with forest department and conservation scientists for whom "nature" remains separate and out there to be "conserved." Cultural realities are dynamic and complex and often may not align well with the current global and national conservation paradigms, values and goals. The best way forward, according to her, would be through open and transparent dialogue and collaborative approaches between different actors, mainly the local people as has been done in some regions of the North East leading to a revival of wildlife populations. She rightly points out that any collaborative approach would require a much greater understanding and acceptance, thereby identifying the "cause and not their symptoms" and integrating them in a multi-tiered framework of governance.

Similar arguments on conservation laws not only not working but being counterproductive to their own objectives, are also illustrated by Archana Bali and Kartik Shankar in "Hunting Stories and Shady Tales" in the context of the Western Ghat. Taking the readers through the coffee plantations, they argue that conservation goals can be most meaningfully achieved when conservation ethics are normative rules of the society and formal legislation is a guiding tool and not a top-down policing instrument. They call for a mosaic landscape-based conception of conservation instead of focusing on exclusionary and bio-geographically limiting protected area system. They argue that diverse agricultural landscapes play an important role in achieving conservation goals.

Such interdisciplinary and multilayered understanding of local, ecological, social and anthropological issues and building them into a matrix of diverse conservation governance and management system is a desperate need for wildlife conservation across India and is already a well-established argument internationally (Borrini-Feyerabend et al 2013; Jonas et al 2014). Delving deeper into understanding community-based conservation, Rajkamal Goswami and T Ganesh in their chapter "Conservation in Times of Development" compare the loss of forest quality over two decades in two different forest governance regimes, namely community forests (89.6%) and reserved forests (10.4%) in the Jaintia Hills in Meghalaya. They find that the rate of degradation of forests was much higher in community forests than reserved forests.

Closer examination, however, reveals that maximum changes were associated with mining, industrialisation and land-use change from communal *jhum* to privatised commercial plantations. The trigger, they argue, has been the motivation to maintain high economic growth post 1990, achieved by changing legal and policy environment, and facilitating landownership from local indigenous communities to large corporations. Weakened local institutions under deliberately created environment of confusion about the roles and responsibilities could

not withstand such pressures. Their research clearly indicates that devolution of power to the smallest unit of decision-making in itself is not enough to achieve conservation. It must accompany appropriate safeguards and precautionary principles, unalienable landownership regimes, locally self-empowering and supportive policies, and appropriate support mechanism for nature-based sustainable livelihoods. Similar issues, among others, are also highlighted in a very detailed analysis of the "Sustainability of Endemic Chilgoza Pine Forests" in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh by Rinki Sarkar.

Diminishing Diversity

M Vikas writes about the much less explored conservation debates and discussions around urban and peri-urban India. Since 1990, India has seen unprecedented urbanisation and rapid land-use change in adjoining rural and peri-urban areas. Fast expanding glutinous cities, epitome of industrial human consumptive lifestyles, devour and subsume surrounding agricultural, forest and wildlife diversity and are rarely seen as spaces shared by ecosystem-based communities or non-human species (leave alone spirits). Even as cases of wildlife encounters with increasingly ignorant urban humans increase, few cities have a wildlife management plan or trained staff to handle encounters or undertake rescue exercises. Taking readers through a much less known ecological and socio-economic

history of areas which have transformed to become part of Delhi metropolitan, he looks at the impacts of the city and its political economy on common property resources (CPRs). Many of these were and some continue to be the customarily protected sacred groves. Gujjar pastoralists and Dalits, dependent on these resources, were gradually pushed out and continue to be marginalised. In this invisible coexistence of two cultural world views, the dominant urban view decides how the green spaces are managed and for what, leading to Delhi Ridge becoming the "green lungs" of the city envisioned for recreation; these as lived spaces integral to the culture and economy of the Gujjar and Dalit communities completely forgotten. Vikas calls for the planners, particularly the forest department to come out of their "binary" vision of forest and green space management and include multifaceted complex ecological, historical and socio-economic realities to make management of green spaces a more comprehensive and inclusive exercise.

Similar arguments are presented by Ghazala Shahabuddin in the context of rewilding with the Asiatic cheetah. She brings together debates and discussions around reintroduction of cheetah in India to analyse the nature of science and politics behind decisions related to rewilding projects. She argues that continuing with the fortress approach, rewilding projects tend to ignore and trivialise local context. Human-free "inviolable" areas

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continue to be created ignoring all evidence of inadequacy, failure and immense suffering and social cost associated with relocation programmes without exploring possibilities of coexistence. She questions the "science" in the inadequate and politically influenced "scientific studies" from prestigious institutes like the Wild Life Institute of India and concludes that rewilding projects demonstrate continued fuelling of public and state imagination by the charisma of large carnivores at a huge social cost and compromising the interests of less glamorous local species and the local people.

Meghana Agrawal, Ruth DeFries, Y V Jhala and Q Quereshi in "Threats to Co-existence of Humans and Forests in Central India" bring the readers to a detailed and localised context of Kanha-Pench landscape of Central India. Central Indian forests provide significant ecosystem services, habitat for a diversity of wildlife and support the livelihoods of 60% of human population that coexists with these forests and wildlife. The authors contend that mining and infrastructure projects threatening these forests are likely to severely compromise their long-term capacity to continue to support coexistence. They then go on to explore very local factors and perceptions that may also have an impact on co-existence. The paper questions many long-held notions about nature and natural forests which have guided conservation praxis and argue that often local use, knowledge and forest management systems come in conflict with the government institutions and policies because of differences in perception arising from these notions. They warn that vague unexamined perceptions of impacts, not looking at the natural biophysical processes and viewing forests as static entities will compromise the resilience within the system to maintain ecological processes. They call for conservation plans and policies to be built upon locale-specific in-depth studies.

Neha Sinha in her paper "Water under the Bridge" looks at ecological, political and social dimensions of conservation of another much less talked about ecosystem—the wetlands in India. She

argues that despite a wetland policy, a more or less clear definition and specific biodiversity conservation policies, wetlands are highly threatened. Most wetlands are not identified as wetlands as per the definition and hence treated as drains and wastelands facilitating their diversion for other more "useful" activities such as roads, real estate development, and waste dumping grounds. Top-down, centralised, unidimensional and blinkered vision alienates wetlands from those for whom they are critical. Which waterbody is to be identified as a legal wetland? What is their value and for whom? And what kind of conservation and management they require, by whom and for whom? These remain highly contested and least publicly debated questions.

Safeguarding Coastal Ecosystems

A core issue that most chapters point towards is that the primary driving motivation behind all political, social and economic processes post the 1990s has been to fuel the corporate-based model of economic growth. Attempts to achieve conservation under such circumstances are at best temporary patchwork negotiated by politically weak actors with great struggle. Kanchi Kohli and Manju Menon in their paper then wonder, "Is conservation impossible?" by exploring the case of attempts to safeguard India's coastal ecosystems through regulatory mechanisms. While the industrial projects are regularly cleared along the sensitive and biologically rich coastal ecosystems, the conservation projects find themselves stuck behind procedural lack of clarity and confusion. The mandate of the regulatory provisions remains that of prioritising economic growth instead of facilitating conservation programmes. They highlight that despite all its follies and attempts at dilution, Coastal Zone Regulation Notification remains a unique document which is an outcome of complex processes of negotiation among a wide range of actors, including the local communities. They argue that a similar continued multi-actor solidarity is needed to ensure that the notification can be effectively implemented to achieve conservation,

support local livelihoods and effectively prevent takeover of coastal commons by private corporate bodies.

In conclusion, using different geographic, social and legal context, the book very successfully highlights current conservation debates and continued myopic view within conservation laws, policies and practice by trying to strait-jacket the needs of a huge diversity of ecosystems, socio-economic and bio-cultural landscapes, further stretched by being secondary to the needs of "development." Successful implementation of conservation laws and policies lies in broadening the lens with which to view and understand diverse human societies and their relationship with their ecosystems both within rural and urban context. This wonderful compilation is a must-read for anyone interested in contemporary conservation praxis. A couple of issues would have added immensely to this book, particularly on rights-based approaches to conservation, brought about by the enactment of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. As the claims of the act being used successfully towards self-empowerment and achieving conservation and livelihoods objectives emerge, it would be immensely useful to understand how, if at all, these initiatives have addressed some of the concerns raised in the book, particularly related to lack of inclusiveness, local perceptions, local knowledge, local resistance to industrial threat, and ecological restoration. One hopes that this comes in a sequel that may be in the making.

Neema Pathak Broome (neema.pb@gmail.com) is a member of Kalpavriksh, based in Pune.

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Practice of Caste and the Complexities of Constitutional Democracy

JADUMANI MAHANAND

On the one hand, majoritarian upper-caste discourse has dominated in democratic institutions, such as Parliament, executive and judiciary, and on the other, the idea of Hindu law resounds in everyday social lives. The dynamics of law in India are contrasting in two major ways. First, the ancient law that is known as Manu's law (*Manusmriti*) comprises Hindu religious codes/rules, rituals and customs that predominate the modern constitutional law. And second, the modern law is adopted by the democratic state. The modern democratic state is a political contract and agreement among the citizens through the Constitution to secure rights, liberty, and equality as a matter of inalienable fundamental rights. Yet, in the last seven decades, despite having modern constitutional law, the lawlessness of the established Hindu social order sanctifies and validates the persistence of caste, atrocities against Dalits, and subjugation of women that is prescribed in Manu's law in accordance with Hindu religion.

Dag-Erik Berg, a political theorist, scrupulously brings out the complexity of the social inequalities and exclusion in the constitutional democracy. B R Ambedkar, in one of his Constituent Assembly speeches, said that the Indian democracy is going to have a life of contradictions in its social and economic life. Interestingly, Berg employs Ernesto Laclau's concept of antagonism to understand the contradictions in Indian democracy. He calls it "mechanism of oppression" in the context of Dalit situation in postcolonial democracy. Berg showcases the protest against the dilution of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) (PoA) Act, 1989, and in that context how two Dalit women went to smear black paint on Manu's statue in the Rajasthan High Court in 2018. In particular, the book *Dynamics of Caste*

Dynamics of Caste and Law: Dalits, Oppression and Constitutional Democracy in India by Dag-Erik Berg, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020; pp 243, ₹795.

and Law: *Dalits, Oppression and Constitutional Democracy in India* construes caste and law in the context of Dalits' intricacy with constitutional democracy and the state machinery. Berg explores the concept of political ontology in Ambedkar's philosophy to comprehend Indian society and polity. In this regard, the scholarship on Ambedkar is well articulated as a theorist of democracy and constitutionalism, who fathoms to unravel the social political problem of his time that is explicated in postcolonial democratic state. While building a narrative, Berg locates the historical trajectory of caste atrocity in the purview of law, revealing the ambiguous relationship between caste, untouchability, and equality in the enhancement of law against caste practice in relation to Dalits, such as Article 17, and PoA Act, 1989. He mainly deliberates over two massacres against Dalits, namely the Karamchedu and Tsundururu and the landmark judgment in the related court case, while discussing the Khairlanji episode on the same plane. Berg further demonstrates the caste discrimination in the university campuses and reservations in the context of the movement that emerged after the institutional murder of Rohith Vemula. He names it the modernity of caste in a democracy.

Methodological Questions

In terms of methodology, Berg enters into a complex zone in approaching the book. Studying social and political theory in India raises serious methodological questions. Earlier, scholars have asked if there is a distinct political theory in India. The answer is no. Indian social and political concepts are unpacked through

Western conceptual tools. There are two approaches to bare such nuances. On the one side, scholars like Aishwary Kumar (2015) study Ambedkar from the lens of global comparative political thought in order to contour Ambedkar's philosophical enterprises in global political theory. On the other side, Aakash Singh Rathore (2020) discovers the distinctiveness of Ambedkar's original conceptual historical engagement in the making of the preamble of the Indian Constitution. Berg adopts both approaches in his study. He has categorically used the concepts of Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, and Michael Foucault in relation to Ambedkar's concepts for a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The concepts such as "oppressive mechanism," "antagonism," and "post-foundationalism" are applied in the book.

Berg develops an argument about the caste-based dominance in understanding law in order to provide an account of the interrelated themes such as mechanism of oppression, institution of laws, and institutionalising ideology. The question is, how can one respond to the Dalit problem only through legal mechanisms? "The mechanism of oppression refers to the paradox of how upward mobility among Dalits coexists with enduring atrocity" (p 3). The concept allows us to reconceptualise the enduring problem of oppression of Dalits and also look at the postcolonial development. Broadly, the mechanism of oppression is employed to explain the dynamics of caste and law that is involved in two types of conflict, namely violence and negotiation. Violence generates fear and resentment, whereas negotiation is a part of democratic practice. The reason for such a conflict is that upper castes or caste Hindus do not tolerate Dalits gaining wealth, behaving in a sophisticated way or demanding their rights. Interestingly, Berg employs Laclau's concepts of antagonism in order to advance Ambedkar's theory to argue how antagonism constitutes an ontology of caste.

This is a new trend in studying Ambedkar, because of his conceptual relevance. The question that one would like to ask is: Why is it obligatory to employ such derivative conceptual tools no

matter how useful and intellectually captivating they may be? Interestingly, Berg has provided some original concepts available in Ambedkar's theoretical lexicon. The larger ambiguity of such an enterprise is to elevate the positional-ity of a thinker who is very often pushed into the corner because of their radical emancipatory "philosophy and praxis." If Ambedkar's theoretical claims are appealing, why can he not be then acceptable to Western scholarship as an original thinker? One can therefore ask: Why are Ambedkar's concepts not being applied universally and useful resource to Western society, while thinking about emancipation, discrimination or democracy? In this regard, the scholarship of Berg develops an Ambedkarite perspective that is worth exploring in foregrounding such complex question, albeit there is no direct answer to such an enterprise.

Context of Caste Atrocities

One of the important arguments in the book could be understood as an answer to the question as to why "practising caste" is not a criminal act according to the Constitution, although caste practices are a violation of fundamental rights, principally the right to equality. Berg's discussion foregrounds this as the crux of the problem. For Dalits, law is a source to protect themselves, whereas Article 17, POA Act, 1989 and fundamental rights are violation of the caste system (status, occupation, and ranking). However, upper castes are ready to face law and Constitution but unwilling to accept Dalits as equal human beings. That is how the impunity of caste is maintained. Berg's study of Karamchedu and Tsundururu exposes such practices. The tragedy of the Indian judicial system is that the lower courts are seemingly impartial, but the higher court's judgment are unfavourable.

Against the backdrop of the prevention of caste in practising constitutional democracy, Berg provides a new insight in analysing the debate between M K Gandhi and Ambedkar. He argues that caste was not taken seriously in the Constituent Assembly Debates as the prevention of caste is limited to untouchability, not the whole caste system. Therefore, practising

caste is a matter of privilege in the Brahminical social order. To capture the practice of caste, Berg develops a phrase, "teaching Dalits a lesson," to understand caste atrocities against Dalits. In my reading, the phrase has two dimensions. The repulsion and hatred of upper castes is expressed when it is called "teaching Dalits a lesson" that Berg has explained throughout the book. But it can be read the other way as Dalits teaching a lesson to upper castes' hatred and violence through the constitutional provisions, notwithstanding the fact that the provisions of Constitution being facilitated through the state are deeply puzzling. Berg has not paid enough attention to this aspect. The concept of lawlessness is explicit in Ambedkar's analysis of caste and law,¹ but Berg has not delved upon it while finding intricacy of caste, law, and state.

The source of modern law is constitutive of constitutional democracy, however, the impact is imperceptible in the Indian society. The law is misused by the ruling class. The caste system is outlawed in India, nevertheless, every 15 minutes, a crime is committed against Dalits. Every day, six Dalit women are

raped. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) figures show that anti-Dalit crimes rose by 25% over the last decade. The conviction rate is very low. Berg discussed three cases, and unsurprisingly, in none of these cases, justice is delivered to Dalits. On the one side, it is the blatant truth of the human rights violation against Dalits exposed by the NCRB, and on the other side, evidences are inadequate for judiciary to convict the casteist criminal (the perpetrator). Caste atrocities against Dalits are normalised as a social act by the non-Dalit society. Ambedkar's prediction is evident in the post-constitutional state:

however good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot. However bad a Constitution may be, it may turn out to be good if those who are called to work it, happen to be a good lot.'

Berg's scholarship contributes to unpack this complexity in the context of law and caste in a constitutional democracy.

Jadumani Mahanand (jadumani.cps@gmail.com) teaches at Jindal Global Law School, O P Jindal Global University, Sonapat.

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Between Precarity and Flexibility Labour and Capital in the Gig Economy

GAYATRI NAIR

The year 2020 has been rather strange and difficult with the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the most appropriate moment for this vital new contribution on gig work to have been published. In *The Gig Economy: A Critical Introduction*, Jamie Woodcock and Mark Graham outline in lucid language the workings of the gig economy. The world of gig work is a world of work that has been built on the obfuscation of where and how value from work is generated. Woodcock and Graham introduce readers to the inner workings of the gig economy—simultaneously hailed and denounced as the disruptor of traditional economies—revealing just how technology, technology corporations and workers interact within it.

The first few pages lay out deftly both sides of the debate: gig work presents itself as a job with a great deal of built-in flexibility, but also one with no linked economic guarantees and social securities. The book concerns itself with understanding the developments leading to the rise of the gig economy and specifically, its implications for workers. Divided into chapters that examine the What, Where and How of the gig economy, the book is built on interviews conducted with gig workers across countries of the global North and South. In unravelling the operations of the gig economy, it is concerned just as much with the political economy of the gig economy as the notion of the work-day within it. The readers are given insights into the macro processes, as well as the minutiae, that are transforming the world of work, where workers on platforms are scrounging for gigs, and delivery persons remain hungry as they constantly remain logged on to platforms to earn a survival wage.

The book is an especially useful contribution at a time when delivery-based

BOOK REVIEWS

The Gig Economy: A Critical Introduction by Jamie Woodcock and Mark Graham, UK, Cambridge and Medford: Polity Press, 2020; pp ix + 182, £14.99.

gig services, marked as essential work during successive lockdowns, have seen a disproportionate division of risk within the gig economy, with gig workers facing the brunt of this. Owing to the structure of the gig economy, which this book does well to bring out, the responsibility for this risk is not borne by corporates that run gig platforms but is instead outsourced to the consumers.

To raise questions on the legal responsibility of tech corporates towards their workers, demands an unpacking of what really is at work within the gig economy. Early on, Woodcock and Graham address this question, beginning with a rather important consideration—technological interventions leading to new forms of work is not a new phenomenon at all. Technology has enabled tech companies to organise work in a new manner (p 22). Part of this, as the authors demonstrate, is made possible through technology-driven changes in work where the “digital legibility” of work is important. Digital legibility refers to work that can be broken into elemental processes that can then be rendered available through a digital form (pp 23–24). Delivery work for instance, which can be broken into parts like collection and drop, monitored through GPS and for which payments can be organised online, is work that is highly digitally legible. This digital legibility, in turn, only works with easy and cheap access to technology that has been facilitated by the prevalence of smartphones. But while technology is instrumental here, the role of technology corporates has not been limited to a

mere technical aggregation service, as they claim. The authors argue that this is “selective framing” that hides what corporates actually do. Far from being limited only to the creation and running of platforms, corporates perform a much wider, but often concealed role:

facilitating payments, establishing trust mechanism, surveillance of workers (and, in some cases clients), and myriad other sector specific features like driver routing or panic buttons. The point here is that platforms are far from a simple marketplace in which clients and workers meet. (p 23)

In the authors’ analysis, the gig economy emerges at the intersection of political economy, technology, and social context. Each of these contribute towards the possibility of organising work over platforms which are marked by both an incredible extent of flexibility as well as precarity. What is at stake then is both an empirical consideration of this precarity and its implications, both of which are central ideas the book explores.

Precarious Work

The lens of precarity frames the manner in which the book responds to the central concerns of gig work. By identifying what gig work is and how it emerges, as well as by considering what it is like to be a gig worker and the implications of the gig economy, the authors avoid the easy collapse of gig workers into roles of passive victims subject to the machinations of technology corporates. Thus, they avoid turning gig workers into celebrated representatives of a new era of a shared economy that is projected as politically progressive as much as it is economically conservative.

Precarity allows the narrative to shape both the macrostructural changes as well as the everyday experience of gig work. The authors begin by noting that the term has been used largely to identify a distinction in work from what is imagined, as the more common form of employment: “the standard employment relationship.” Drawing on Mitropoulos (2005), they argue that the term can be “unwieldy and indeterminate” and

draw from Beck (1992) and Bourdieu (1998) to point towards its negative implications—loss of security, certainty, benefits, etc (p 17).

Yet, the authors insist that if the experience of precarity remains pervasive in this contemporary moment, then it demands attention. They begin by looking at whether precarity generated in the gig economy is new and distinct. They offer an important conceptual clarification—precarity in work is not new and yet there is something different at work within the gig economy. Precarious work has existed even at a time when formal, stable and secure work was the norm, and often remains marked by gender and racial hierarchies. However, even as conditions of precarity and informalisation have come to be the norm, the gig economy marks a different moment, one where precarity is deepened by measures of time. There are no longer short-term jobs spanning weeks or days; there is only the gig, sometimes lasting only minutes, and amplifying with it the experience of precarity.

Within this precarity also lies the experience of those who have been able to thrive owing to the flexibility this work offers (the example offered by gig companies of the single mother scheduling gigs as per her convenience). This desire for flexibility is important to consider for two reasons. First, austerity politics over the world has led to individuals, and particularly women, having to shoulder more work, particularly work that is unpaid. Flexibility in such a context can be welcoming. The second insight that the book highlights is that for many young people such flexible and short work is desirable because it is freed of the unnecessary emotional investment in work that is also linked to stressful jobs or the phenomenon of “bullshit jobs” (Graeber 2019).

Gig work offers the possibility, as the authors argue, of “different ways of working” (p 31). Given the way technology and work now interface in the gig economy to create models of “cloud work” and “geographically tethered work,” the possibilities within these new ways of working

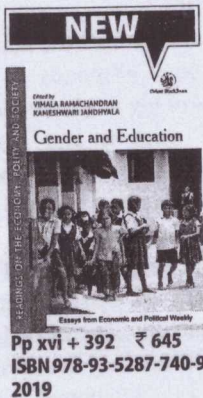
need not necessarily be abandoned. The authors imagine the future of work is one not based on technological utopias but grounded in political and social shifts that must accompany this new form of work. In their conclusion the authors flesh out these possibilities, where transparency and accountability accompany power for the workers and increased democratisation within the gig economy.

For this future to take shape, the fundamental basis on which the gig economy is currently predicated must change. Technology corporates need to recognise those labouring within the gig economy as workers. But this has been a difficult point to negotiate, especially in countries like India, where the gig economy is celebrated for bringing jobs to an economy of largely jobless growth. Freed of legal responsibility towards workers, technology corporates can generate and accumulate profits with minimal pay-outs to workers. For instance, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, corporates have been able to outsource responsibility for workers to consumers by creating funds

Gender and Education

Edited by

VIMALA RAMACHANDRAN AND KAMESHWARI JANDHYALA



Education of women and girls in India has been widely debated and discussed since the mid-1900s. While the last century has seen a considerable shift in the status of women in Indian society, gender equality in education continues to be influenced by the economy, society, and culture, the accessibility and availability of formal education, and gender norms. A continued preference for sons across the country plays an important role in determining whether girls are given access to both primary and higher education.

This volume brings together wide-ranging debates that took place in the *Economic & Political Weekly* from 2000 to 2017 on the social, political and economic realities affecting the education of women across the country. It analyses the different axes of inequality; the political, economic and social context of education; and pedagogy and curriculum, through a study of textbooks.

The volume will be critical for students, scholars and researchers of sociology, education, women's studies and development studies, and for NGOs and organisations working in the development sector.

Authors: Vimala Ramachandran • Kameshwari Jandhyala • Aarti Saihjee • Anuradha De • Claire Noronha • Meera Samson • Krishna Kumar • Sadhna Saxena • Divya Vaid • Jeemol Unni • Nandini Manjrekar • Suchitra Balasubrahmanyam • Nina Haeems • Lori McDougall • Anju Saigal • Balwant Singh Mehta • Megha Shree • Karuna Chanana • Kausik Chaudhuri • Susmita Roy • Ambika Kohli • Annemie Maertens • Sharmila Rege • Dipta Bhog • Malini Ghose • Purwa Bharadwaj • Disha Mullick

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aimed at supporting drivers, delivery personnel, etc. A legal classification of drivers as workers would force these companies to provide forms of support for income loss, insurance, etc. The Appendix section of the book provides a draft convention on platform work, that imagines, through an introduction of labour rights into the gig economy framework, a way that precarity can be scaled down while flexibility is retained.

Labour Process Theory, Workers and Value Generation

Given that this book commendably places the voice of workers at the centre stage, while analysing the gig economy and resistance to it, it is rather surprising that an opportunity to theoretically contextualise this through labour process theory is missing here. One reason for this could be that the book is intended both for a larger, non-academic audience as well as a call to arms of sorts. But setting the empirical details of this book in this theoretical context, much like Braverman (1998) did, could only encourage new ways of thinking about workplace resistance and solidarity.

This is particularly so, since Braverman's work brought to attention the way capitalism is driven by a need to enhance technology on the one hand, while diminishing the worker on the other (Foster 1998). Given the concerns that the book raises and ends with, it would do well to consider how the capital-labour relationship manifests within the gig economy. With Taylorism, it was managerial control combined with technological advance that could create a legibility of the work process and keep workers in check. Given that the gig economy is constructed manifestly on the absence of this direct managerial control, it would be important to consider what the implications of this are. Is it the case that the gig economy has transposed this managerial role to a technological avatar that constantly monitors and controls workers, or has it eliminated the need for monitoring altogether? The answer lies somewhere in between, where gig firms use a mix of technology-driven oversight and human managers to track workers. More significantly, the

intense use of technology in the gig economy does something more than just obfuscate points of control. As Braverman (1998: 134) indicates:

In this way the remarkable development of machinery becomes, for most of the working population, the source not of freedom but of enslavement, not of mastery but of helplessness, and not of the broadening of the horizon of labor but of the confinement of the worker within a blind round of servile duties in which the machine appears as the embodiment of science and the worker as little or nothing.

In the context of gig work it is evident that the worker and labour is confined by and subject to algorithmic control (complex algorithms driving price mechanism, incentive structures and access to gig, complaint mechanisms, etc) which has degraded the quality of work itself. At a time when there is a great deal of consideration on the question of taking the Uber model to other parts of the economy and a general push towards automation, it would serve us well to consider Braverman's work to understand how technology, capital and labour interact to the detriment of the latter under capitalism. The democratisation of work that Woodcock and Graham indicate at the end of the book is theoretically better derived from an understanding of how technology is deployed under capitalism "to diminish the worker."

Relatedly, the book could have done well to engage with the theoretical debate concerning the generation of value in work. Given that labour in the gig economy is not only generating value through the production of services, but also producing data that can be used to develop and enhance production (self-driving cars, drones to deliver, etc), there arises the question of how value can be understood. The debate between the autonomist Marxists and the labour process theorists on whether labour still remains the primary site of value generation and antagonism could have been considered, given the empirical and conceptual work done by this book. Between claims of unwaged prosumers (Fuchs 2016)—a class of shadow workers who are both consumers and users—and the role of workers in the gig economy

as knowledge producers, there was much room for this debate to be explored. The book, it would seem, leans favourably towards the labour process theory position, but an explanation of why this has been the route chosen would benefit even the lay reader and would make a significant contribution to the debate.

But this is a minor shortfall for an otherwise remarkable book that remains lucid and accessible throughout. The rich conceptual and empirical detail that grounds this book is likely to make it the first choice for anyone who is interested and intrigued by the gig economy. Given the rapid expansion that the gig economy has undergone under the pandemic, and its model of outsourced risk (to workers) and responsibility (to consumers), this book is likely to interest many—workers themselves, policymakers and the conscious consumer.

Gayatri Nair (gayatri.nair7@gmail.com) is a sociologist working on urban labour and teaches at the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, Delhi.

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Production, Trade and Consumption of Pulses

D NARASIMHA REDDY

There appears to be a widely prevalent impression, particularly among the developed countries, that there are people and nations who do not know the “incredible properties” of pulses, and believe “that their nutritional value is generally not recognised and their consumption is frequently under-appreciated” (FAO 2016). Such a situation may be largely because pulses in farming and food are essentially a third world phenomenon. Almost 90% of the area under pulses and about 80% of output of pulses are in developing countries, and among them sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where the world’s most of the poor and undernourished live, and for whom pulses are a critical source of protein, together account for about two-thirds of the area, and one-half of output of world’s pulses (Joshi and Rao 2016).

Pulse protein is a relatively large share of overall consumption in low-income countries, ranging from 10–35% in Africa. The country with the greatest pulse consumption is India. Protein from pulses represents 12.7% of total protein in the Indian diet. (Mc Dermott and Wyatt 2017)

To bring to light the crucial role that pulses play in health diets and sustainable agricultural production, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2016 as the International Year of Pulses (IYP) nominating the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as the agency to implement it. Soon after the FAO came out with a report that was intended to popularise different aspects of pulses by illustrating (literally, as could be seen from the colourful pages all along in the report) the benefits ranging from nutrition to biodiversity—that included not only the expertise of the agriculture and nutrition sciences, but also appetising pulse recipes by some of the world-class chefs from across the regions (FAO 2016).

BOOK REVIEWS

The Global Economy of Pulses edited by Vikas Rawal and Dorian Kalamvrezos Navarro, Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2019; pp xi + 174, price not indicated.

But the volume under review, is of a different kind that seeks to explain “the world pulses situation and recent market trends, covering the themes of production, yields, utilisation, consumption, international trade and prices, as well as providing a medium-term outlook for pulses” (p x).

Variation in the Crops

A study on global economy of pulses, as could be seen from this report, faces several challenges. First, there are several varieties of pulses and on many minor varieties there are hardly any separate data, necessitating separate analysis on major varieties, and grouping some other varieties. Second, pulses are cultivated under diverse conditions, ranging in size from homesteads and small farms to large and industrial farms, and in terms of cropping pattern, from sola crops to inter-crops to boundary crops. The levels of technology adopted, yields and incomes vary across the crops. This makes a choice of region or country-wise analysis difficult, and hence the report focuses on major varieties of pulse crops and the place of major producing regions/countries under each of these major crops. The third constraint is that data, especially for low-income countries, are less robust, and the available FAOSTAT data on pulses is mostly up to 2012–13, and in a few cases extend up to 2015–16 (IYP 2016). Notwithstanding these constraints, the study maps out a comprehensive picture of the various dimensions of pulses in the global economy. The report is presented in nine chapters, of which there

are six chapters, each devoted to one major pulse crop discussing the production conditions and dynamics of growth in the major producing countries.

Global Trends in Production

The introductory Chapter 1 begins with an emphasis on the two aspects of pulses that distinguish them from most other food crops. First, pulses are very nutritious seeds with high protein, mineral and fibre, and low fat and no cholesterol. Second, pulses have root nodules which help biological nitrogen fixation from the soil. These properties of pulses make them essential ingredients in the fight against protein malnutrition and in reducing the use of chemical fertilisers. In spite of their critical role in raising the levels of human nutrition and in maintaining environmental sustainability of agriculture, the growth of pulses has been slow due to low yields and low returns.

The global trends in the production of pulses for about four and a half decades since 1971 shows four phases. The first phase of 1970s was marked by stagnation or even a marginal decline in total pulses production from 43 million tonnes (mt) to 41 mt. The second phase of 1980s saw marked increase in the production of pulses to 57 mt by 1991, driven largely by the increase in the area as well as productivity of dry pea, which was substantially used as animal feed. The third phase consisting of 1990s, saw yet another decade of stagnation. It was largely because of the decline in the production of dry pea, for which the demand fell steeply because of soya bean emerging as an alternative source of animal feed. It was only in the fourth phase (2001–14) that there was slow but consistent increase in the global production of pulses from 56 mt in 2001 to 77 mt in 2014. Though the regional pulses vary crop-wise, in overall production, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa account for half of all pulses produced in the world. Over the years there has been a steady increase in the pulses traded globally. In 1971, it was a minuscule of 4% of global production or 1.9 mt of production that was traded globally, and it increased to

18% or 13 mt by 2013. North America, where domestic consumption is very low but production is on the increase, is the major exporter accounting for 44% of global exports of pulses.

Chapter 2, after a detailed analysis of the nutritional and health dimensions, looks at trends and regional variations in the levels of consumption and sources of demand for pulses across the world. Globally, the average per capita per day consumption of pulses is about 21 grams, but it is 33 grams for sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where the dependence on pulses for protein and dietary energy is also high. It may not be out of place to say that the entire chapter could serve as a brief and succinct guide to those interested in the nutrient and micronutrient profiles of food in general, and that of pulses in particular. The report finds that food-based dietary guidelines are an important informational tool for nutrition education and analyses the guidelines developed for about 100 countries with the FAOs assistance. For instance, the guidelines for India, a country where pulse consumption is widely prevalent, provide very detailed information on the recommended levels of intake for different age groups with meat and non-meat dietary habits.

Cultivation of Chickpea in India

Beginning with Chapter 3, six chapters deal with one pulse crop each. Chapter 3 is on chickpea, which is a major pulse crop accounting for 17% of global area as well as output of pulses. Though chickpea is grown across all continents, India is the largest producer of chickpea with a little over two-thirds of the share in the global output. And the two varieties—*desi* and *kabuli* by which it is globally traded, are Indian derivatives. Hence, the story of chickpea globally is also substantially influenced by what happens to it in India. For almost three decades, 1960s through 1980s, there was stagnation in the global production of chickpea. During these decades, India experienced net decline in area as well as production of chickpea. This was largely attributed to the green revolution that brought about a shift in the area from low returns chickpea to high-yielding varieties of

wheat in irrigated Indo-Gangetic plains that brought about higher returns. Since 1991, the declining trend in area and production under chickpea was reversed. The area under chickpea increased from 5.6 million hectares (mh) to 8.4 mh in 1998, and further to 10 mh by 2013, and the productivity also increased resulting in output of 10 mt by the end of the period. The transformation in the chickpea economy was due to the development of high-yielding, short-duration and relatively more heat-resistant varieties of chickpea. This facilitated an increase of almost 4 mh due to shift of chickpea cultivation to semi-arid areas of peninsular India. Between 1991 and 2013, the additional area brought under chickpea was more than the entire area in the world, other than that of India. The momentum gained in the area, productivity and production in chickpea, as the latest data show, has been sustained beyond 2013. Since India is not only the largest producer of chickpea but also largest consumer of the pulse, a part of the demand is met by imports to the tune of 4% of domestic consumption. India also exports part of its *kabuli* variety of chickpea for which there is demand abroad. Chickpea cultivation in India is largely under small and marginal farms, and in spite of considerable varietal improvements, vagaries of weather still keep the yield at a relatively low level, affecting the returns of small farmers, besides the problems of marketing that are highlighted later in the report.

The Dry Bean Varieties

Chapter 4 is a broad combination of pulses that are categorised as “phaseolus and *Vigna* Genera,” or broadly referred to as “dry bean” varieties. This category includes more than half a dozen varieties, and the study included these under one category of “dry bean,” because FAOSTAT does not provide separate data for each of the varieties. Further, two important pulses, namely cowpea and bamba bean, are also not included under FAOSTAT category of “dry beans,” but are brought under this chapter. Thus we end up with nine varieties under this chapter. These cannot be considered as of minor significance, since together they constitute 41%

of global production of pulses. Not all the nine varieties are spread across the world. On the contrary, some of them are region- or country-specific. For instance, “common bean” (there are several varieties within this) is entirely confined to a few countries in North and South Americas, and Africa, whereas pulses like *mung* and *urad* are largely in Asian countries like India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, China, Pakistan, Thailand and Sri Lanka. India is the largest producer and consumer of *mung* and *urad* beans. In 2011–13, these beans accounted for 26% of total area under pulses in the country, but the yields are very low. Part of the local demand for these pulses is met by imports. The other important variety which accounts for almost 10% of the global pulse production is cowpea. It is substantially confined to West African countries like Nigeria, Nigu and Burkina Faso, which together account for 83% of global cowpea production. Yields are very high in Nigeria, but very low in Niger and Burkina Faso. Most of these pulses in Asia and Africa are under smallholder farms, and yields, with some exceptions, are relatively low. There has been considerable research towards evolving short duration varieties with higher yields with the objective of increasing production and margins of small producers.

Chapter 5 is about lentil. The story of growth of production of lentil has been quite in contrast to other pulses. The growth story of most of the pulses is linked to the local consumption demand and cultivation on small farms, often rain-fed. But lentil growth in recent decades is driven by export demand, and sought to be met by large-scale mechanised farming. This could be seen from the fact that Canada accounts for 40% of the world's total production of lentil, produced on large farms mostly for exports to traditional lentil-eating countries like India. Similar are the production conditions in Australia. These countries account for most of the half of lentil production that is exported. Of course, India is the second largest producer accounting for about one-fifth of global production, entirely on small farms with low yields and returns. About three-fourths of Nepal's pulse production is

dependent on lentil, and most of which is for domestic consumption.

Pigeon pea, also known as red gram, is the focus of Chapter 6. Pigeon pea is cultivated in tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world, and is confined to developing countries in Asia, south east Africa and the Caribbean. The cultivation of this crop is almost entirely by the smallholder farms. In the triennium ending 2014, global production of pigeon pea stood at 4.4 mt constituting about 5.8% of total pulse production across the world. India with 3.0 mt or about 67% of the global production, is the world's largest producer of pigeon pea. The second largest producer, Myanmar, is way down with about 13% of global production share. Malawi, Tanzania and Kenya follow next, each with a share of 5% to 6%. The prominence of India in pigeon pea production is not matched in yield and growth. In 2012–14, the per hectare yield of pigeon pea was 652 kilograms (kg) in India, in contrast to 1,268 kg in Malawi and 921 kg in Myanmar. As a result, India as the largest consumer of pigeon pea, also ends up as the largest importer of the pulse. The report discusses at length research efforts made at the International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) since 1981, and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) since 1996, to develop improved varieties, including hybrids. But the major challenge, as it is pointed out, apart from the rain-fed conditions of cultivation of pigeon pea, is the self-pollinating nature of pulse crops, which inhibits large-scale production of hybrids. But pigeon pea does allow a degree of cross-pollination by bees, which has allowed development of certain hybrids, but yet the productivity levels continue to be low.

Chapter 7 deals with dry pea, a cool season legume that is used as both food and animal feed. Unlike other pulses, dry pea production has declined considerably since 1991, largely because of soya bean emerging as a major substitute in animal feed. In 1991, 63% of global dry pea production was used as animal feed; by 2011, this share had fallen to 34%. Between 1989–91 and 2012–14, the share of dry pea in the global pulse production

declined from 26% to 14.5%. Interestingly, it is a "dry pea" with a cool preference, and hence the production is dominated by the Northern hemisphere as could be seen from the Figure 7.1 of the report (p 100). Canada is the largest producer of dry pea with a share of 32% (2012–14) in the world's production, followed by Russia (13%), China (13%), the United States (6%), and France (5%). India too produces dry pea but it constitutes only about 3% of its total pulses production. India is the world's largest importer, mostly from Canada and Russia, and it accounts for about 40% of global imports of dry pea; this in spite of the fact that there is very little direct consumption of dry pea. The demand for dry pea in India apparently is for adulterating chick pea flour, which is used mostly in making snacks! Chapter 8 is on the pulses of *Vicia* germs which includes 150 species and most of them contain toxins, but used as pastures, green manure, livestock feed and as cover crop in winter. Of them, faba bean, also known as horse gram, is the only one used for human consumption. Though over the years the production of faba bean is on the decline, its production accounted for about 4.4 mt (triennium 2014). And another variant of it, common vetch, accounted for 0.92 mt. China is the world's biggest producer of faba bean, and Ethiopia is the largest producer of common vetch.

From Farms to Mills

The six chapters which take us through a detailed analysis of the conditions of production and the nature of trade of different varieties of pulses across countries in different regions of the world, lead us to Chapter 9 which presents an analysis of value chains in the production of pulses in three selected regions or countries that include Canada, Africa, and South Asia, essentially India. It may be necessary to draw a difference between the form of export and the form of consumption of pulses, which have implications for the nature of value chains in pulses. First, until recently almost all exports, either from large-scale mechanised farms like that of Canada or from smallholder farms, have been in the form of whole grain or beans that

hardly involved any processing. Only recently, a small proportion of Canadian lentil goes through processing. Second, pulses are consumed either as whole grain/bean, split and dehulled grain and flour. The processing is done domestically in the importing countries, and most of the imports are in the form of whole grain. Thus, in countries like Canada, where much of the production is for exports, the value chain is short, that is, once the pulse is harvested, it is stored in grain silos until sale. But the process has two distinct characteristics in South Asian countries like India. First, the consumption is in the form of split, split and dehulled or as flour, and hence milling becomes an important form of the value chain. Second, since much of the production is in small farms, the produce goes through a long chain of intermediaries right from village traders or aggregators, commission agents, millers, wholesalers and retailers. India's pulse-milling industry is the largest in the world, account for about 76% of global processing and milling capacity. From a situation dominated by thousands of microenterprises, pulse milling in recent years has been growing into large-scale capital-intensive process. The report shows that by 2013, 40% of milling was done by the factory sector which constituted only 10% of the mills.

Projections for Production

The last chapter deals with the drivers' growth by analysing the changes in production during 2001–14, and explore the future growth prospects using a partial equilibrium model that includes domestic markets of 162 countries in terms of production, consumption and trade. Between 2001 and 2014 there was significant acceleration in production of pulses which increased by 20 mt, largely contributed by increases in chickpea (5 mt), dry beans (7 mt), cowpea (3.8 mt) and

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lentil (1.6 mt). The growth was spread over sub-Saharan Africa, North America, Australia, India and Myanmar. Based on the database for the period 2003–05 to 2013–15, the chapter presents projections of consumption, production, exports and imports for the triennium ending 2025. The model used for projections used data from 162 countries, and given the limitations of data in many countries, there may be deviations from the achieved performance. Going by the data available for recent years for India (GoI 2018, 2019) the projections made for 2025 appear to be quite off the mark. This may be largely due to the nature of the past data and the assumptions flowing from it. For instance, projected output of pulses for 2025 in India is 23.5 mt, and imports for the same year is placed at 4.3 mt. But the actual data show that the surge in production of pulses achieved during 2000–16 continued in the past few years as well. By 2017–18 the production reached 25.52 mt (GoI 2018). This was achieved due to horizontal expansion of area under pulses, and vertically in increasing the

yield levels of pulse crops. Between 2015–16 and 2017–18, the overall area under pulses increased by about 18% or 4.54 mh. While earlier the area increase was due to extension of chickpea to new areas, the recent increase in area is due to expansion of area under urad, tur and chickpea. During this short period, production increased by about 42%, from 16.32 mt to 25.42 mt (GoI 2019). Apart from the area increase, increase in yields contributed substantially to the growth of production. The yield of chickpea increased from 840 kg per hectare to 1,078, tur from 646 kg per hectare to 940, lentil from 705 to 1,034 and urad from 604 to 655 (GoI 2018).

The report under review is, perhaps, a first major comprehensive account at one place about the global production, trade and consumption of pulses. Of the two related aspects of pulses in the beginning of the report, the one on the nutritional dimension receives considerable attention, but the other relating to the contribution of root nodules of pulses fixing biological nitrogen and the potential of pulses substituting animal proteins

and together their contribution to sustainable agriculture in the context of climate change, it would be highly desirable to have yet another report from the authors.

D Narasimha Reddy (duvvurunarasimha@gmail.com) taught economics at the University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad.

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Citizenship and Women's Agency On the Responsibility of Calibration

AARDRA SURENDRAN

Natasha Behl's crisp volume, *Gendered Citizenship: Understanding Gendered Violence in Democratic India*, seeks to contribute to the discussion on women's religious collectivisation and citizenship in the context of Punjab. The central focus in the book is on women's unequal experience of citizenship and their attempts to negotiate with this inequality. Behl seeks to establish a "line of sight" on sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV) of varying intensities, ranging from the heinous sexual assault and murder of Jyoti Singh in Delhi in 2012 to the constraints on women's religious practice gleaned also through the author's own experience in Punjab. The book argues that while such

Gendered Citizenship: Understanding Gendered Violence in Democratic India by Natasha Behl, New York: Oxford University Press, 2019, pp xi + 172, price not indicated.

violence may not appear comparable in terms of their intensities, there exists a common logic, of denying women full democratic participation in public spaces, that is at play in each of these instances, rendering citizenship an incomplete or even risky project for all women in India. Behl advances the framework of "situated citizenship" to explicate the gap that exists between the formal imagination and actual existence of citizenship, and terms the lived reality that results from such situatedness as "exclusionary inclusion."

Organised into six chapters, the volume seeks to integrate some debates on the failed promise of citizenship for marginalised sections, on the lacunae within mainstream political science in understanding the everyday operation of citizenship, and on women's agency in dealing with constraints imposed by the state as well as the community. The first two chapters establish the conceptual and methodological backdrop of the study, wherein the author makes a case for situated citizenship as a methodological approach to overcome the gender blindness of mainstream literature on citizenship and democratisation. Chapter 3 reviews some literature on the relationship between the state, law, and religion in India and points out how women's bodies have often been the sites of this contest. The chapter provides an overview of the rape and murder of Singh in 2012 and examines state and judicial responses to it. It also carries the responses of some legislators and office bearers of certain political parties to the incident,

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A Social Theory of Money

ANUSH KAPADIA

In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, the Federal Reserve (Fed) expanded its balance sheet to almost double its asset holdings from about \$4.2 trillion (with a “t”) to about \$7.4 trillion.¹ India’s economy is valued at about \$3 trillion. So, the Fed took value equivalent to India’s entire economy onto its balance sheet during the pandemic year. This may be causing some global asset froth, yet the world has not fallen apart, instead it has endured. Americans were cut cheques worth thousands of dollars. This kind of money creation boggles the mind of the average citizen. It is also entirely beyond the ken of the discipline of economics, which has no place for money in its toy models of its video-game world. With people turning to conspiracy theories in anger and despair, it has never been more important to understand the “social technology” of money.

This is what Cambridge sociologist Geoffrey Ingham has spent a career doing. As a leading social theorist of money, his earlier work, *The Nature of Money*² remains the benchmark of what money is and why it has the capacity to bear value. If money is conventionally defined as a medium of exchange, a store of value, and a unit of account, what enables money to function as such?

The book under review, *Money* is essentially an entry-level summary of the more substantial work (*The Nature of Money*) and is highly recommended for undergraduates or newcomers to the subject. The book retains all the elements of the 2004 book with updates on the 2007 credit crisis and cryptocurrencies. The book is structured in two main parts, a theoretical section (Chapters 1–3) followed by a historical/empirical section (Chapters 4–8). The theory is strong but replicates some of the limitations of the earlier work; the exposition of the history of capitalist money remains unsurpassed.

BOOK REVIEWS

Money by Geoffrey Ingham, Cambridge: UK, Polity, 2020; pp 154, £45 (hardback), £14.99 (paperback).

Given the nature of the subject, it is no surprise that there are many competing theories of money. Ingham expertly outlines these before giving us his own pitch, a theory that is solidly rooted in sociology building on Georg Simmel and Max Weber. Taking issue with the wooden materialism of commodity theories of money, Ingham’s theory is nominalist and social: money has value because it settles debts, and the ultimate debt in a given monetary space is the tax liability imposed by the state. This is no hypostatized state but a form of authority that emerges from the community. Unlike the earlier work, the emphasis on state coercion is largely absent such that he has put some clear water between himself and the chartalists he often travels with. The state simultaneously “imposes” a tax debt on the community and “nominates” the instrument that will adequate this self-same debt: this instrument becomes money. The sheer social pressure of the social debt relation is such that it can give all manner of money things real economic, “material” value, “the existence of a [tax] debt gives money its value” (p 10).

Theories of Money

Commodity theories of money begin with solid material facts which seemingly ground the store of the value function of money. Only goods with some intrinsic value can act as stores of value, as per the economists’ fable, so money must have emerged from primitive barter. This notion is shared by everyone from Aristotle to Karl Marx as well as neoclassical economists. Ingham shows this to be a myth for two reasons: logical and historical. Logically, even a modest number of goods would yield a bewildering number of exchange ratios

(a 100 goods yield 4,950 exchange ratios, p 24) making even the most primitive barter computationally infeasible. Further, there is no historical evidence of this transition from barter to money. States were involved from the very outset, defining units of account to measure stocks of grain, calculate taxes, set wages and so on (p 26). Such units were then used to denominate prices and debts of all kinds.

Nominalist theorists, including John Maynard Keynes, always begin with the unit of account function: defining what counts as a “rupee” in metal is the normal understanding but it is frequently glossed over that the “rupee” is a liability, not a token. Still, the power to define the unit of account enables all manner of debts, private and public, to be denominated in a common unit controlled by the state and its bank. Ingham rightly makes much of the ability of personal debts to take on a depersonalised form, thanks to this move. Without the foundational act of establishing a unitary unit of account for a monetary space, private exchange would have no invariant around which to pivot and be lost in myriad barter relations, each having no relation to the other. This is the nominalists’ strongest argument: some monopolistic social force must establish an abstract unit of account or else “exchange,” itself—which requires commensuration—would be unthinkable.

His nominalism makes Ingham appear to be a fellow traveller with Georg Friedrich Knapp’s *State Theory of Money*, and indeed both are nominalist theories. But Ingham is much more careful. Thus, while Ingham appreciates the “myth-busting” potential of Knapp’s successors, Modern Monetary Theory (MMT), he disagrees with their conclusion that a sovereign state has no budget constraint as it can always spend money into existence and tax it away later: “[H]ow and how much money is produced is ultimately a political matter, not one of technical economics” (p 34). MMT might tell us what is technically possible, says Ingham, but politics picks out the actual from this space of the technically possible, and MMT sadly lacks a theory of politics. This brings us

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to the question of money and value which Ingham somewhat dodges.

Value of Money

Ingham wants to move away from this classical dichotomy as it might concede too much to the commodity theory. It is as if we admitted to the classical dichotomy in any form, we would have to admit that the commodity theory was true: the implication seems to be that the only way to account for the material dimension in money is to reduce money to that dimension. While such crude materialism must indeed be criticised, Ingham never entirely rids himself of some version of the classical dichotomy qua the distinction between monetary and non-monetary dimensions of the economy: "Money itself cannot create value" (p 5). If this is the case, how can we reconcile nominalist power of the state with whatever non-monetary dimension implied by this statement? Perhaps there is a relationship between the nominal and the material that is not reductionist, that is, one that renders money's value in terms of the economic value of the monetary medium (the commodity theory).

Ingham does not take this direction. Instead, he invokes Weber's distinction between the formal and substantive validity of money to highlight the sociopolitical undergirding of money's value:

States cannot *directly* determine the *substantive* validity of money: that is, its purchasing power at any point of time. But they can declare and impose its *formal* validity: that is, what is accepted as valid payment for debts ... *valid prospective* value is wielded as a "weapon" in the struggles that determine actual substantive values. (p 36)

Here, Ingham seems to assume that *only* political equilibrium in "struggles" between interest groups will determine the purchasing power of money, that is, *without* any reference to the productive capacities of the society in question. This is what makes his theory a purely social theory of money. This political balance includes the common sense ideas of the day ("sound money," inflation targeting) that may be technically wrong but nevertheless have political bite sufficient to stem inflation (p 64). Ultimately, it is the balance of interests

and ideas that does the regulative work in Ingham's theory.

Yet, Ingham is clear that money cannot directly create substantive value, so the material fact of the productive economy still stalks his theory. He passes over material dimension, again, perhaps concerned that it would cut against both nominalist and sociopolitical predicates of his position.

Such a concern would be unwarranted. As Ingham himself notes in passing, "the value of taxes gives value to money" (p 35). But taxes are drawn from the social product. Taxes thereby anchor money to the real economy through the political settlement expressed in the configuration of the state's monetary power which interlocks the central bank and the credit system to the fisc and the real economy. The nominalism of Ingham's theory is retained in such a formulation even while politics remains central. But the political and material are folded together with the productive economy over which the particular state presides. "Anchoring" is not a reductive notion: it in no way means that money can never be over/under-issued by private and/or public parties. It merely means that there is a semi-autonomous yet materialist predicate to money that is necessary but not sufficient for a complete theoretical account. To wit, it is germane to the power of the dollar that the United States (US) economy is the single largest economic entity on the planet, held together (just about) by a political contract.

There is more than one way to be a materialist and for the nominal and the material dimensions to relate to one another. The commodity theory and its classical dichotomy are flawed but they do not exhaust the range of possible materialisms. Ingham's own theory gives us the resources to combine nominalism and materialism, each in their own dimension interacting in complex ways with politics-in-context to produce the luxuriant diversity of monetary/creditary phenomena that we see across time and space.

Ingham's theory emerges from his reading of history (in Part II), mainly the paradigmatic case of Great Britain. His axiom that the political balance will

determine the nature and value of money builds on his incisive account of the fusion of state and capital in a new form of early modern sovereignty, king-in-parliament. Here again, he shows his distinction from garden-variety MMT: "[s]tate monetary sovereignty is not absolute" (p 61). Capitalist money as a "template" that is a conjuncture of the three key institutions: a state-established money of account in which tax liabilities are denominated; private bank networks issuing IOU bank money; and state chartered central banks as state debt managers.

Yet, the interrelation between the three is somewhat mischaracterised. It is not quite right to say that "the regulated banking system has a state-granted franchise to issue the legal tender, denominated in the state's money of account, by extending loans to borrowers" (p 63). Banks expand both sides of their balance sheet when they make a loan, issuing liabilities against themselves (by creating a deposit account for the borrower out of thin air) while entering the new loan as a new asset backed by some collateral. Bank liabilities, inside money, can be exchanged on demand ("withdrawn") for central bank money, outside money or legal tender, and the bank is committed to *maintain par* between its own liabilities and those of the central bank, hence the need to keep a fraction of its reserves on hand in outside money. This is quite draconian discipline as the bank is a much smaller entity (*in potentia*) than the central bank. This is one key reason why banks mutualise together in systems, and can ration outside-money liquidity when their depositors want to switch from bank deposits to cash.

It is true that users equivocate bank money and central bank money, and that equivocation enables banks to borrow cheaply and extend loans through mere balance sheet entries. But this equivocation is precisely the social achievement that Ingham himself observes when he marks the ability of personal debts to be satisfied by impersonal credit notes: it is the achievement of socialisation occurring on the balance sheet of the bank wherein the personal IOUs of the borrower are replaced by the socially legible ones of the bank. States regulate

which entities can enter the banking club and gain access to the source of outside money, central bank refinance, but this does not amount to the same thing as banks having a franchise to issue legal tender. Banks issue money that can be exchanged for central bank money at a price of 1 ("par"). This is both promethean and precarious power.

Exchange and Time

On exchange, there is indeed a sleight of hand involved when mainstream theories equivocate the "medium of exchange" with the "means of payment" functions, when the two encode entirely distinct theories of money (p 12). Leading with the medium of exchange function of money points to barter: money is just a special commodity that falls out of multilateral barter by means of social convention; as such, the monetary instrument would have to have intrinsic value. As we have seen, this is both a historical and logical dead end. Means of payment, on the other hand, lead us to payment of debts and the entire creditary architecture of the modern economy.

And yet, Ingham is somewhat hasty in downplaying exchange, leading one to wonder if this is to shut the door on the commodity-theorist Mengerians. Just so, Ingham does not follow through on John Hicks' insight that spot payments are by far the minority of transactions (p 41). Hicks is pointing out that most transactions are deferred and therefore generative of debt relations, basically pay me later. Exchange and debt are two sides of the same coin because exchange occurs in a finite time period during the pendency of which a buyer is simultaneously a debtor. The temporal/futural element of exchange requires (in)formal contracts to hold it all together and therefore immediately takes us beyond simple-minded barter stories. Exchange points more to debt and contract than to barter. As such, there is no need to abjure the medium of exchange dimension entirely.

The temporality of exchange is critical for two reasons. First, it gets us away from the notion that the monetary instrument must have intrinsic value, that is, it must refer to some pre-existing,

"dead-labour" value (p 26). Credit points to the future because economic life points that way—our production is oriented to future output just as exchange implies future settlement. As the future is constitutive of economic life, our materialism does not have to be sullenly past-oriented, so Ingham is right to point to "prospective value." But, more importantly, exchange qua the social division of labour is the salient socio-material fact about economies, modern and ancient alike. Rooted in different spheres of production and occurring across time and space, exchange is a key element of our sociality. While capitalism weaponises exchange, other more democratic modes are conceivable. Ingham continues to teach us how and why money is social in its ontology, and opens up ways for us to explore such modes.

Anush Kapadia (akapadia@iitb.ac.in) is at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay.

NOTES

- 1 https://www.federalreserve.gov/monetary-policy/bst_recenttrends.htm.
- 2 See Ingham, G (2004), *The Nature of Money*, Cambridge: Polity.

framework to better understand the developments in the South China Sea. Part II comprises China's interests, activities and its newly commenced policies towards the South China Sea. It also includes the claims and policies initiated towards the South China Sea by other claimants. Part III describes the involvement of other powers which are not directly a part of the dispute and the different mechanisms used by them to counter Chinese assertiveness in the waterbody.

Historical Framework

The shift from West to East will definitely have an impact on the global and regional geopolitical order. The maritime trade has gained salience and the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) became the busiest routes through which the maritime trade traverses. To describe the significance of the South China Sea, Kipgen goes back to the 8th century and the influence of the Chinese and other South East Asian rulers in the major trade routes of the South China Sea. The arrival of

A Political Assessment of the Parties and Mechanisms Involved in the South China Sea Dispute

ULUPI BORAH

The South China Sea dispute has attained immense recognition in the international community and remains a major concern in the current times. An in-depth research on the dispute has already been done in the last few years by the scholars across the globe. Nehginpao Kipgen has very comprehensively given a detailed account of the dispute in his book *The Politics of South China Sea Disputes*. In the introductory part, Kipgen explores the dominant international relation theories: realism, liberalism and constructivism through the lens of which the dispute has been analysed. In addition, he explores the ASEAN

The Politics of South China Sea Disputes by Nehginpao Kipgen, London and New York: Taylor and Francis Group, Routledge, 2020; pp 148, ₹695.

Way, an approach adopted by the ASEAN members to deal with the issue. These aspects make the book stand apart from other scholarly works. Kipgen has lucidly focused on the factors involved in escalating the conflict among the claimants and the non-claimants and its implications witnessed both at a regional and international level. The book can mostly be divided in three parts. Part I gives an introductory overview of the South China Sea dispute with appropriate historical

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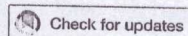
to make sense. Therefore, it is suggested that these three components promote socialised teaching in parallel to the third mode of reflexivity of teaching by promoting the participation of all students.

Shortly, this volume suggests that teaching without market-driven competition and evaluations builds a strong relationship between teacher and students, thereby stimulating interest to new practical knowledge and forming a shared common world among generations. What the authors demonstrate in this volume is that teaching in performativity age requires inviting those care about education for the sake of its own to construct knowledge and understand how this knowledge functions by challenging commodification of education and encouraging teachers collectively find their way with students. To conclude, I think this sophisticated volume leads the audience to think education, especially teaching, for the benefit of itself, demanding to make education educational.

Gözde Çeven

✉ cevengozde@gmail.com  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0191-5061>

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Philosophy of educational research, by Richard Pring, 3rd edition, London Oxford New York New Delhi Sydney, Bloomsbury Academic, 2015, 221 pp., £29.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-4725-7534-0

This new edition of Richard Pring's successful *Philosophy of Educational Research* offers a comprehensive introduction to policy debates and developments in education whilst encouraging deep philosophical engagement. This book, therefore, makes invaluable reading for teacher educators and, as Pring says, anyone wanting to think 'more philosophically about doing educational research' (206). Divided into 12 chapters, each with headings and subheadings, and clear signposting to further discussion of topics in future chapters, Pring presents his arguments concisely, supported with clear contextual examples often from his own work. As well as illustrating the points made, these examples demonstrate the need for a more comprehensive understanding of educational practice. Despite the book's relative brevity, there is considerable depth to most of the chapters, demonstrating the importance of embedding philosophical issues in educational research.

The foreword to this third edition, described as an 'upgrading', clearly details its main differences which include new chapters concerning changes to educational policy and contextual changes since the previous edition; it is stressed the relevance of the original arguments with the book's philosophical foundations, literature, and ideas remain largely unchanged. Focusing on illuminating the impact and consequences of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the UK and how to conduct effective research, one of those new chapters makes particularly interesting reading for those embarking on a career in academia and for doctoral students in Education. Another new chapter focuses on the Programme of International Student Achievement (PISA) which started in 2001 and looks at comparisons of standards in mathematics, language and science in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. The UK, therefore, attaches considerable importance to this as a measure of its economic growth. Pring emphasises however the need for caution in the analysis of this research, highlighting the potential variations across the

participating countries in the competencies and standards against which students are assessed.

The introductory chapter to Pring's book begins with a clear overview of changes to funding for research and the reasons behind those changes, followed by interesting and stimulating discussions about what is meant by educational research and quality. These questions, Pring stresses, are 'at the heart of this book' (9). Using examples from his own experience, Pring illustrates the need for a more comprehensive understanding of educational practice. Aiming to demonstrate the mistaken dichotomies of quantitative and qualitative research, he explores a range of research methods, highlighting the difficulties of dividing research into the two different paradigms and arguing for their distinctness but not their opposition. The subsequent lively, stimulating debate around quantitative research versus qualitative research offers the reader invaluable insight into the complexities of the philosophy of educational research. This is followed by the introduction of what Pring refers to as 'key concepts' for consideration in educational research; with an emphasis on implications for truth and objectivity, these 'key concepts' highlight the difficulties of the researcher's inevitably subjective position within the world being researched.

After outlining dominant philosophical positions from positivism to postmodernism to encourage readers to consider the underlying backgrounds to their own research, Pring shifts the focus approximately two-thirds of the way through the book to the role of the teacher as researcher and to action research; he stresses this is with the aim of improving teaching practice rather than theoretical knowledge. Recognising the teacher's privileged position within the classroom, Pring questions the validity of an outsider observer's research. Doubt is also raised around the possibility of creating a science of teaching with so many unpredictable elements and differences among teachers in their beliefs, values and perceptions. Pring's idea of teacher-researchers in a community able to share their experiences, test hypotheses and reach tentative conclusions together has perhaps become more prevalent in educational research in the 5 years since this book was published. However, this in no way detracts from Pring's argument that research should support professional judgement, not dominate it. In a chapter devoted to moral considerations underlying educational research, Pring explores a number of factors such as principles and rules around conducting research, the possibility for negotiations concerning these procedures, and researcher motivation, which is frequently overlooked. Pring highlights the need to consider the values of the larger community within which the research is conducted such as those of the educational institutions involved and their local communities.

The book's conclusion leaves the reader in no doubt about the importance of the role of the teacher as researcher and the need for teachers and researchers to reflect philosophically on their practice. Pring highlights what he refers to as the 'struggle to make sense' (206) of the meaning of one's actions in a world more complex than we realise and which inevitably shapes our thoughts and actions. The book concludes with a reminder of the values embodied by the aims of education and the need to observe moral traditions such as respect, trust and confidentiality whilst engaging in educational research.

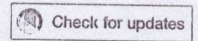
Overall, this book is a brilliant, comprehensive and highly accessible introduction to the philosophy of educational research. It explains reasons behind funding changes, the scepticism of policymakers and funding bodies surrounding the validity of educational research, and the impact of key policies and key philosophical concepts for educational research, before considering action and practitioner research, ethical issues and finally the future of educational research. In the few years which have passed since this edition's publication, there have inevitably been policy changes and developments not covered here; the questions at its heart, however, remain as relevant now as they were then. The pages of this book are packed

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with highly valuable and accessibly written philosophical insights including an extended exploration of the merits of quantitative and qualitative research central to educational research debate. I really enjoyed reading this book and would recommend it to all those involved in educational research.

Mary Catherine Garland
University of Plymouth Institute of Education, Plymouth, UK
✉ mary.garland@plymouth.ac.uk

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Making education educational: a reflexive approach to teaching, by Halvor Hoveid & Marit Honerød Hoveid, Cham, Switzerland, Springer International Publishing, 2019, 209 pp., 103,99 € (hardcover), ISBN: 978-3-030-27075-9

The reflexive approach creates space for teachers to think in education, specifically about teaching, in an expansive way. It shifts the momentum from learning, which is today considered as the key in most educational policies to teaching, which seems on the chopping block. High-stakes exams for the sake of accountability, acquiring 'framed' basic skills for performativity and overfocusing learning outcomes risk at dehumanising the act of teaching.


Making Education Educational: A Reflexive Approach to Teaching, written by Halvor Hoveid and Marit Honerød Hoveid, focuses on teaching within educational practice instead of the commodification of learning. This the volume presents a Ricoeurian analysis in educational philosophy by linking teaching conceptualised as a driver of education to epistemology comprising theory and practice of the language. The introduction chapter discusses how the current educational trends prioritise learning for economic growth and the way the authors handle the act of teaching as a driver of education and explains the use of Ricoeur's phenomenological philosophy in teaching. The concept of teaching, which draws on from a reflexive approach angle, is rigorously served in the rest seven chapters. In each chapter, the authors demonstrate that considering education as a mediator for knowledge among generations require teaching conceived as the performance of the content in education during classes in school.

After the introduction chapter, a case study presents to stress the importance of the deliberations on teaching from the teacher's perspective in chapter 2. An experienced primary school teacher, Rachel's case displays how eager she is on building the connection between students and the content via teaching while it describes how she is under pressure by school authorities for teaching factual and theoretical knowledge to students to get high performance on computer-based progression check tests. In chapter 3, this contradictory duality in teaching is analysed through the understanding of the Ricoeurian approach in the three modes of reflexivity of teaching, which are teaching through subject knowledge, teaching through procedures, the pragmatics of the act of teaching. Epistemologically discussing Gilbert Ryle's speech on the paradigm shift from a Newtonian perspective to Einsteinian perspective, the authors make a clear distinction between 'knowing how' and 'knowing that' in chapter 4. Knowing how to teach as the third mode of reflexivity points out a pragmatic knowledge requiring the attention of teachers on classroom interactions. Unlike that, chapter 5 also indicates that there is prevailing rule-oriented teaching as delivered practice shifting education into a kind of performativity governed by the state today. This chapter alleges that through reading and listening in teaching, teachers attentively connect with students; however, teaching is deformed with delivery by its measurement and judgement based on the premise of efficiency. The authors claim in chapter 6 that the challenge faced by teachers is overcome by learning 'to read teaching as a text' (p. 25) and listening more others, and education should foster building social links between generations and their meanings of symbolic systems. Chapter 7 discusses how the ideological power of the state functions during education and how teaching criticises this functioning with the view to empowering new generations. The last chapter emphasises that to make education educational need teachers recognise students vice versa where trust, the individuals, and content of teaching in ceaseless movement and new beginnings are constantly re-created. Besides, the authors stress that in a Ricoeurian approach, the act of teaching includes three basic components, firstly, attention on students, spending time and room for speaking and telling, secondly, repetition for a deeper understanding of students, thirdly transition among different activities for students

to make sense. Therefore, it is suggested that these three components promote socialised teaching in parallel to the third mode of reflexivity of teaching by promoting the participation of all students.

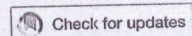
Shortly, this volume suggests that teaching without market-driven competition and evaluations builds a strong relationship between teacher and students, thereby stimulating interest to new practical knowledge and forming a shared common world among generations. What the authors demonstrate in this volume is that teaching in performativity age requires inviting those care about education for the sake of its own to construct knowledge and understand how this knowledge functions by challenging commodification of education and encouraging teachers collectively find their way with students. To conclude, I think this sophisticated volume leads the audience to think education, especially teaching, for the benefit of itself, demanding to make education educational.

Gözde Çeven

✉ cevengozde@gmail.com  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0191-5061>

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Philosophy of educational research, by Richard Pring, 3rd edition, London Oxford New York New Delhi Sydney, Bloomsbury Academic, 2015, 221 pp., £29.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-4725-7534-0

This new edition of Richard Pring's successful *Philosophy of Educational Research* offers a comprehensive introduction to policy debates and developments in education whilst encouraging deep philosophical engagement. This book, therefore, makes invaluable reading for teacher educators and, as Pring says, anyone wanting to think 'more philosophically about doing educational research' (206). Divided into 12 chapters, each with headings and subheadings, and clear signposting to further discussion of topics in future chapters, Pring presents his arguments concisely, supported with clear contextual examples often from his own work. As well as illustrating the points made, these examples demonstrate the need for a more comprehensive understanding of educational practice. Despite the book's relative brevity, there is considerable depth to most of the chapters, demonstrating the importance of embedding philosophical issues in educational research.

The foreword to this third edition, described as an 'upgrading', clearly details its main differences which include new chapters concerning changes to educational policy and contextual changes since the previous edition; it is stressed the relevance of the original arguments with the book's philosophical foundations, literature, and ideas remain largely unchanged. Focusing on illuminating the impact and consequences of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the UK and how to conduct effective research, one of those new chapters makes particularly interesting reading for those embarking on a career in academia and for doctoral students in Education. Another new chapter focuses on the Programme of International Student Achievement (PISA) which started in 2001 and looks at comparisons of standards in mathematics, language and science in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. The UK, therefore, attaches considerable importance to this as a measure of its economic growth. Pring emphasises however the need for caution in the analysis of this research, highlighting the potential variations across the

2015

Today, "Uncle Aamir" is "a household name in China." But we would do well to note that his popularity rests on his personal appeal, not necessarily the appeal of Bollywood writ large. But the very factors that attract such a large fan following—a focus on social ills, gender relations, inequality, etc—may well attract the attention of a disapproving state and party. As Krishnan notes,

The [Chinese] films that make it to the movie theatres, more often than not, are ones that carry a message that the Communist Party is the most comfortable with. And that message is, to borrow a phrase from an Aamir movie [*Three Idiots*]: all is well. (pp 357–61)

To conclude, let me return to the theme I began this review with: India needs to know China better. Krishnan makes this point evocatively:

You spend a year, and you know enough to hesitate. You spend a decade, and the

complexity overwhelms you so much that you realise it would be a fool's errand to try to make any sense of the place. This summed up my China experience too. Of all the stereotypes about the "the Chinese" I encountered in India, one I heard most often—and one that particularly annoyed me—was the notion that "all Chinese think alike". ... *If India is to have a better grasp of its neighbour, there's no doubt we—in the media, and the academic and the business communities—need to place far more attention and investment in China than we currently devote.* (pp 333–34; emphasis added)

Partha S Ghosh (parsarg@gmail.com) is senior fellow, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi. He was formerly ICSSR National Fellow and taught South Asian studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

NOTE

- 1 In this connection some valuable perspectives can as well be culled from Ramesh (2019: 506–22, 669–70).

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Policy versus Pretence Tackling Air Pollution in India

SANTOSH HARISH

Air pollution was only beginning to get acknowledged as a public health crisis by the political class in India when COVID-19 redefined how a public health crisis is perceived for a generation. And now, either seeking to improve the "ease of doing business" or being unwilling to impose costs on polluters citing the economic crisis, there is a real risk that the Indian state may regress on its recent, tentative steps.

Air: Pollution, Climate Change and India's Choice Between Policy and Pretence by Dean Spears is an instructive reading to navigate this moment. Two themes surface repeatedly in this book. First, Spears argues that the notion of a trade-off between development and environment is vastly overstated, and especially when we consider the impacts of pollution exposure on early childhood development, the two converge. Second, he discusses how governments often engage in the pretence of appearing to be serious

Air: Pollution, Climate Change and India's Choice Between Policy and Pretence by Dean Spears, Noida: HarperCollins, 2019; pp x + 258, ₹250.

about environment, while doing little in practice to make substantive progress. Both these themes have important implications on sustaining progress on environmental outcomes in the coming years.

Outline

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1 focuses on air quality and discusses three important sources of pollution (household biomass burning, stubble burning and coal power), and the health impacts, particularly on children. Part 2 discusses climate change: how India is especially vulnerable to a warmer world, and how accounting for adverse health impacts linked to climate change and air pollution justifies more ambitious mitigation pathways. Spears argues that India can tackle the health crisis linked to air

quality domestically, while citing the same policy efforts to signal leadership at the global climate negotiations. In the concluding Part 3, Spears reflects on the role of the political class, experts and voters in framing and prioritising meaningful environmental policy.

The book draws extensively from the environmental economics literature, and especially the author's own body of work with his collaborators. As a result, the book also provides a peek into quasi-experimental methods to investigate the effects of pollution on health. This could be especially valuable for researchers and government officials approaching air pollution from other vantage points. Notably, most of the research cited here is based in India.

While drawing from his body of work, Spears also draws parallels from his sanitation policy work to identify two key insights that hinder a variety of development and environmental outcomes in India. One, on how effective the government can be in meeting certain types of targets (toilets for all), while flailing at broader structural changes (providing reliable water supply). And two, on the critical role that social inequalities play in sustaining widely shared habits and traditions that block progress towards

the desired outcomes. Much like the behavioural shift needed to curtail open defecation, gender roles and traditional preferences sustain the use of polluting solid fuels for household purposes, even when the households can afford to move to cleaner fuels like liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Subsidies are necessary but not sufficient to accelerate the transition.

Clean Air and Economic Growth

The author lays out several arguments for how development economics is convergent with environment economics. One important linkage between them is the impact of air pollution and climate change on public health, especially on children. In India, over 60,000 infants of less than five years of age are estimated to succumb to air pollution in a year (WHO 2018). Prenatal exposure within the womb can lead to permanent effects on the cognitive abilities, and on the respiratory and cardiovascular systems. Other impacts on infants include acute lower respiratory infections, stunting, obesity, and development of neurological disorders. As the book points out, there is a growing literature in economics on how effects on early childhood development continue to affect education, productivity and income as adults. The book covers the work done by the author and his collaborators on birthweight and child height in some detail.

Besides the very large effects on health, there are a variety of economic costs posed by air pollution. Black carbon, a form of particulate matter emitted from combustion activities, is also a short-lived climate pollutant (SLCP) that affects precipitation and the solar radiation reaching the crops directly affecting crop yields. Ozone, another air pollutant and SLCP, is toxic to crops. Burney and Ramanathan (2014) estimate that climate change and air pollution, largely due to the direct impacts of the SLCPs, reduced wheat yields in India in 2010 by 36% on average, with Uttar Pradesh—the largest wheat producer in the country—being especially badly affected with 50% reduction.

Far from a trade-off, India cannot afford to ignore air quality and climate change precisely because of their impacts on development and well-being.

Environmental policy is often characterised by symbolic measures and grand declarations that are not followed up in practice. As the book points out, policy pretence is not restricted to the environment, but welfare outcomes in other spheres often improve despite the government, given the larger global advances in technology and commerce. Unfortunately, there is no real substitute for the state in regulating against polluting activities. Since environmental degradation is an externality of economic activities, “environment policy requires navigating the ship of state against the current, not with it” (p 20).

Examples abound of air quality management efforts lacking scientific credibility. Consider the growing popularity of smog towers and other outdoor air purifiers. The Delhi government’s budget for 2020 allocated ₹30 crore to the installation of smog towers. A member of Parliament from Delhi got a smog tower installed in one of the local markets with much fanfare in winter 2019. Other cities like Bengaluru and Mumbai are investing in some variants of this as well. Despite not reducing emissions, a smog tower is perhaps attractive to governments because it seems plausible as an intervention, is a physical manifestation of the government’s promise to do something, and does not impose any new cost on polluters. But, as Spears argues, such instances of “fake policymaking could crowd out demand for the genuine article” (p 197).

Among the genuine articles are the foundational knowledge resources needed as inputs for air quality management. Monitoring pollution levels in the ambient environment in a scientific, representative manner is crucial to measure and track air quality over time. While there has been progress in Delhi and a few metros, smaller cities have some distance to go, and rural monitoring sites are non-existent. Similarly, regularly commissioning studies to estimate the relative contribution of different sources of air pollution is an important input for prioritising action. Channelling resources towards plugging these gaps is a political choice. Spears outlines how “ambiguity ... offers a place to hide” (p 24).

While discussing health impacts, Spears repeatedly stresses on the absence of a reliable registry of deaths, and argues that developing such a nationwide database is ultimately also a political choice. In the wake of COVID-19, with new infections and deaths under increased scrutiny, there might be an opportunity to prioritise developing a reliable database of deaths by cause.

‘Strong Arms, Clumsy Fingers’

One crucial difference between India and other countries that have had to deal with air pollution is its much weaker state capacity. Or as the author puts it, “India is tasked with regulating pollution on a 21st century scale with a 19th century regulatory state” (p 31).

In fact, air quality in India is affected by sources that span centuries: extensive continued reliance on solid fuels for household needs, poor public service delivery in terms of managing waste or maintaining roads, and industries and vehicles of the modern economy. Jurisdictions are fragmented, and the formal regulatory agencies—the state pollution control boards—have direct oversight only on industries (Ghosh 2019). Several other agencies like the municipal corporations, state transport departments, the ministry of petroleum and natural gas, and electricity regulators have prominent roles to play.

The strategy ought to be to prioritise measures not necessarily based on the “theoretically optimal set of regulations” (p 183), but also on the ability of the state to implement them. Spears puts it well: “the Indian state indeed has its powers: it can build things, it can ban things, and it can give things to citizens” (p 206).

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However, while it can flex these “strong arms,” the “clumsy fingers” of day-to-day public services or regulation are its undoing (p 205). The Ujjwala programme to provide access to LPG hits the sweet spot in this regard—arguably, even the fingers have proved to be rather nimble in providing targeted support to the beneficiaries. Of course, access to LPG does not mean its regular usage—a successor initiative is needed (Josey et al 2019). All things considered though, this is one source where health, pollution mitigation, political incentives, and state capacity are well aligned.

Based on a similar line of thinking, Spears recommends an end to coal-based power as a part of India’s strategy for both climate change and air pollution. Coal power plants have significant impact on air quality and health. Regulatory capacity cannot be expected to enforce the emission norms as they exist, let alone more sophisticated instruments such as cap and trade. Renewables have become cost competitive, if not cheaper than new

coal. Transitioning away from coal would then be a reasonable strategy to follow. While the technical path to this transition is increasingly becoming clear, there are significant political economy considerations (Dubash et al 2019).

The book has a few shortcomings. While recognising that the book does not seek to be read as a primer on the issue, it would have helped for the author to synthesise the literature a little more, especially from disciplines other than economics. For instance, the book does not quite capture the full range of air pollution’s impacts on health. There are sections of the book, particularly in Part 2 on climate change, where the reader may feel that the book is trying to do too much, or lose track of the underlying argument. In particular, Chapter 4 on the impact of electrification, while interesting, felt to me like a digression from the larger story. Likewise, the penultimate chapter on political salience, while being provocative, did not seem to probe deep enough.

But, these are small missed opportunities in a book that manages to be both accessible and engaging to the uninitiated, while offering new perspectives and arguments for the converted.

Santosh Harish (santosh@cprindia.org) is a Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi.

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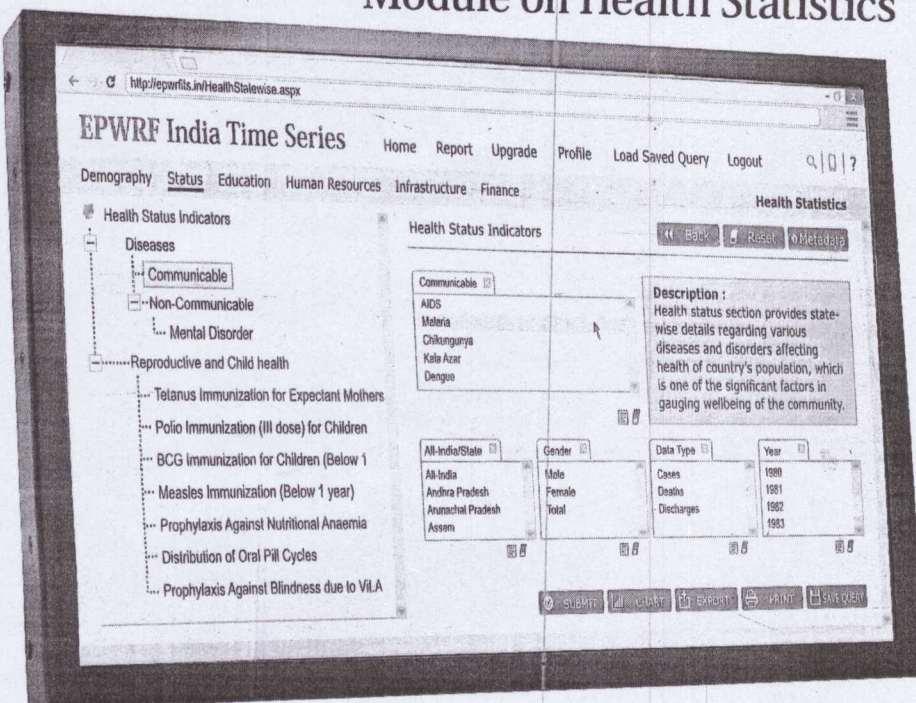
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Aishwarya Chandran
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology
New Delhi
E-mail: aishwarya.chandran@hss.iitd.ac.in

✓ Durba Mitra, *Indian Sex Life: Sexuality and Colonial Origins of Modern Social Thought* (Princeton University Press, 2020), 290 pp., \$ 99.95, 82.00 Pound (UK) (paperback). ISBN: 978-0-691-19634-3, ISBN: 978-0-691-19635-0.

DOI: 10.1177/0971521521997960

Durba Mitra's book *Indian Sex Life: Sexuality and Colonial Origins of Modern Social Thought* is principally about the politics of knowledge, in particular, with respect to the production of taxonomized knowledge about the so-called deviant sexuality of Indian women, emblemized in the figure of the 'prostitute'. It analyses the incursion of the colonial state into the intimate socio-sexual spaces of Indian women. Focusing on Bengal, the book's five chapters deal with how this 'deviant female sexuality' emerged as foundational to the development of modern social thought regarding 'Indian women' writ large. The colonial state and its Indian collaborators appropriated diverse conceptual resources from philology, Indology, sociology and ethnology, mobilizing official surveys, 'forensic medical investigations', and the law in its enterprise to diagnose and control the behaviour of its subjects. *Indian Sex Life* analyses how the boundaries between culture and science and fantasy and fact were blurred in the state's efforts to establish control over the female body throughout the 19th century, in a quest to realize a normative vision of a monogamous moral society and bring about a constructed 'modernity' through the selective co-opting of so-called traditional mores. This mission reproduced itself in the mentality of wide swaths of India's population, especially its women, regardless of their class, educational or professional background. Indeed, it became integral to Indian patriarchal society, which internalized this vision and reinforced it through cultural and political channels. Against this background, *Indian Sex Life* unravels the alarming face of colonial 'modernity', devised through socio-administrative engineering and the disciplining of women's bodies.

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In the chapter titled 'Origins', Mitra selected 'Kama' as the site of knowledge turn, 'what was lost in these new fixed s multiplicity of interpretations of differen (p. 26). As a starting point in the product philological scholarship (defined as the bore a historical importance that needs does a commendable job of linking 19th with the sexual sciences that developed by how a pluralistic, nuanced tradition be interpretation; however, this multiplicity been discussed in greater detail to provide was so crucial. 'Kama', after all, can hardl other aims of human life, namely *Dharma* Doniger and Daud Ali is crucial in this rege Indology separate and segregate the hithert erotic, the aesthetic and the economic?

This brings us to a major point of critiqu a primarily discursive vein, bringing som who sees that using other archival sources claims. Just as 'Kama' and 'Artha' are inextri between the moral and the material in moder more in her book.

In subsequent chapters, Mitra shows I ethnology and sociology all contributed to women and their deviance as fields inherentl 'modern social thought'. These emergent sch of the joint endeavours of colonial scholars a native collaborators and intellectuals. Yet di and the foundational moments of disciplines to prejudice and conceptions of difference a situate the beliefs and typologies of the past in of 'Indian sex life'? Who read and engag Moreover, what makes the figures who are pri influential enough to constitute a hegemonic all other accounts of sexual being? It would be high with the low, namely the counter-hi transgression present in literature, such as the in fact, the *padavali* literary corpus that contin force on the Bengali social imagination well in

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multicultural? Postcolonialism, feminism, and
iversity Press.

Aishwarya Chandran
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology
New Delhi
E-mail: aishwarya.chandran@hss.iitd.ac.in

Sex Life: Sexuality and Colonial Origins of Modern
University Press, 2020), 290 pp., \$ 99.95,
paperback). ISBN: 978-0-691-19634-3, ISBN:

DOI: 10.1177/0971521521997960

Sex Life: Sexuality and Colonial Origins of Modern India is principally about the politics of knowledge, in the production of taxonomized knowledge of Indian women, emblemized in the 'deviant female sexuality' of Indian women. It analyses the incursion of the colonial project into the sexual spaces of Indian women. Focusing on the ways in which the colonial state and its associated diverse conceptual resources from philology and ethnology, mobilizing official surveys, 'disciplines', and the law in its enterprise to diagnose the behaviour of its subjects, *Indian Sex Life* analyses the ways in which the colonial state sought to establish control over the female body and culture and science and fantasy and fact in the nineteenth century, in a quest to realize a normative vision of Indian society and bring about a constructed 'modernization' of so-called traditional mores. This book is the mentality of wide swaths of India's population, regardless of their class, educational or social status, it became integral to Indian patriarchal society. In this background, *Indian Sex Life* unravels the ways in which colonial 'modernity', devised through socio-political and the disciplining of women's bodies.

In the chapter titled 'Origins', Mitra shows how European philologists selected 'Kama' as the site of knowledge about sexuality and women. In turn, 'what was lost in these new fixed structures of knowledge was the multiplicity of interpretations of different texts on premodern social life' (p. 26). As a starting point in the production of 'modern social thought', philological scholarship (defined as the study of languages and texts) bore a historical importance that needs to be highlighted. The author does a commendable job of linking 19th-century translational projects with the sexual sciences that developed by the 1920s. She also highlights how a pluralistic, nuanced tradition became a monolith in colonial interpretation; however, this multiplicity of the premodern could have been discussed in greater detail to provide a fuller sense of why this loss was so crucial. 'Kama', after all, can hardly be seen as separate from the other aims of human life, namely *Dharma* and *Artha*: the work of Wendy Doniger and Daud Ali is crucial in this regard. How, exactly, did modern Indology separate and segregate the hitherto overlapping domains of the erotic, the aesthetic and the economic?

This brings us to a major point of critique. Mitra analyses 'sex life' in a primarily discursive vein, bringing some perplexity to the historian who sees that using other archival sources problematize several of her claims. Just as 'Kama' and 'Artha' are inextricably linked, the relationship between the moral and the material in modernity needed to be spelled out more in her book.

In subsequent chapters, Mitra shows how law, forensic science, ethnology and sociology all contributed to a hegemonic discourse on women and their deviance as fields inherently tied to the development of 'modern social thought'. These emergent scholarly disciplines arose out of the joint endeavours of colonial scholars and administrators as well as native collaborators and intellectuals. Yet disciplines are hardly static, and the foundational moments of disciplines are always inherently tied to prejudice and conceptions of difference and otherness. How do we situate the beliefs and typologies of the past in our present understanding of 'Indian sex life'? Who read and engaged with this scholarship? Moreover, what makes the figures who are privileged in Mitra's account influential enough to constitute a hegemonic discourse that supersedes all other accounts of sexual being? It would be interesting to contrast the high with the low, namely the counter-histories of sexuality and transgression present in literature, such as the production of *Battala*, or in fact, the *padavali* literary corpus that continued to exert a tremendous force on the Bengali social imagination well into the 20th century.

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The discursive domain of a Bengali public sphere extends well beyond the empirical sources discussed by Mitra. For instance, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay appears as a Deputy Magistrate in 'Repetition', a chapter that discusses legal descriptive taxonomies. While the 'B files' are a new and original addition to the study of gender and sexuality in India, and Mitra's deep and persuasive reading of them is valuable, Bankim played a more influential role in the Bengali public sphere as a writer and intellectual. His depiction of powerful female figures in novels such as *Durgeshnandini*, *Kapalkundala*, and *Devi Chaudhurani* (to name a few) generated considerable debate and discussion in a public sphere that engaged with his fictional and non-fictional writings. To look at Bankim as merely a Deputy Magistrate is therefore a limiting exercise.

Mitra's central argument is that the colonial state produced 'usable knowledge' about women through 'repetitive, descriptive prose in letters and lists' (p. 63), producing a typology that categorized all deviant non-monogamous women as prostitutes. Moreover, several enactments to supplement the Indian Penal Code of 1860 were promulgated in order to discipline the 'self' and the 'body' of those women identified as 'deviant'. In her reading, such knowledge production propagated the notion that the vast majority of Indian women fell within the category of 'deviant females', cutting across caste, racial and religious divides—even the institution of 'monogamous marriage' did not suffice to shield women from being characterized as deviant. Thus, the category of 'prostitute' was injected into the *episteme* of Indian society, appearing under different labels, but with the same essentially defamatory force. The chapter titled 'Circularity', in particular, is powerful in its reconstruction of the women who were victims of physical and epistemic violence and whose life stories can be reconstructed only through their shadowy presence in the colonial archive. This is an extremely original chapter, one that brings the female body back as a dominant site of colonial intervention, violence and appropriation. Mitra compellingly shows that this female body was never completely whole, disembodied first by the violence of abortion, then by the medico-legal knowledge to which it gives rise, and, finally, in and by the archive itself.

One wonders, however, why Mitra devotes little time to extant scholarship on the women's question in Bengal, even if only as a foil. The book is primarily situated in 19th-century Bengal and is thereby historically situated in an age of liberal reforms for women. This is to say that those who favoured progressive reform (such as Vidyasagar) were anxious that, without reform, women would perforce be victims of

deviant sexual behaviour. A more obscure figure, Chakladar, Chandra, and others, important perhaps as Saratchandra Chatterjee's 'The Value of Women' because the site of colonial intervention in that case, one may have on the mental life', beyond the immediate.

This question is perhaps one which offers an account of the 20th century. Santosh (1937), which had clear and which also had an considerable attention have done is to understand deeper way by looking at the *adivasi* woman. She mentions are extreme histories of prostitution.

Indian Sex Life is a study of the emergence of colonial means by which to establish and channelized crucial historical motifs designate an increasing 'prostitute' and to implement interventions, too, particularly, and 'othering' massive discursive project in Mitra's analysis. In a way how the recruitment of British colonizers outside generate labour for the economic explanation of recruitment and emphasis as it c

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deviant sexual behaviour. While Mitra cites hitherto unstudied texts by more obscure figures such as Abinash Chandra Ghose, Haran Chandra Chakladar, Chandra Chakraberty (who spent his life in Europe) and others, important public intellectuals are only mentioned in passing, such as Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, including his essay on 'Narir Mulya' ('The Value of Women'), and Bankim. One reason for this might be because the site of colonial knowledge production is the state itself but, in that case, one may ask: How much real impact did these taxonomies have on the mental life-worlds of Indians in this account of 'Indian sex life', beyond the immediate legal ones?

This question is partly answered in the chapter titled 'Evolution', which offers an account of social evolutionary thought as conceptualized by several important Indian intellectuals in the first few decades of the 20th century. Santosh Kumar Mukherji's seminal *Prostitution in India* (1937), which had clear biases against lower-caste and Muslim women, and which also had an important afterlife in postcolonial India, receives considerable attention from Mitra. One further thing this chapter could have done is to understand the 'primitive' in ethnological studies in a deeper way by looking at the constitutive figure of the indigenous other, the *adivasi* woman. Surely these caste, ethnic and religious differences she mentions are extremely important in both conceptual and the social histories of prostitution in colonial India?

Indian Sex Life is a valuable addition to existing historiography on the emergence of colonial modernity, one that honed in on women as a means by which to establish moral rule and claim the cultural superiority of Western civilization and its attendant values. Colonial ideology nourished and channelized a new Indian patriarchy. *Indian Sex Life* reveals a crucial historical motivation lurking behind the strategy of being able to designate an increasing number of women under the category of 'prostitute' and to implement 'deviant sexuality' as a culpable offence. The archive, as Mitra presents it, shows that medical examinations and legal interventions, too, participated in a common agenda of cataloguing, classifying, and 'othering' women as prostitutes. The reasons behind this massive discursive project, however, receive relatively less examination in Mitra's analysis. In an important explanatory moment, she identifies how the recruitment of indentured labour had been a major issue for British colonizers outside India; the criminalization of 'deviance' helped generate labour for the empire (p. 95). However, this important economic explanation of recruiting cheap labour does not get as much attention and emphasis as it deserves.

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Notwithstanding its value as intellectual history, Mitra's book does raise certain questions for readers trying to trace links between conceptual history and political economy. In the first place, the book does not shed as much light on contemporary Bengali society as it could, in terms of both its urban and rural areas. For example, it could have clarified the specific locations of the women who were traced and identified as 'prostitutes' by colonial administrators and Bengali collaborators. The reader may also wonder whether the 'B' proceedings are a genuinely reliable source for the claim of the unbridled existence of 'deviant women' within Bengali society. As for forensic medical investigations and the application of criminal law for the so-called deviant, Mitra's explanation of the hidden agenda of deporting those women into indentured labour is a moment when historical causality makes its presence visible. Had Mitra further investigated this line of inquiry, then many of the internal contradictions of the colonial modernity project would have been unpacked.

To restate, *Indian Sex Life* would have been an even richer book if it had considered the economic, rather than merely ideological, motives behind the construction and persecution of female sexual deviance. There was a systematic economic agenda at play that was arguably more important than the 'moral' vision of Indian society as laying the foundation of colonial 'modernity'. Women in Bengal, especially widows, enjoyed residual, substantive rights to property and inheritance. Contemporary documents reveal how reluctant the British were in accepting women as revenue payers in the East India Company's treasury. Among other reasons, there was strong ideological resistance to this phenomenon among Company officials due to the fact that women in contemporary England could not themselves inherit and own property. Prescriptive and/or customary practices endorsed the property rights of the widows and other categories of residual but substantive female heirs including mothers (as co-sharers with their male progeny), unmarried daughters and owners of *Stridhana* (female property). This was a major factor behind labelling women as 'unchaste' and 'sexually deviant', precisely in order to strip them of these property rights. In other words, stigma was instrumentalized to deprive women of their economic rights. Male relatives of these women colluded with the British to label them as 'unchaste'. This history is made abundantly clear by sources such as Early Supreme Court records and Justice Hyde's Manuscript Diary, but Mitra elides this question.

The final chapter, 'Veracity', revisits the impossibility of finding an authentic voice of the figure of the prostitute herself. Mitra shows how

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forms of autobiographical and sociological life-writing emerged that helped further 'state policy as well as a conservative social agenda of Hindu upper-class elites' (p. 178). In this discussion, we see the absence of a crucial autobiographical text of the most notable example of a 'deviant' female, actress Noti Binodini, who appears in the notes, but not in the main body of the chapter. Though Mitra explains that Binodini is an exception, *why* Noti Binodini is an exception is crucial in understanding the most glaring contradiction within Mitra's discursive formulation. She was universally accepted, a leading actress in her time, Girish Ghosh's muse, a much-read contributor to popular periodicals, and had reportedly moved even Ramakrishna Paramahansa to tears. How can one categorize the great and enduring popularity of a woman such as Noti Binodini? It points to an economic argument. Ultimately, the 'deviant' female can own her history through economic independence and empowerment, remaining unslotable in the discursive frameworks of moral and immoral. These gaps and fissures in the colonial state's taxonomical project of prostitution can only help nuance Mitra's overall argument, which itself is an important intervention in the conceptual history of gender and sexuality in the British Empire.

Nandini Bhattacharyya Panda
Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
E-mail: nandinibpanda@gmail.com

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Papori Bora

entre for Women's Studies

harlal Nehru University

New Delhi, India

oribora@mail.jnu.ac.in

Silvia Federici, *Beyond the Periphery of the Skin: Rethinking, Remaking and Reclaiming the Body in Contemporary Capitalism* (Ontario: Kairos Publishing, 2020), 176 pp., ₹1128 (paperback), ISBN-10: 162-9-637-068, ISBN-13: 978-1-629-63706-8.

DOI: 10.1177/0971521521997959

Marxist feminist scholar Silvia Federici's latest book, based on a series of lectures delivered at the California Institute of Integral Studies in 2015, critically examines the role of the body under late capitalism. The book draws significantly from her earlier work *Caliban and the Witch* (2004), which examines how the persecution of women labelled as witches was instrumental to the establishment of capital's hegemony in modern European history. In *Caliban and the Witch*, Federici critiques Marx's theory of primitive accumulation to assert that it is not disruptions in orders of feudal economies that marked a period of transition from pre-capitalist to capitalist societies, but regimes of systemic and concerted violence unleashed upon bodies of women that was crucial to the establishment of disciplined labouring bodies under capitalism. She even critiques Foucault's notion of biopolitics for its failure to account for the unique vulnerabilities of gendered bodies. She goes on to say that Foucault's understanding of biopolitics as marking a shift from coercive to pastoral regimes of power was inadequate, by turning our attention to the violence women's bodies are routinely subjected to. She invokes the gruesome history of witch hunting and the immolation of women at the stake in Europe to recast historical, political and ethical arguments about gender and capitalism, by positing women's bodies as central to the debate.

In *Beyond the Periphery of the Skin*, Federici (2020) looks at the ways in which the appropriation of women's bodies is not merely supplementary to the regime of capitalism. It is only by embedding women's bodies within debates of reproduction, social organisation and workforce discipline that capitalism can perform its hegemony. The question of the 'body' for Federici is therefore specifically that of a body inflected by its gender. The question Federici addresses in the volume is this: In what ways is the body being constituted through processes of capitalist production? What does it mean to be a body, in material, discursive, political and social terms, embedded within systems of capitalist circulation? And, finally, in what ways can the tools that 'enclose' our bodies be dismantled, and bodies be reclaimed?

The book is divided into four parts, with each part consisting of a collection of short essays. Part One sets the context for Federici's argument,

laying down historical and contemporary discussions in feminist discourse on the body. 'Capitalist accumulation is the accumulation of workers' (p. 14), she asserts, reflecting on the ways in which capital has made strategic use of bodies. Federici invokes histories of the enslavement of black bodies, particularly black female bodies, forceful sterilisation and restricted access to contraception as ways in which women's reproduction has been used as a means to control the growth of capital. The intersections of gender with race, class and social location are instrumental here in the manipulation of bodies and its perceived use value in the circuits of capital.

Part Two looks at how the body has been 'made', through analyses of performative theories of gender, the feminist movement's denaturalisation of femininity and an investigation of the viability of 'women' as a category of analysis in light of trans- and inter-sex movements. The section also talks about the increasing bio-medicalisation of the body and a reconstitution of corporality through gene editing, assisted reproductive technologies and non-life-affirming plastic surgery.

Part Three critically examines the body as it has been historically transformed into labour power. Speaking of the ways in which the body is the 'condition of existence of labour power' (p. 78), she invokes histories of the two World Wars, colonialism and the Holocaust to point to ways in which science has been used to make bodies more 'productive' and amenable to labour. In this context, she refers to the use of sexuality as a way of controlling women's labour, through the institution of marriage and the chastisement of sex work.

The final section, Part Four, points to ways forward in feminist discourse and praxis, in reclaiming the body, 'to define our bodies in ways that are non-dependent on our capacity to function as labour power' (p. 84). She proposes 'mobility ... not pursued for the sake of work' (p. 121) as possibly the greatest source of resistance our bodies can offer to the disciplinary, mechanised, commodifying effects of capitalism on our bodies. She calls for a politicisation of pain, and a re-appropriation of our bodies through a re-imagination of its limits. She imagines the 'periphery of the skin' as not that which 'encloses' the body, but as that which enables us to establish newer ways of relating to the world around us, and being affected by it.

Federici has in the past engaged with the metaphor of the body as machine in the context of Taylorist labour regimes. She revisits the semiotics of the techno-corporeal body in this volume too, but differently. She examines the increasing bio-medicalisation of corporeal boundaries, and cites the phenomena of gene editing, assisted reproduction and

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n of corporeal boundaries,
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gender reassignment surgery. While she is prompt in pointing out how the insertion of technology within trajectories of biology harks back to vivisectional practices of imperial science, she fails to explore the relationship between technology and the body more closely. The assimilation of assisted reproduction, transgenderism and genetic medicine under a rather reductive rubric of 'bio-medicalisation' presumes essentialised categories of the body as well as technology. While contemporary feminist science and technology studies have devised theories of the body as liminal spaces (Haraway, 1991; Harding, 1998), Federici's diatribe on technology appears to be rather fearful of these possibilities.

The volume covers an eclectic range of issues, moving between historical, political, social and cultural perspectives on gender. Her essays are concise and evocative, tying histories of the women's movement to the current crises of representation in feminist discourse where signifiers for the body seem to become increasingly more diffuse. While distinctly contemporary, her essays appear to be more of a hastily assembled pastiche of inchoate lectures, as opposed to a coherent monograph. Despite her avowed efforts to de-radicalise and de-essentialise what it means to be a body, her analysis of transgender and inter-sex movements lacks some of the depth that her scholarship has traditionally demonstrated. Her dissatisfaction with performative theories of gender for not being adequately rooted in material conditions of women's lives begins as abruptly as it ends. Federici's invocation of 'militant' joy, and the philosophy of dance as a defiance of capitalist organisation of bodily mobility, offer glimmers of hope not just for feminist political action but also for alternative configurations of 'rebellious' bodies, an idea she had explored with phenomenal insight in *Caliban and the Witch*. However, the idea is left underexplored and appears rather anachronous to the arguments in the preceding sections of her book. Federici's writing has been reputedly compelling, incisive and evocative. However, *Beyond the Periphery of the Skin* fails to do justice to her passionate commitment to activism and academia.

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Afiya S. Zia, *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan: Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?* (Lahore: Folio Books, 2019), 250 pp. \$31.34 (paperback). ISBN: 978-969-7834-00-6.

DOI: 10.1177/0971521521997958

Afiya Zia begins her book with the following questions:

Are secular politics, aims and sensibilities impossible, undesirable and impracticable for Muslims and Islamic states? Should Muslim women be exempted from feminist attempts at liberation from patriarchy and its various expressions, which include Islamic laws and customs as they are practiced in the present time? (p. 2)

The immediate context for these questions is her discomfort with the emergence of what she calls post secularist scholarship¹ that emerged in the post 9/11 period in the aftermath of the war on terror (WoT). This scholarship by mostly diasporic Pakistani scholars in Western universities emphasises the 'docile' agency of Islamic women. This scholarship is framed by an overwhelming critique of Islamophobia and US imperialism, which does not take a political stand on the inequalities perpetrated by Islamist politics of strands both conventional and militant in Pakistan. More specifically, this scholarship, according to Zia, targets secular feminists in Pakistan as 'native informants' who play into imperialist politics by critiquing Islamist politics. Zia critiques this predominantly anthropological scholarship for its failure to take into account the political history of Pakistan, instead focusing on ethnographic work that emphasises questions of interiority of Islamic women and their non-contentious form of agency within the framework of religious practices.

As opposed to this, Zia highlights the work of liberal/secular feminists in Pakistan and their encounter with 'Men, Money, Mullahs and the Military'—the obstacles to women's equal rights. Central to this is the role of the secular women's group, Women's Action Forum (WAF) founded in 1981, which was at the forefront of the pro-democracy movement in the 1980s, opposing the Islamisation of the state enforced by General Zia ul Haq. She highlights working women's movements in Pakistan that are secular in nature to counter the disproportionate attention given to religious actors by the Western academy. Thus, she focuses on the work of Lady Health Workers (LHWs) as a contrast to examples of religious agency. The activism of LHWs is in opposition to patriarchal practices and often in defiance of faith-based obstacles to their work on rural maternal health services and vaccination drives. She

Bonita Aleaz

University of Calcutta
Kolkata, West Bengal, India
aleazbonita@gmail.com

highlights their struggle through strikes for regularisation of their work and a minimum wage. She follows this up with a discussion on the consequences of pietist agency in the context of Taliban politics in Northern Pakistan, by discussing two women's (secular) movements in Pakistan.

Central to Zia's critique of the postsecularist scholarship is the influence in their work of Saba Mahmood's theorisation of the pietist women in the Mosque movement in Egypt (Mahmood, 2005). The post 9/11 period saw a spate of work critiquing the preoccupation of the WoT discourse with questions of gender and sexuality, especially the narrative of saving Muslim women, within which US-centric feminists were caught up. The refrain 'Do Muslim women really need saving?' was against the imperialist framing of some of these feminist demands which were complicit with US imperialism (Abu-Lughod, 2002). What they focused on was the importance of a politics of location in claiming a feminist politics and feminist subject, thereby critiquing US-based liberal feminists. What one sees in Zia's book is the flip side of this politics of location. What does it mean for a feminist in Pakistan to engage with the (postsecularist) scholarship in a context of an increasing influence of religion and the military within imperialist geopolitics, where rights of women and minorities are increasingly constrained? Thus, Zia argues that this is a two-way process:

Islamists too use the same tool (women's sexual freedom) to launch cultural assaults on the West and to reaffirm the sovereignty of (an imagined) Muslim ummah (global community, represented by male clerics) through a commitment to protect society and women from their own collective sexualities. (p. 37)

Central to Zia's criticism of Mahmood's work is its theorisation of Muslim women's agency, which has become very influential. This theorisation seeks to go beyond the feminist binary of resistance and subordination to understand the complex ways in which Muslim women demonstrate agency, thereby delinking women's agency from the goals of liberal and feminist politics of freedom and resistance. While Mahmood's work was a specific ethnography of pietist women in Egypt, it has been taken as a general theory to study notions of Muslim women's piety in most Muslim majority contexts. And Zia takes issue with that, as the political consequences of piety have not been examined or have been sidelined deliberately (p. 39). To demonstrate the limitation of religious agency for women, she examines three specific case studies of women

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(Chand Bibi, Islam Bibi and Afia Siddiqui) whose agency can be understood only within the strictures of Islamic nationalism and culture which work to reinforce patriarchal traditions. She concludes her argument by discussing the importance of secular working women's agency by discussing two movements—one of women councillors and the other a peasant women's movement. Thus, she reiterates:

It is seen [through these two movements] that the material and meaningful translation of agency, voice and changing consciousness for working women is only possible through oppositional resistance that is based on non theocratic strategies rather than docile or pietist patience or virtue. (p. 176)

This book is a welcome contribution to feminism and feminist theory from the Global South. Its critical voice articulates the importance of theorising feminist politics in South Asia which takes the political context of the postcolonial nation-state of Pakistan seriously. By doing so it demonstrates the predicament of a postcolonial politics located in South Asia. As Sunder Rajan and Park (2000) have articulated:

...in its interpretations of colonialism, in contemporary struggles with the state, and in understanding religious, ethnic, and cultural nationalisms, postcolonial feminism, like other postcolonialisms, has to contend with the political concepts and practices identified with Western Enlightenment thought as they operate in the different space of postcoloniality (an operation that Gayatri Spivak has described as catachresis): secularism, democracy, liberalism, modernity; and not simply by rejection. (p. 63)

Zia demonstrates this in the context of the political concepts of secularism and liberalism in postcolonial Pakistan, where efforts have been made to paint liberal/secular rights-based activism as imperial and a Western import. This resonates with conservative politics that is anti-women and anti-minority. She states that the goals and methods of such rights-based activism sometimes align with and sometimes deviate from classical European liberalism.

These academic and political efforts to delegitimise and obscure the historical benefits that such liberal rights gave to a generation of Pakistani women allow such critics to offer piety and religious rights as unproven alternatives. By doing so, this project potentially interrupts the possibility of an alternative genealogy of the universal secular female citizen-subject in the future. (p. 182)

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There is a parallel to this argument in the work of Mrinalini Sinha (2006), which Zia cites, who illustrates the emergence of woman qua woman as the potential citizen-subject of the newly independent Indian nation-state in the activism of women's groups working across religion to imagine a political community.

This book will be of interest to feminists in India and elsewhere working on women's movements, questions of religious agency and the consequences of the global WoT and counter-terrorism activities on postcolonial politics and identity formations.

Note

1. By postsecularist scholarship, Zia means scholarship that emerged in the post 9/11 period, which focused on the relationship between Islam and secularism with the argument that Western feminists have worked in tandem with secular feminist and human rights advocates in Pakistan to demonise Islam and Islamist movements in the WoT. The focus on religion during this period was different from earlier engagements by feminists as it took a critical stand in opposition to universal Enlightenment values such as secularism, by focusing, according to her, predominantly on the subjectivities of Islamist men and women, thereby advocating a religious citizenship. This, according to her, downplays the role of religious militancy and conservatism which have usurped secular space and expressions in Muslim contexts. In the process, they do not consider that women and minorities in the Muslim context actively participate and benefit from and provide leadership to secular resistance to Islamist politics.

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Papori Bora

Centre for Women's Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi, India

E-mail: paporibora@mail.jnu.ac.in

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Silvia Federici, *Beyond Reclaiming the Body* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 2020), 176 pages, ISBN-13: 978-1-629-6-629-6

Marxist feminist scholar Federici's lectures delivered at the University of Warwick critically examines the history of the body which draws significantly from Foucault's theory of primitive accumulation which examines how the body became instrumental to the emergence of European history. In *Beyond Reclaiming the Body*, Federici's theory of primitive accumulation of feudal economies that transitioned to capitalist societies, to be unleashed upon bodies of capital, disciplined labouring bodies, and Foucault's notion of biopower. Federici's understanding of biopolitical regimes of power was in which women's bodies are recruited into the history of witch hunting in Europe to recast historical bodies and capitalism, by positioning the body as a site of resistance. In *Beyond the Periphery*, Federici examines the history of the body in which the appropriation of the body to the regime of capitalism within debates of reproductive labour that capitalism carves out for the body. Federici's 'body' for Federici is the body of the female worker. The question Federici asks is the body being produced? What does it mean in economic and social terms, embedded in the history of the body. And, finally, in what ways is the body being reconstituted, and bodies be reconstituted. The book is divided into a collection of short essays. Par

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Nivedita's attention, though she felt free to pursue her promotion of the nationalist linking of an aggressive questioning intellectuals like Tagore had his own of Bengal in 1905 saw her vehemently opposing the when the Swadeshi and as clearly quite active—helped in the manufacture of the well-known was very close.

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Reba Som has done a remarkable job of bringing alive the many-faceted Sister Nivedita. And hence, my minor quibble—the title *Margot: Sister Nivedita of Vivekananda*—does not do full justice either to the subject or to the author. The Swami was indeed instrumental in bringing Margaret Noble to India and was a great influence on her life; but soon, she was involved in many non-religious activities—educational, literary, editorial and finally political. Som painstakingly—and at times, in somewhat confusing detail—introduces us to the work and dramatis personae in the many lives of this remarkable woman. Such well-crafted biographies are a vital contribution not only to an understanding of our past but also to emergent research methodologies in the social sciences.

Malavika Karlekar

Editor, *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*

E-mail: karlekars@gmail.com

✓ S. Shankar and Charu Gupta (Eds.), *Caste and Life Narratives* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2019), 313 pp. ₹1,195 (hardcover). ISBN: 978-93-5290-875-2

DOI: 10.1177/0971521521997938

Singular Representations of Caste

The catalogues of the major libraries in the country reveal that maximum additions to their shelves have been made in recent decades on books on caste. *Caste and Life Narratives*, edited by two well-known authors, S. Shankar and Charu Gupta, however, is not just another addition to this growing corpus. It was first published under the same title by the Centre for Biographical Research by the University of Hawaii Press in 2017 as a special issue of their journal *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*,

in its Winter (Vol 40, no. 1) edition. The editors quite aptly dedicate the volume to Rohith Vemula, the young Dalit researcher who had planned his untimely death so that it would draw attention to his cry for justice for the Dalits. It is the same cry which finds expression in varying tones in the life narratives of those who have been carefully chosen in this volume to represent the continuing brutalisation of Dalits not only in the country but elsewhere as well.

Caste and Life Narratives contains a plethora of life narratives of people who challenged their Dalit identity in very specific ways. Consisting of 14 chapters, including the introduction, written from different disciplinary and thematic perspectives, the book represents different languages, regions, modes and time periods.

Though falling under the rubric of biography and historical studies, life narratives are a distinct genre, going much beyond a documentation of events in the life of its subjects. The editors spell out their objectives in the introductory chapter, describing their twofold objectives of using caste in a scholarly study of life narratives, while at the same time 'foregrounding a nuanced and critical awareness of life narrative in explorations of caste' (S. Shankar and Charu Gupta, 'My Birth Is My Fatal Accident', p. 1). The choice of the essays reveals an erudite eclecticism on the part of the editors, arranged into four sections: literary lives, visual and performance cultures, the legal frame and finally two chapters on immigrant Dalits in the USA and the Japanese Dalits or the Burakumin.

Four authors reflect on the literary styles of regional writing in the volume. These range from pliable, accommodative subjects (Charu Gupta on Santram BA) for instance, to the most enabling transformative lives (Laura R. Brueck, 'Bending Biography'). Gupta's Santram BA symbolises the dilemma of caste reforms in the country, why it could never become full-blown. He never let go of his religion but through its theology sought to refute caste. Tapan Basu highlights Hindi and Marathi narratives while Parthasarathi Muthukkarupan looks at the contours of aesthetics in Tamil Dalit writing. Basu emphasises that there has been no dearth of writing in each of these linguistic fields by Dalit writers. Yet they have been suffered invisibility and oblivion, even including Swami Achhutananda Harihar, the founder of Adi Dharma, who gave Dalit politics the critical concept of the 'primal dweller'. The years 1978-1986 marked the golden period of Dalit writing in Marathi, but neither media attention nor any awards marked their presence. Bama is the most representative presence in Tamil Dalit writing. The irreducibility of the experiencing self is one of the most distinguishing features of

Dalit literature that ca Brueck's writing brings critique, where the aut alternative worlds for De realism that violently w towards more creative po Swarnavel Easwaran, focus on the varied meth A biopic on the fiery Per lead to debilitating factu leader may subsume the director may be caught be actor and the character pl actual purpose. This is a being a Dalit-specific issu in public spaces, in this ce ty refused to accept the pi to her eventual disappear viewers. Menon's work us methodology', to uncove actress Rosy. Y. S. Alone u Lacan and Spivak the anal persistently dominant Bra culture. Dalit artists acros unusual themes. On the oth day lives of *Tamasha* perfor Mangalatai Bansode, a pop A 'Dalit woman artist's "de vival' is enmeshed with the battles' (p. 174).

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lethora of life narratives of identity in very specific ways. In the introduction, written from different perspectives, the book represents different periods.

Biography and historical studies, which go beyond a documentation of events, spell out their objectives and their twofold objectives of representation, while at the same time the awareness of life narrative in Gupta, 'My Birth Is My Fatal Fate' reveals an erudite eclecticism in its sections: literary lives, visual arts and finally two chapters on Dalits or the Burakumin.

Issues of regional writing in the form of modulative subjects (Charu Gupta's most enabling transformative work 'My'). Gupta's Santram Baramba looks at the country, why it could not be his religion, but through its history highlights Hindi and Marathi and looks at the contours of Dalit consciousness that there has been Dalit presence in different fields by Dalit writers. In the oblivion, even including the story of Adi Dharma, who gave the name 'liminal dweller'. The years of Dalit writing in Marathi, but they had their presence. Bama is a Dalit writer. The irreducibility of Dalit writing is a distinguishing feature of

Dalit literature that cannot be simply usurped under Dalit studies. Brueck's writing brings out an interesting interplay between theory and critique, where the authors focus on imagined situations to create alternative worlds for Dalits. Such writing falls within the genre of post-realism that violently wrenches subjects away from the beaten track towards more creative possibilities.

Swarnavel Easwaran, Bindu Menon, Y. S. Alone and Shailaja Paik focus on the varied methods of visual representation currently in vogue. A biopic on the fiery Periyar (Swarnavel) shows the pressures that may lead to debilitating factual projections. Star persona playing a political leader may subsume the importance of the character himself since the director may be caught between two powerful personalities—that of the actor and the character played; biopics then become a negation of their actual purpose. This is a reiteration of a general problem rather than being a Dalit-specific issue. Menon projects the cause of the Dalit woman in public spaces, in this case on the silver screen. Our hierarchical society refused to accept the presence of a Dalit woman as an actress, leading to her eventual disappearance as a consequence of being rejected by viewers. Menon's work uses quite an exceptional method, that of 'trace methodology', to uncover the disappearance of the prominent Dalit actress Rosy. Y. S. Alone uses another interesting method, drawing from Lacan and Spivak the analogy of 'sanctioned ignorance', to highlight the persistently dominant Brahmanical gaze, governing visibility in art and culture. Dalit artists across genres reverse the process by highlighting unusual themes. On the other hand, Paik offers a glimpse into the everyday lives of *Tamasha* performers in Maharashtra. Based on oral resources, Mangalatai Bansode, a popular tamashagir's life narrative, is presented. A 'Dalit woman artist's "deviant" sexuality, labour and struggle for survival' is enmeshed with the 'community's social, cultural and political battles' (p. 174).

The last two sections discuss issues usually ignored in works on Dalits. How responsive is our legal system? Has the law been inclusive of those with different sexual orientation? Sumit Baudh looks at the Supreme Court's verdicts on such groups and finds the crying need for greater activism by them and on their behalf for their necessary inclusion in the legal process. Mukul Sharma's account of the Sulabh international story reveals another truth. It is not only pro-activism manifest among the subalterns but the continuing patronage of Brahmanical patriarchy from within, by the Dalits themselves, that reinforces their liminal existence.

Readers would usually be unfamiliar with the Dalit diaspora, and many might believe that initial identities are subsumed under adoptive identities. Shweta Mazumdar Adur and Anjana Narayan refute this through quite a detailed account of the ongoing hierarchies, and inherent power relations affecting Dalit existence in the USA. However, bonding among Dalits is visible over issues of violence against Dalits in India. The last essay recounts the life narratives of the Burakumin in Japan. A product of long-term research by June Gordon, it reflects the sordid story of marginality in a continuum, across waves of modernisation in the country which have only legitimised their oblivion in Japan's public spaces and discourses.

The conjunction of caste and life narratives that the book dwells upon throws up a number of significant facts: It is through such an alignment that the most profound truths at the experiential level are revealed. First, canonical structures of caste chalked out in pre-established frames are not infallible; they can be deconstructed and reconstructed anew as per new experiential frames. Second, such frames come in a plethora of forms and produce greater clarity of experienced images; in this process, the hermeneutical entwining between the author and her subject is made more explicit. Contextual envisioning and utilisation of the most appropriate method becomes essential for truth to be made explicit. Thus, be it from the lens of protected or 'sanctioned ignorance', in the field of diaspora studies, or through trace methods among others, each of these unravel and go beyond the shadow areas and the many questions left unanswered within fields like subaltern studies. Third, the volume also demonstrates the weakness of the realist mould which has dominated academic space, also the feeble analysis achieved by merely functioning under the rubric of Dalit studies, rather than the comprehensiveness achieved by the rubric of critical caste studies. Such processing helps in reaching into the depths of the post-realist frame of analysis to show the individual strengths of the actors and their desire to project truth as experienced. Here it is not merely the power of the trajectories of realism that are emphasised, but rather the power of the narrations. In this effort, new paradigms are sought by the authors to counter older frames of analysis of the Dalit-Brahman interface in India and beyond. The volume is an essential addition to any library and very useful for research on hierarchical social relations.

Bonita Aleaz

*Professor (Ret), University of Calcutta
Department of Political Science, Kolkata, West Bengal, India
E-mail: aleazbonita@gmail.com*

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Afiya S. Zia, *Faith and Autonomy?* (Lahore: Fol ISBN: 978-969-7834-00-

Afiya Zia begins her boo

Are secular politics, ai impracticable for Muslim exempted from feminist expressions, which include the present time? (p. 2)

The immediate context for emergence of what she calls the post 9/11 period in the scholarship by mostly diasporians emphasises the 'docile' is framed by an overwhelming Islamism, which does not take into account the political history of Pakistan. More specifically, secular feminists in Pakistan critique patriarchal politics by critiquing anthropology and political history of Pakistan, emphasises questions of intentionality of agency with As opposed to this, Zia highlights in Pakistan and their encounter with 'Military'—the obstacles to the role of the secular women's movement in the 1980s, opposed by General Zia ul Haq. She highlights in Pakistan that are secular in attention given to religious agency. focuses on the work of Lady examples of religious agency. to patriarchal practices and oft their work on rural maternal he

alongside the everyday structural misogyny in post-ceasefire Nagaland. The heart-breaking narrative of Beth, a teenage girl regularly raped by her ex-insurgent father, shows the complicity of the larger network of family in silencing assaulted women. Ahuja and Bharadwaj take the reader through a different kind of conflict zone in Chhattisgarh that has rendered the Adivasi people of the mineral-rich region citizens without fundamental rights in the face of a development regime funded by multinational capital. Jayshree's essay draws attention to caste-based sexual violence against Dalit women in Rajasthan. The impunity of the perpetrators is laid bare in Pratiksha Baxi's essay as she unpicks the double humiliation of 'deviant' women—first in the appalling spectacle of stripping and parading and then inside the court through the completely unsympathetic judicial process.

The narratives of atrocities, however, are also narratives of intense courageous protests. The Manipur Mothers' naked protest in 2004 in the wake of the brutal killing of Manorama, Kashmiri people's resistance after the rape and murder of two women in Shopian in 2009 that became the turning point in breaking the silences after two decades regarding the mass rape of women in the village of Kunan Poshpora in 1991, and the relentless struggles of Soni Sori and Irom Sharmila link histories of humiliation and violence with contemporary feminist movements. The massive protest mobilisation after the Delhi gang rape in 2012 opened these histories of violence to a new generation of women and men. If it becomes possible to turn the public secret of rape into the public acknowledgement of injury, as Chakravarti argues, a feminist understanding of the state will emerge for the older and newer generation of feminists.

Mallarika Sinha Roy

*Centre for Women's Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi, India*

E-mail: mallarikasinha@yaho.com

✓ Reba Som, *Margot: Sister Nivedita of Vivekananda* (New Delhi: Penguin Viking, 2017), 291 pages, ₹599 (hardcover). ISBN: 978-06-700-8879-9.

DOI: 10.1177/0971521521997935

When Reba Som set out to research about Margaret Noble—Margot—to her family and friends, a primary task was to access the over 800 letters

that her subject wrote to a friend in an appropriate historical primary as well as secondary story of a complex, somewhat woman.

One cold November afternoon I had been invited by the 'forwards' to hear an Indian monk speak at the end of all religions. This was to be a tumultuous friendship that had come to India—and to even a missionary background, via Vivekananda's family. He, however, was a primary disciple of Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. Vivekananda just before his arrival at the Parliament of Religions in 1893.

Soon after, a small group of women arrived in India, attracted to the West. Margaret Noble was among them. On 25 November 1893, Margaret Noble as Nivedita came to India. How to worship Shiva, she wrote to Vivekananda. Som has dealt perceptively with this special relationship between Vivekananda and Nivedita—relationship of 'clash and conflict' as she describes it—leader falling away from me, at least indifferent, and possibly (p. 21). Vivekananda too was not to forget her past, be less outspoken. In part, Nivedita realised that Vivekananda's perhaps her 'worshipful passion' was not just while on a Himalayan journey. Vivekananda decided to take only Nivedita as a disciple. He was clearly overwhelmed by Nivedita. Vivekananda prostrating himself before her. How Nivedita 'longed for the Master's edge such as his Master had given her. 'uncompromising reserve', at the love bestowed on him by his 'ruined' (quoted on p. 31) certainly this intense relationship.

a post-ceasefire Nagaland. A teenage girl regularly raped by the larger network of and Bharadwaj take the lead in Chhattisgarh that has shocked region citizens without government regime funded by its attention to caste-based Rajasthan. The impunity of the author's essay as she unpicks the threads in the appalling spectacle of violence through the completely

do narratives of intense counter-protest in 2004 in the wake of people's resistance after the 2009 that became the turning point regarding the mass rape of 2011, and the relentless struggles of humiliation and violations. The massive protest has opened these histories of violence. If it becomes possible to acknowledge the injury, as well as the state will emerge for

Mallarika Sinha Roy
Centre for Women's Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawahar Lal Nehru University
New Delhi, India
rikasinhroy@yahoo.com

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Margaret Noble—Margot—to access the over 800 letters

that her subject wrote to a few to whom she was very close. Setting these in an appropriate historical context based on a detailed reading of several primary as well as secondary sources, the author weaves a tightly knit life story of a complex, somewhat intimidating but also clearly disarming, woman.

One cold November afternoon in 1895, the 28-year-old Margot had been invited by the 'forward-looking' London-based Sesame Club to hear an Indian monk speak on the Universal Oneness that characterised all religions. This was to be the first step towards a very special and even tumultuous friendship that began with Margaret Noble's decision to come to India—and to eventually make it her home. She came from a missionary background, while lawyers dominated in Narendranath Datta's family. He, however, gave up the study of law and became the primary disciple of Ramakrishna, a simple, unlettered priest at the Kali temple at Dakshineswar. The young man was to become Swami Vivekananda just before his 1893 trip to the USA where he was to speak at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago.

Soon after, a small group of staunch Western women supporters arrived in India, attracted to the young and charismatic Swami. Margot was among them. On 25 March 1898, Swami Vivekananda renamed Margaret Noble as Nivedita after a simple initiation ceremony. Taught how to worship Shiva, she was now a *brahmacharini*, celibate and pious. Som has dealt perceptively with the evolving—and no doubt controversial—relationship between Vivekananda and Nivedita. The latter wrote of 'clash and conflict' as she saw 'the dream of a friendly and beloved leader falling away from me, and the picture of one who would be at least indifferent, and possibly hostile, substituting itself' (quoted on p. 21). Vivekananda too was clearly conflicted. He asked his disciple to forget her past, be less outspoken and to 'Hinduise' her thoughts. For her part, Nivedita realised that Vivekananda dreaded temptation—and perhaps her 'worshipful passion'. The real test, however, was yet to come: while on a Himalayan journey with his disciples, on 29 July 1898, he decided to take only Nivedita on the pilgrimage to Amarnath. Nivedita was clearly overwhelmed by the sight of the Shivalingam and of Vivekananda prostrating his almost naked body before it. Som writes of how Nivedita 'longed for that moment to be supremely meaningful, when he would impart to her, through a touch perhaps, a spiritual knowledge such as his Master had given him' (p. 30). And yet, Vivekananda's 'uncompromising reserve', and his belief that he should not return the love bestowed on him by his disciples 'for that day the work would be ruined' (quoted on p. 31) certainly hints at a certain underlying tension in this intense relationship.

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Som, however, chooses not to delve any further into what must surely have been a complicated situation but tells the reader that after this pilgrimage, Vivekananda turned away from Shiva worship to worship of the mother goddess. Meanwhile, with the outbreak of a severe plague epidemic, Nivedita was soon deeply involved in the Ramakrishna Mission's volunteer service. Shortly afterwards, in early 1899, she became close to the Tagore family, something that apparently did not have the Swami's approval. While he found Rabindranath's love poetry erotic, Nivedita clearly enjoyed intellectual conversations with the poet. By 1900, following the trip to the USA with Vivekananda, Som writes that though Nivedita realised that her life was held 'in the hollow of his hand' (quoted on p. 71), the time had come for her to forge her own future.

The school at Bosepara soon occupied Nivedita's attention, though after Swami Vivekananda's death in 1902, she felt free to pursue her commitment to the much larger cause of promotion of the nationalist spirit in India. However, Som comments that her linking of an aggressive Hinduism with nationalism concerned 'questioning intellectuals like Rabindranath Tagore' (p. 144). In any case, Tagore had his own misgivings about the concept. The partition of Bengal in 1905 saw her participating in many lectures and meetings vehemently opposing the government's divisive move. Soon after, when the Swadeshi and revolutionary movements started, Nivedita was clearly quite active—though Som disagrees with the view that she helped in the manufacture of bombs by getting appropriate chemical formulae from the well-known scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose to whom she was very close.

For students of the intellectual and nationalist history of Bengal of those days, it is indeed of interest how significant personalities such as Aurobindo Ghose and Jagadish Chandra Bose (apart from Vivekananda and Tagore of course) developed such close relationships with this young British woman: her editorial skills were valued by both, and in 1910, she was in charge of editing the final issues of Ghose's *Karma Yogin*. She had a long, personal relationship with Jagadish Chandra Bose, and his wife, Abala, and helped Bose with 12 chapters of his book, *Irritability of Plants*.

An avid writer and appreciator of Indian art, Nivedita wrote a complimentary review of E. B. Havell's work in Ramananda Chatterjee's *Modern Review* to which she contributed frequently. Soon after, her 1909 visit to Ajanta and Ellora resulted in 'a rich harvest of articles'. The same year, the Vicerine, Lady Minto, visited her incognito, curious to know more about 'the English lady running a school in the native quarters of the city' (p. 228). The visit helped keep at bay investigations and

harassment of the school with travel—a pilgrimage and a quick visit to Ellora. In September 1909 when she had a virulent fever, she died on October 13, 1909. Abala Bose suffered silently, refusing to prolong her life.

Reba Som has done a fine job of presenting a multifaceted Sister Nivedita. The book is a subject or to the author's biography of Sister Nivedita of Vivekananda. Margaret Noble to India. She was involved in many editorial and finally, a somewhat confusing collection of personae in the many lives. Biographies are a vital part of the past but also to emerge

S. Shankar and Charu Gupta (eds), *Sister Nivedita* (New Delhi: S. Shankar and Charu Gupta Books, 2019), 313 pp. ₹1,200

Singular Representation

The catalogues of the major additions to their shelves are published in the journal *Caste and Life*. S. Shankar and Charu Gupta are growing their corpus. It was first published for Biographical Research as a special issue of their journal.

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Malavika Karlekar

Editor, *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*

E-mail: karlekars@gmail.com

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Uma Chakravarti, *Fault Lines of History: The India Papers II* (Zubaan Series on Sexual Violence and Impunity in South Asia) (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2016), 343 pp. ₹795. ISBN: 978-9-385-93231-1.

Books often reflect the time they are written in, but there comes a rare book that holds a mirror to the time it is written in and forces the reader to face the ugly scars of history as well. Uma Chakravarti's edited book *Fault Lines of History: The India Papers II* is a book that recounts the horrors of sexual violence and impunity in India through eight essays, each of which explores in detail multiple historical trajectories of sexual violence in contexts of conflict, neoliberal development regimes, caste atrocities and deep-seated misogyny. This book is part of a series—Zubaan Series on Sexual Violence and Impunity in South Asia—that emerged from a project led by nine advisers from five South Asian countries. The series has eight volumes, and this book is the second of the two volumes focusing on India. The Series Introduction by Urvashi Butalia, Laxmi Murthy and Navsaran Singh outlines the fraught issues around conflict zones, militarisation and accountability of war crimes in South Asia. This series offers a vantage point to conceptualise South Asia as a regional spatial unit of cross-border economy, culture and politics with a long shared history of violence within a larger international context.

Chakravarti's Introduction to the volume lays out the issues at stake—the everyday and the exceptional in sexual violence and impunity in contemporary India. Militarisation in identified conflict zones like India's Northeast and Kashmir where the notorious Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) and the Army Act of 1950 have made the distinction between everyday and exceptional events of violence nearly redundant. And yet the metropolitan intelligentsia has taken little notice of 'the rich body of empirical material and experiential accounts that we have seen for states that live in a state of exception' (p. 5). In Chakravarti's view, feminist academia has also not paid the required attention to these

Book Reviews

issues. Though feminist quite a sustained manner of writings based on fact also often produced by the nexus between political

The eight essays of the largely drawn from prior. Three essays are situated. Barbra and Dolly Kikon and Gazala Peer), one by Bharadwaj) and Rajasthi (Pratiksha Baxi) unapologetically parading of women in Uttar Pradesh in 2011. Six essays peel back the vulnerabilities and impunity and geographical specificity on specific 'events'—one by Sanjoy Barbra), and the other of 'deviant' women (Pratiksha Baxi) of public silence regarding the spectacle of violence on

Protagonists in these Roshmi Goswami narrate to be associated with a name as a sympathiser is worse (pp. 50–51). The tragic death of a woman militant in Unnao and killed by the security forces rejected the overtures of India, forcibly picked up for arrest again—suggest the range of Sahba Husain, in the context of open similar kinds of vulnerability of militants/ex-militants: Peer gives glimpses of the sexual violence who depicts Peer's analysis of the legacy of army and civil courts governance and law inter-

Dolly Kikon unveils the conflict zones through a

-45-

issues. Though feminist scholarship has discussed sexual violence in quite a sustained manner over the last three decades, bringing the body of writings based on fact-finding reports within its purview (which are also often produced by feminists) would sharpen the feminist critique of the nexus between politics, governance and law.

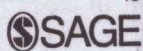
The eight essays of this volume develop thought-provoking arguments, largely drawn from primary data of women's lives in conflict zones. Three essays are situated in India's Northeast (Roshmi Goswami, Sanjay Barbora and Dolly Kikon), two in Jammu and Kashmir (Sahba Hussain and Gazala Peer), one each in Chhattisgarh (Guneet Ahuja and Parijata Bharadwaj) and Rajasthan (Jayshree P. Mangubhai). The final essay (Pratiksha Baxi) unpacks three harrowing incidents of stripping and parading of women in Uttar Pradesh in 1980 and 1993 and in Maharashtra in 2011. Six essays peel away the layers in the matrix of violence, vulnerabilities and impunity with evocative observations on the historical and geographical specificities of conflict. The two essays that concentrate on specific 'events'—one on the Nellie massacre in Assam in 1983 (Sanjoy Barbora), and the other on three cases of stripping and parading of 'deviant' women (Pratiksha Baxi)—allude to the disturbing elements of public silence regarding sexual violence on the one hand and the spectacle of violence on the other.

Protagonists in these essays represent various aspects of conflict. Roshmi Goswami narrates that perhaps the 'plight of a woman perceived to be associated with a militant outfit either as an active "combatant" or as a sympathiser is worse because the violations are extremely brutal' (pp. 50–51). The tragic deaths of Deepila and Roshni—the former was a woman militant in United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) brutalised and killed by the security forces, and the latter a young woman who rejected the overtures of local male ULFA activists and was consequently forcibly picked up for allegedly being an 'informer', never to be found again—suggest the range of women's vulnerabilities in conflict zones. Sahba Husain, in the context of Jammu and Kashmir, brings into the open similar kinds of vulnerabilities in ex-militants, women in families of militants/ex-militants and male survivors of custodial torture. Gazala Peer gives glimpses of the sheer terror of Kashmiri women survivors of sexual violence who deposed against their perpetrators in army courts. Peer's analysis of the legal complexities in terms of the juridical powers of army and civil courts shows how the nodal points of armed forces, governance and law intersect with each other.

Dolly Kikon unveils the aspects of militarisation and policing in conflict zones through an account of a Women's Cell in Nagaland

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India Papers II (Zubaan Series
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Chakravarti's edited book
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alongside the everyday structural misogyny in post-ceasefire Nagaland. The heart-breaking narrative of Beth, a teenage girl regularly raped by her ex-insurgent father, shows the complicity of the larger network of family in silencing assaulted women. Ahuja and Bharadwaj take the reader through a different kind of conflict zone in Chhattisgarh that has rendered the Adivasi people of the mineral-rich region citizens without fundamental rights in the face of a development regime funded by multinational capital. Jayshree's essay draws attention to caste-based sexual violence against Dalit women in Rajasthan. The impunity of the perpetrators is laid bare in Pratiksha Baxi's essay as she unpicks the double humiliation of 'deviant' women—first in the appalling spectacle of stripping and parading and then inside the court through the completely unsympathetic judicial process.

The narratives of atrocities, however, are also narratives of intense courageous protests. The Manipur Mothers' naked protest in 2004 in the wake of the brutal killing of Manorama, Kashmiri people's resistance after the rape and murder of two women in Shopian in 2009 that became the turning point in breaking the silences after two decades regarding the mass rape of women in the village of Kunan Poshpora in 1991, and the relentless struggles of Soni Sori and Irom Sharmila link histories of humiliation and violence with contemporary feminist movements. The massive protest mobilisation after the Delhi gang rape in 2012 opened these histories of violence to a new generation of women and men. If it becomes possible to turn the public secret of rape into the public acknowledgement of injury, as Chakravarti argues, a feminist understanding of the state will emerge for the older and newer generation of feminists.

Mallarika Sinha Roy
Centre for Women's Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi, India
E-mail: mallarikasinharoy@yahoo.com

Reba Som, *Margot: Sister Nivedita of Vivekananda* (New Delhi: Penguin Viking, 2017), 291 pages, ₹599 (hardcover). ISBN: 978-06-700-8879-9.

DOI: 10.1177/0971521521997935

When Reba Som set out to research about Margaret Noble—Margot—to her family and friends, a primary task was to access the over 800 letters

that her subject wrote to a friend in an appropriate historical context, primary as well as secondary sources, the story of a complex, somewhat enigmatic woman.

One cold November afternoon she had been invited by the 'forwards' to hear an Indian monk speak at the Parliament of Religions. This was to be a tumultuous friendship that came to India—and to eventually a missionary background, with Datta's family. He, however, was a primary disciple of Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. Vivekananda just before his departure for the Parliament of Religions.

Soon after, a small group of women arrived in India, attracted to the cause. One was Margaret Noble as Nivedita. How to worship Shiva, she was told. Som has dealt perceptively with this relationship between Vivekananda and Nivedita of 'clash and conflict' as she describes a leader falling away from megalomania, at least indifferent, and possibly (p. 21). Vivekananda too was not to forget her past, but less outspokenly. Nivedita realised that perhaps her 'worshipful passion' while on a Himalayan journey had decided to take only Nivedita. She was clearly overwhelmed by Vivekananda prostrating himself before her. How Nivedita 'longed for the knowledge when he would impart to her, the edge such as his Master had given her. 'uncompromising reserve', a love bestowed on him by his family, 'ruined' (quoted on p. 31) certainly defined this intense relationship.

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Bengali counterparts, although their creative work was based on their own understanding and was distinctly homegrown', and that the 'modernity project for Odia women was distinctly different from the way it was envisaged by the colonial administration' (p. 110).

While one agrees with the author's concluding observation that the 'periodical press in Odisha had a fractured relationship and multi-faceted negotiations with colonial modernity' (p. 126), and that this remained a contested field, the discussion would have been enriched if the fault lines had been examined with a view to point to diverse pathways explored by the different ideological and social streams that emerged within a society subjected to long years of colonial and feudal oppression. Undoubtedly, women were and continue to be a significant part of this story. However, Mohanty has chosen to provide only a partial glimpse of this rich story.

Indu Agnihotri

Independent Researcher, Delhi
iagnihotri53@gmail.com

✓ Leila Alikarimi, *Women & Equality in Iran: Law, Society and Activism*. London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2019, 339 pages. £85.00 (hbk), £91.80 (ebook). ISBN: 978-1-7845-33168.

DOI: 10.1177/0971521520980859

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regime under the legal restrictions on representing an Islamic and alleged 'West Westernized Pahlavi rights became the and control was fo women's rights on t consequent strategie described by Leila A and Activism. It has

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Indu Agnihotri

Researcher, Delhi
 tri53@gmail.com

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regime under the leadership of Shia cleric Aytoollah Khomeini imposed legal restrictions on women. Iran under Khomeini presented itself as representing an Islamic counterculture that opposed the cultural degradation and alleged 'Westoxification' perpetuated during the rule of the Westernized Pahlavi Dynasty. Once again women's bodies and women's rights became the grounds on which the discursive battle of domination and control was fought. The authoritarian government's quashing of women's rights on the grounds of 'preserving national security' and the consequent strategies adopted by the women's movement is powerfully described by Leila Alikarami in *Women & Equality in Iran: Law, Society and Activism*. It has a chilling resonance in our times.

One of the main focal points of this book is the struggle to bring about the accession by the Iranian state to UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).¹ In the case of Iran, this abstention has been combined with the introduction of a highly misogynistic legal code in the name of Islam and *sharia* as part of the larger Islamization project. These patriarchal codes deprive women equality in most aspects of life. As the work shows, all these reforms were undertaken in the name of Islam, on the basis of a narrow, regressive and reductive interpretation of the *sharia*. The work also examines women's struggles for legal equality in post-revolutionary Iran, with particular emphasis on their human rights and CEDAW. The 'One Billion Signature Campaign', in which the author was an active participant and a legal attorney, is also analysed here thoroughly. This first hand insights of the author into the deliberations involved in the prolonged process of negotiations, discussions and contestation over the issue of the ratification of CEDAW by Iran, marks the significance of the work. It also powerfully illustrates the impact of the 'One Million Signature Campaign',² and challenges posed by women's rights activists which eventually lead to greater public sympathy for their cause. Highlighting the significance of this campaign, Alikarami construes it as being successful as a bottom-up grassroots effort as women from varied ideological spectrum come together to mainstream the debate on gender justice and legal equality. While discussing the multiple impediments faced by women's rights activists, the author focuses on the politics of interpretation of Islamic law and the internal politics of the country. The work foregrounds the debate on women's legal equality within the particular socio-legal context of Iran. The focus is on the 'new phase' of women's activism through the lens of feminist legal theory that developed in the wake of the reforms ushered in under the liberal reformist leadership of Mohammad Khatami (1997–2005).

The book provides a detailed analysis of the political and legal systems in Iran in a historical context and the author skilfully illustrates the changes which began in the 1990s with the new political leadership as new spaces opened up in civil society. But the political fluidity that followed can be seen as a sort of a roller coaster ride for the women's movement in Iran with its ebbs and flows. It examines the prospect of women's rights and gender justice within an Islamic and national framework in the post-Khomeini years, with the dynamic nature of the *sharia*. The author shows how feminist activists and scholars have adopted innovative strategies of interpretation of the *sharia*, through a feminist press and other forms of activism. This approach in turn led to the innovative use of jurisdictional tools available within Islamic jurisprudence, such as *ejtehad* based on a more egalitarian understanding of Islam.³

Women & Equality in Iran: Law, Society and Activism powerfully highlights that despite constant deadlocks faced by the women's movement, the women of Iran have managed to gain some concessions and modifications through their innovative approach towards *sharia*-based mechanisms. Hence, an important point that can be deduced from this book is that despite all the set-backs, there still existed a vibrant women's movement in Iran. Alikarami makes a significant point by emphasizing that the gender bias of the Iranian legal system has been successfully challenged and has lost its legitimacy on account of the constant and unrelenting pressure mounted by women's rights' activists, the feminist press, scholars and feminists from different ideological hues. While rich details about the domestic context and particular dynamics of Iranian society are extremely useful, the book could have benefited more by placing these within a broader geopolitical framework exploring how global patriarchy gets entrenched and reproduced. It would have been illuminating to explore the reasons behind the fact that both USA and Iran are conspicuously among only a handful of countries that have still not ratified CEDAW. It could have shown how political elites on both sides feed off each other in their propaganda war, and in particular, in the problematic 'clash of civilizations' discourse. Moreover, certain questions remain unanswered; For instance, why is Iran resisting the ratification of the CEDAW even when countries like Saudi Arabia have done so? Apart from the overt and superficial reasons given by the Iranian State despite the legal flexibility and space given to state parties at the time of ratification of the convention, nothing more is known.

There are four points that could also have been dealt with by the author: first, the multiple marginalization of Iranian women need to be

further contextualize politics and nation Muslim context along rights' law could be CEDAW and other CEDAW is the inter-recorded reservations mechanisms in the pr account.

To sum up, this wo place in a Muslim cot hegemonic struggles. pel the popular miscor victims of Islamic lav that, despite the obsta challenged and questio multiple levels.

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1. The convention was ac as the Iranian Revoluti
2. The campaign was laun ideological divides.
3. For example, we have M movement for equality society organization co instances of the new tre a middle ground with st tice within the framewo See www.musawah.org

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further contextualized within the intersectionality of gender, international politics and national power politics—and not narrowly within the Muslim context alone. Second, the Eurocentric framework of UN human rights' law could be critiqued. Third, there is a need to assess the workings of CEDAW and other human rights mechanisms, given the fact that *CEDAW is the international convention with the maximum number of recorded reservations. Lastly, the effectiveness of the UN human rights mechanisms in the protection of human rights should also be taken into account.*

To sum up, this work unravels the social and political churning taking place in a Muslim country where women are at the forefront of counter-hegemonic struggles. This book should be read as a work that helps dispel the popular misconceptions of Muslim women being silent, voiceless victims of Islamic law, in need of being saved. The work illustrates that, despite the obstacles faced by Iranian women, they have actively challenged and questioned their legal subordination by campaigning at multiple levels.

Notes

1. The convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly in the same year as the Iranian Revolution, in December 1979.
2. The campaign was launched in August 2006 by Iranian women cutting across ideological divides.
3. For example, we have Musawah and Sisters in Islam. The former is a global movement for equality and justice while the latter is a Malaysia-based civil society organization committed to promote gender justice. They provide instances of the new trend for global Islamic feminism, attempting to reach a middle ground with states as they demand women's rights and gender justice within the framework of international human rights and Islamic law. See www.musawah.org and www.sistersinislam.org.my.

Huma Hasan

Centre for Women's Studies
AMU, Aligarh, India
huma.hasancws@gmail.com

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we definitely adopted self-restraint as a rule of life. To my great joy this knit us together as never before. We ceased to be two different entities. Without my wishing it, she chose to lose herself in me. The result was that she became truly my *better* half. She was a woman always of very strong will which, in our early days, I used to mistake for obstinacy. But that strong will enabled her to become quite unwittingly my teacher in the art and practice of non-violent non-cooperation. The practice began with my own family.

Nitika Ladda

Department of Political Science
Lady Sriram College, New Delhi, India
laddaniki@gmail.com

✓ Sachidananda Mohanty, *Periodical Press and Colonial Modernity: Odisha, 1866–1936*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016. 143 pages. ₹595.

DOI: 10.1177/0971521520980866

Mohanty chooses the periodical lens as a significant pointer to emerging debates in the context of the advent of the British in Odisha in 1803, who opted to indirectly rule through arrangements worked out with the 'Gadajat' states, that is, the feudatory states/ kingdoms in this region. The book focuses on the context of 19th–20th century Odisha—through the lens of two publications—with the aim 'to show how [the] periodical press shaped ideas and the material culture of a region, and in turn got metamorphosed by the play of contemporary cultural and ideological forces' in Odisha (p. x). The periodicals are *Utkal Dipika*, a weekly founded in the year the great famine affected Odisha, and *Utkal Sahitya*, a literary periodical, started in 1897. It is argued that both were a response to 'the need to safeguard the language and literature of the region', thereby laying the context for a 'contestatory discourse surrounding colonial and vernacular modernity' (p. x).

The chapters discuss the rise of the periodical press in Odisha, with two of these specifically focusing on Gourishankar Ray and Biswanath Kar, respectively, the Editors of the two publications selected, apart from the Introduction which seeks to lay out the context. The founders of both are presented as 'nativists and modernists who were open to ideas of change'. Justifying his choice of sources and subject, the author observes that 'the periodical press has become axiomatic for reading social and cultural history today' (p. 6) and that in Odisha

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The book traverses through the content that 'modern newspaperisation in the form the space is allocated ing to present an overview men who participated author misses out on exploration of prevalence with the emerging colonial modernity remain two editors—Ray, a minded reformists in rationalist or a secular patronage, the two jobs and forces. The Britain would weaken a full-fledged vernacular they made for the sake colonial position' (p. other voices and force

It is in this background larger contestation—on the location of Women remains largely peripheral discursive terrain, the reformers in select sections culled out by scholars women, their role and debates in colonial India the complexity visible specifically feature in Woman and Conduct Book 4, on Utkal Sahitya and

Clearly, there emerged education and social emerged as writers on focus on women's role Mohanty contends that

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Nitika Ladda

*Department of Political Science
All India Institute of Technology,
New Delhi, India
laddaniki@gmail.com*

*Colonial Modernity: Odisha,
2016. 143 pages. ₹595.*

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an important pointer to emerging modernity in Odisha in 1803, who worked out with the British in this region. They were the first to publish in Odisha—through the *Utkal Dipika*, a weekly newspaper, and *Utkal Sahitya*, a monthly magazine, at both of which were a response to the 'literature of the region', and a discourse surrounding

the colonial press in Odisha, which Shankar Ray and his publications selected, and which they put out the context. The modernists who were the sources and subject, they became axiomatic for the region and that in Odisha

the modernity propelled by the state and its appendages produced both 'resistance and acquiescence' (p. 7).

The book traverses a significant period of the history of the region through the content and context of the periodical press, even as it notes that 'modern newspapers and periodicals depend on the revenue administration in the form of advertisements' because of which a large part of the space is allocated to the 'affairs of the colonial state' (p. 87). In seeking to present an overview which also reflects on the social origins of the men who participated in these debates in an extremely readable text, the author misses out on nuances in terms of shifts over time and a deeper exploration of prevalent ideas and inherent tensions. The preoccupation with the emerging classes and their contestation over the project of colonial modernity remains a primary concern. Mohanty observes that the two editors—Ray, a Kayastha and Kar, a Brahmin—were religious-minded reformists inclined towards the Brahmo Samaj and neither was a rationalist or a secularist (p. 124). Also, that being recipients of feudal patronage, the two journals 'did not speak out against the feudal kingdoms and forces. Their complicity with the ruling class in Odisha and Britain would weaken their nationalist ardour and the desire to construct a full-fledged vernacular modernity. Regardless of the strategic choice they made for the sake of exigency, they stand ill accorded with an anti-colonial position' (p. 125). Such contestation, clearly, had to wait for other voices and forces to emerge.

It is in this background that the discussions on women's place in the larger contestation—or the absence of it—need to be understood. From the location of Women's/Gender Studies, though a focus on women remains largely peripheral to the evidence Mohanty garners to lay out the discursive terrain, there are references to debates and attitudes of the reformers in select sections. The author is familiar with the material culled out by scholars of the print media to point to the rich debates on women, their role and rights, which emerged as a significant marker in debates in colonial India and are critical to the analysis of understanding the complexity visible in attitudes to modernity. Women's concerns specifically feature in small sections on Female Education, The New Woman and Conduct Book Tradition (13–18) and then again in Chapter 4, on Utkal Sahitya and Colonial/Alternative Modernity.

Clearly, there emerged significant voices in support of women's education and social reform, especially of women themselves, who emerged as writers on their own merit, even as debates continued to focus on women's role with respect to conjugality in a changing society. Mohanty contends that Odia women were 'greatly influenced by their

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Bengali counterparts, although their creative work was based on their own understanding and was distinctly homegrown', and that the 'modernity project for Odia women was distinctly different from the way it was envisaged by the colonial administration' (p. 110).

While one agrees with the author's concluding observation that the 'periodical press in Odisha had a fractured relationship and multi-faceted negotiations with colonial modernity' (p. 126), and that this remained a contested field, the discussion would have been enriched if the fault lines had been examined with a view to point to diverse pathways explored by the different ideological and social streams that emerged within a society subjected to long years of colonial and feudal oppression. Undoubtedly, women were and continue to be a significant part of this story. However, Mohanty has chosen to provide only a partial glimpse of this rich story.

Indu Agnihotri

Independent Researcher, Delhi
iagnihotri53@gmail.com

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discussions and analyses are extremely valuable in an environment where it is increasingly necessary to ensure that gender retains its centrality within public discourse.

Pranta Pratik Patnaik

Department of Culture & Media Studies
Central University of Rajasthan
Bandar Seendri, Rajasthan, India
prantapratik@gmail.com

Manisha Chaudhary, *Kasturba Gandhi: A Bio-Fiction*. New Delhi, India: Niyogi Books, 2018. 424 pages, ₹795.

DOI: 10.1177/0971521520980858

The life and work of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi as the architect of India's Swaraj in the fight against colonialism has been one of the most prolific subjects of academic discourse. While his political activities have always been at the centre of scrutiny, yet aspects of his personal life were largely seen as unimpeachable by both scholars and his critics. The wealth of published material deals in detail with Gandhi's philosophy and activism but the majority of these works do not mention the role of Kasturba Gandhi in shaping the trajectory of Gandhian politics. At the age of 13, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was married to Kasturbai Makhanji in 1883 and they were to live for 62 years as a married couple. Popularly known as Ba, Kasturba does find mention in Gandhi's autobiography *My Experiments with Truth* wherein Gandhi describes their relation as marked by love and jealousy. Yet, there is hardly any literature available for a scholar willing to dig deeper into the life of this formidable woman who moved with him constantly, invested herself in the politics of Gandhi, went to jail in South Africa and India and was a devoted wife and mother in all respects. To be able to carve out an independent existence amidst the life of Gandhi was an insurmountable task but this is what Ba managed to attain.

The book by Manisha Chaudhary attempts to give voice and greater meaning to the life of Ba and does an excellent job of reconstructing her life as the one who took part in the satyagraha alongside Gandhi and gave meaning to his ideas. Due to the paucity of material available, the task of writing a book on Kasturba Gandhi turns out to be a difficult one. But Chaudhary, by adopting the method of bio-fiction, creates a narrative

of pain and happiness in a manner, Chaudhary gives a glimpse into the personal life and in how Kasturba was involved in the satyagraha, the concerns and feelings of Ba as a young woman makes the reader aware of the challenges she faced, leading to footnotes.

Chaudhary in the book traces the life of Ba from birth to death and in a very detailed manner, she captures the spirit of Kasturba who was a remarkable testimony to the concerns and devoted life of a woman whose first glance can be seen but what Chaudhary does in her narrative to Kasturba's life is to trace the journey of Chaudhary traces the journey of a demure, limited within the life of a national figure in a way that we can peek into the childhood of a woman (popularly known as) from a young girl, married, living together and devoted for swaraj. The instances of her life are vivid descriptions which are often unseen and unimaginable in the life of Gandhi going to London and the separation between them, the longingness. She writes:

The two stood facing each other. Much as she tried, she could not look at her father to his mother. Mohandas and Hari. He was struck down and held over himself. He kissed her and was abandoned. Anguish rose like a storm, impossible.

The soul of the book lies in the dilemmas and turmoil in the times when Gandhi wanted to separate and the nomadic life.

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Pranta Pratik Patnaik

*of Culture & Media Studies
at University of Rajasthan
Seendri, Rajasthan, India
prantapratik@gmail.com*

Fiction. New Delhi, India:

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of pain and happiness in the hallowed imagination. In a very adept manner, Chaudhary gives voice to the life of Kasturba as a fighter both in personal life and in politics and she convinces the reader to appreciate how Kasturba was the source of inspiration for non-violence and satyagraha, the cornerstone of Gandhi's politics. Giving voice to the feelings of Ba as a young woman, wife, mother and a freedom fighter makes the reader aware of her life which had hitherto been reduced to footnotes.

Chaudhary in the book draws the life of Kasturba from her childhood to death and in a very intrinsic manner she sheds light on the fighting spirit of Kasturba who fought for the country and her family. The book is a remarkable testimony to a great woman who came out of her familial concerns and devoted herself to be a part of larger society. The book at first glance can be seen as running parallel to Gandhi's autobiography, but what Chaudhary does is to extrapolate the instances and give a narrative to Kasturba's feelings which have hitherto been missing. Chaudhary traces the journey of Kasturba from being young, shy and demure, limited within the confines of the home to being seen as a leader and a national figure in her own right. The book starts by giving us a peek into the childhood days of Kasturba and Moniya (as Gandhiji was popularly known as) from their playing days of fun and banter to getting married, living together and separately and being a part of India's quest for swaraj. The instances in the book is power packed with emotions and vivid descriptions which make the reader dwell on the life of Ba from unseen and unimaginable quarters. When Chaudhary narrates the event of Gandhi going to London to pursue his higher studies, the moment of separation between the husband and wife is laced with pain and longingness. She writes:

The two stood facing each other as if turned to stone. 'Don't go,' she cried. Much as she tried, she could not conceal her tears. Hari looked from his father to his mother. Mohandas did not speak but kissed both Kasturba and Hari. He was struck dumb. He stood there for two minutes till he got a hold over himself. He kissed Kasturba again and then he left, Kasturba felt abandoned. Anguish rose like a wave. It was not just hard to conceal, it was impossible.

The soul of the book lies in Chaudhary's ability to capture Kasturba's dilemmas and turmoil in the various stages of her martial life. From the times when Gandhi wanted to educate her, to the moments of long separation and the nomadic life when Ba had to settle in alien territories

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(in India and South Africa) and create a home away from home. More than anything what the text presents is Ba's resilience in every situation and her spirit to fight and emerge victorious against all odds. During some occasions, the changes in her husband's life made Ba feel that they were like two people on a race track. Giving voice to Ba's feelings Chaudhary writes, 'Why does this happen with women that they remain in the same spot while the man sprints ahead?' But more than anything, Chaudhary beautifully highlights how Ba was always supportive and the biggest pillar of strength in the life of Gandhi who with her firm resolve inspired Gandhi to lead the non-violent struggle. At a juncture when Gandhi's vision was marked with hopelessness, Kasturba said to her husband, 'Neither the court nor we can do anything. Hold on to it in your heart and bring it out when the time is right. When even raja Ravan had to go, do you think the Whites won't?'

The book, in giving description to Kasturba's life, deals with two pivotal narratives—one of Ba being a satyagrahi in sync with Gandhi's ideals and the troubled life and relation of her sons, especially her elder son Harilal Gandhi. Chaudhary talks about the pain that Ba always carried due to the differences between father and son and how that made her heart long to reunite with Harilal even in her deathbed. The uneasy relation between Gandhi and Harilal reveals to the reader the difficulties in the life of Ba while being married to Gandhi who paid little care to personal relationships but more to the idea of social justice. Giving voice to Ba's pain as a mother, Chaudhary writes:

The biggest canker in her soul was that he had broken all relations with Bapu and there was bitterness in his heart. When relationships break, they scatter like a bundle of broken threads. She prayed that he would find peace and happiness in India. He should understand that his father does not want him to be dispirited but wants to electrify him into action.

The journey of Kasturba from a young woman who was conscious about caste and gender roles to one who begins to look at the whole country as her family thus shattering all barriers is a major theme in the book. In the ashrams of both South Africa (Tolstoy Farm and Phoenix Settlement) and India (Sabarmati and Sevagram Ashram), Ba was at the centre of all activities and took up the responsibility of managing them in accordance with the rules. Ba was highly influenced by Gandhi's objectives, and the book tells us how she implemented them by spinning every day and urged other women in the country to spin on the charkha and weave so as to lay the foundation of a self-reliant society. Believing in the ideals of

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our early days, I used to mistake for obstinacy. But that strong will enabled her to become quite unwittingly my teacher in the art and practice of non-violent non-cooperation. The practice began with my own family.

Nitika Ladda

*Department of Political Science
Lady Sriram College, New Delhi, India
laddaniki@gmail.com*

her husband, she was participating in the Movement, which was participating in satyagraha ideas of the Constructive Movement at the forefront of activities. She took on the task of educating the masses.

A thorough reading of the book reveals the tribulations in the life of Kasturba who contributed to India's freedom struggle as a woman whose example was held up under the great work done by Gandhi to being the epitome of the freedom struggle. The life of Ba from a shy young girl to a woman who

However, what I find interesting is the various experiments that she tried such as Madeline Slade (Kasturba's second wife Saraladevi Chowdharar). Did these relationships bear and absorb them like a sponge when Gandhi decided to announce his decision to Kasturba, I wonder what her thoughts were. The book does not consider the idea that Kasturba was a celibate. Is it not important to know the vow of celibacy and how it affected women, does Chaudhary explore this?

The book does a great job of showing the mother and fighter. The book describes scenes which make the reader feel like Chaudhary describes beautiful moments in Gandhi's life which make us realize Gandhi ever had, which makes us realize in 1944. When Ba was on her deathbed, Gandhi was there at her bedside. Kasturba as an indivisible part of Gandhi's life in a vacuum in his life which could not be. Gandhi perhaps wrote the memoirs.

I feel the loss more than I have ever felt ordinary. It was in 1906 that

through the content of the book that 'modern newspaper journalism' in the form of the space is allocated to present an overview of the men who participated in the freedom struggle. The author misses out on the exploration of prevalent issues with the emerging colonial modernity remained. The book has two editors—Ray, a

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her husband, she was the first woman to go to prison in South Africa by participating in the satyagraha and that continued till the Quit India Movement, which was the last time Ba was sent to prison. In addition to participating in satyagraha, Kasturba was also highly involved in the ideas of the Constructive Programme as laid out by Gandhi. Ba was at the forefront of activism during the Champaran satyagraha, who took up the task of educating women and villagers on hygiene and cleanliness.

A thorough reading of the book makes one aware of the trials and tribulations in the life of Kasturba and her existence as a satyagrahi who contributed to India's quest for swaraj along her husband. It gives voice to a woman whose existence more often than not has been subsumed under the great work done by Gandhi. From charting her own discourse to being the epitome of non-violence and urging women to participate in the freedom struggle, Chaudhary does an excellent job in narrating the life of Ba from a shy young woman to a national leader.

However, what I find missing from the text is how did Kasturba take to the various experiments of Gandhi and his closeness to various women such as Madeline Slade (known as Mirabehn), Sushila Nayar and Saraladevi Chowdharani (whom Gandhi referred to as his 'spiritual wife'). Did these relationships not trouble Ba at all or did she choose to bear and absorb them like the other eccentricities of Gandhi? In addition, when Gandhi decided to take the vow of celibacy in 1906 it was merely announced to Kasturba, leaving no scope for discussion or understanding her thoughts. The book chooses to remain silent on this topic or even to consider the idea that Kasturba could have initiated Gandhi's desire to be a celibate. Is it not important to know what Kasturba's feelings were on the vow of celibacy and why, like other aspects of his relationship with women, does Chaudhary choose to remain silent on the issue?

The book does a great job in detailing the journey of Kasturba as a wife, mother and fighter. The book is laced with a humane touch and emotive scenes which make the reader feel the pain and happiness of Ba's life. Chaudhary describes beautifully that Ba was the closest companion that Gandhi ever had, which made him emotionally disturbed after her death in 1944. When Ba was on her death bed at the Agha Khan Place in Poona, Gandhi was there at her bedside attending to every detail. Gandhi saw Kasturba as an indivisible part of his life and after her death she left a vacuum in his life which could never be filled. In a letter to Lord Wavell, Gandhi perhaps wrote the most touching tribute to Kasturba:

I feel the loss more than I had thought I should. We were a couple outside the ordinary. It was in 1906 that after mutual consent and after unconscious trials

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we definitely adopted self-restraint as a rule of life. To my great joy this knit us together as never before. We ceased to be two different entities. Without my wishing it, she chose to lose herself in me. The result was that she became truly my *better* half. She was a woman always of very strong will which, in our early days, I used to mistake for obstinacy. But that strong will enabled her to become quite unwittingly my teacher in the art and practice of non-violent non-cooperation. The practice began with my own family.

Nitika Ladda

*Department of Political Science
Lady Sriram College, New Delhi, India
laddaniki@gmail.com*

✠ Sachidananda Mohanty, *Periodical Press and Colonial Modernity: Odisha, 1866–1936*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016. 143 pages. ₹595.

DOI: 10.1177/0971521520980866

Mohanty chooses the periodical lens as a significant pointer to emerging debates in the context of the advent of the British in Odisha in 1803, who opted to indirectly rule through arrangements worked out with the ‘Gadjat’ states, that is, the feudatory states/ kingdoms in this region. The book focuses on the context of 19th–20th century Odisha—through the lens of two publications—with the aim ‘to show how [the] periodical press shaped ideas and the material culture of a region, and in turn got metamorphosed by the play of contemporary cultural and ideological forces’ in Odisha (p. x). The periodicals are *Utkal Dipika*, a weekly founded in the year the great famine affected Odisha, and *Utkal Sahitya*, a literary periodical, started in 1897. It is argued that both were a response to ‘the need to safeguard the language and literature of the region’, thereby laying the context for a ‘contestatory discourse surrounding colonial and vernacular modernity’ (p. x).

The chapters discuss the rise of the periodical press in Odisha, with two of these specifically focusing on Gourishankar Ray and Biswanath Kar, respectively, the Editors of the two publications selected, apart from the Introduction which seeks to lay out the context. The founders of both are presented as ‘nativists and modernists who were open to ideas of change’. Justifying his choice of sources and subject, the author observes that ‘the periodical press has become axiomatic for reading social and cultural history today’ (p. 6) and that in Odisha

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Folklore and Nationalism
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While largely agreeing with her, it may be worth noting that such research lays the basis for a more informed debate on critical questions, such as: Was there scope for other, non-middle class perspectives on women to emerge within the broader frame of the national movement which provides the context for the study? What was the nature of the interactions between the Hindi public sphere and publishing in the vernacular and the project of pushing Hindu culture as the constitutive frame for this and other language-based enterprises? Also, what scope was there to frame questions, including of roles and conduct in pluralist frames from diverse locations?

Indu Agnihotri

Independent Researcher, Delhi
iagnihotri53@gmail.com

✓ Maitrayee Chaudhuri, *Refashioning India: Gender, Media, and a Transformed Public Discourse*. Hyderabad, India: Orient BlackSwan, 2017, 325 pages (hardcover). ISBN: 978-93-86689-00-9.

DOI: 10.1177/0971521520980857

Refashioning India is an aptly captivating title for the book under review that revolves around changing images and the recasting and representation of India through public discourse where the state, market and media play a crucial role. Gender becomes a common trope by which such discourses are created, managed and disseminated. One recurring theme that runs through this work is the rhetoric of creating a gender-equal/gender-just society and the sustenance of patriarchy through the politics of capitalism and neo-liberalism. The compilation of 11 essays in the book is an outcome of the author's continuous engagement, close and meticulous observation of the Indian political economy and expansion of media.

The book can be read into two inter-connected parts—gender discourses in the pre-liberalization and post-liberalization eras. The first two essays complement each other in a sense that one deals with the textual analysis of gender equality in government documents and the second essay looks at the status of women during the early years of Indian nationalism. Tracing the origin of state engagement with the question of gender, the first essay 'Citizens, Workers, Emblems of Culture: An Analysis

of the First Plan Document on Women' critically analyses the first plan document on Indian women prepared by the sub-committee on Women's Role in Planned Economy. This document recognized the entry of women into production as a means to end the inequality meted out to them. However, female participation in the workforce did not ensure their freedom from household chores, thereby reinforcing the public/private dichotomy. Women who worked out of their homes were viewed as potentially disruptive of the domestic as well as the 'social' order. This reflected a half-hearted effort by the makers of the document towards a discourse of gender equality without questioning the patriarchal norms related to family and marriage that confine women to the domestic sphere. The second essay 'Gender in the Making of the Indian Nation-State' highlights the dilemmas of Indian women at crossroads: Chaudhuri cites the example of several government schemes—community development, rural development, applied nutrition programme, home science extension programme—that enthusiastically celebrated the tokenism of women's empowerment and gender equality. Their failure lay in attempts to incorporate women as agents of development, reiterating the conventional role of women as dutiful wives and mothers. The author argues that women as a collective rather than an individual unit became the project of the apparently 'neutral' liberal state discourse.

The next three essays (Chapters 4–6) capture the 'shift' in public discourse regarding gender in a mediated post-liberalization era. There is more emphasis on terms like 'freedom' and 'choice' in the language of advertisements, both print and visual, where the Indian woman became an integral part of the consumption process. She is no longer the one who only sacrifices but rather indulges in conspicuous consumption to fulfil her needs and wants. The new image is that of a 'modern' woman who is a part of a global process yet one who retains a few cultural traditions. The author argues that in such (mis)representation of women, the media images displace a large section of the population that could not be a part of this consumption process.

The key argument in these essays is how certain terms like freedom and choice are lifted from the women's movement and appropriated in a different context to express the emergence of a liberalized 'self' that suits the project of a 'market-friendly feminism' (p. 118). It also needs to be stressed that the rise of Hindu right-wing politics during this period ensured a bifurcation between traditional and western feminism—the former associated with the social reform movement and the latter to the individual agency of women in matters of consumption.

The major argument is to understand the media, ideas of a 'transformed' public, gradual seeping in facilitated by market. She cites the example, emphasizes their role that have taken place particularly Dalit assertion. On the other hand, the 'corporate feminism' effort for emancipatory choices. The 'hypervisible' became the hallmark patriarchal values imposed.

There was also a section on Indians (NRIs) have taken growth of media as a in the second last chapter after "Nirbhaya": Instance during the reportage. Media channelized the were multiple sites where safety were discussed to be 'a product of western'. On the other hand, guide organizations, considered of the drawbacks in the chapter 'The 2014 Gender Discourse and the New in preparing the group where gender issues were return to the previous section much talked about than problematic and demand greater gender-just social *Transformed Public Discourse* politics involved in the hybrid

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ically analyses the first plan sub-committee on Women's recognized the entry of women quality meted out to them. ce did not ensure their free- forcing the public/private air homes were viewed as l as the 'social' order. This of the document towards a ning the patriarchal norms men to the domestic sphere. : Indian Nation-State' high- roads: Chaudhuri cites the community development, e, home science extension the tokenism of women's e lay in attempts to incor- terating the conventional . The author argues that unit became the project of

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tain terms like freedom nt and appropriated in a peralized 'self' that suits (18). It also needs to be itics during this period western feminism—the ent and the latter to the nption.

The major argument in the early essays of the second part of the book is to understand the socio-economic changes that have impinged on the media, ideas of nationalism and feminism, and most importantly a 'transformed' public. The predominance of media and market and their gradual seeping into the public consciousness, the author argues, is facilitated by market research that draws heavily from textual knowledge. She cites the example of how images of women in the Indian family emphasizes their role in the Hindu joint family despite several changes that have taken place in family structure. The rise of subaltern politics, particularly Dalit assertions, questions the legitimacy of the nation-state. On the other hand, the rise of corporate globalization has given rise to 'corporate feminism' (p. 185) where feminism is no longer a collective effort for emancipation rather is implied through individualized lifestyle choices. The 'hypervisibility' of women in media as 'free' and 'liberated' became the hallmark to justify India's economic reform, neo-liberal patriarchal values immersed in the discourses of consumption.

There was also a shift in the category of 'public' where non-resident Indians (NRIs) have become the part of an extended public sphere. The growth of media as a legitimate agent of the public, the author adds, in the second last chapter, 'National and Global Media Discourse after "Nirbhaya": Instant Access and Unequal Knowledge' was evident during the reportage of the 'Nirbhaya' rape case in December 2012. Media channelized the public outrage to question the government. There were multiple sites where discourses on gender violence and women's safety were discussed—even to the extent of rape being considered to be 'a product of westernisation' (p. 245). The global discourse, on the other hand, guided by international human and gender rights organizations considered the vulnerability of women in India as one of the drawbacks in the brand image of global India. The concluding chapter 'The 2014 General Elections and Afterwards: A Churning Public Discourse and the New Hegemony' shows how this case was pivotal in preparing the ground for the 2014 general elections in India where gender issues were in focus during election campaigns. There is a return to the previous situation where the idea of 'gender equality' is much talked about than acted upon to achieve it. It, therefore, becomes problematic and demands scrutiny as it does not necessarily add up to a greater gender-just society. *Refashioning India: Gender, Media, and a Transformed Public Discourse* provides a nuanced understanding of the politics involved in the hyper visibility of gender discourses. Chaudhuri's

discussions and analyses are extremely valuable in an environment where it is increasingly necessary to ensure that gender retains its centrality within public discourse.

Pranta Pratik Patnaik

*Department of Culture & Media Studies
Central University of Rajasthan
Bandar Seendri, Rajasthan, India
prantapratik@gmail.com*

Manisha Chaudhary, *Kasturba Gandhi: A Bio-Fiction*. New Delhi, India: Niyogi Books, 2018. 424 pages, ₹795.

DOI: 10.1177/0971521520980858

The life and work of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi as the architect of India's Swaraj in the fight against colonialism has been one of the most prolific subjects of academic discourse. While his political activities have always been at the centre of scrutiny, yet aspects of his personal life were largely seen as unimpeachable by both scholars and his critics. The wealth of published material deals in detail with Gandhi's philosophy and activism but the majority of these works do not mention the role of Kasturba Gandhi in shaping the trajectory of Gandhian politics. At the age of 13, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was married to Kasturbai Makhanji in 1883 and they were to live for 62 years as a married couple. Popularly known as Ba, Kasturba does find mention in Gandhi's autobiography *My Experiments with Truth* wherein Gandhi describes their relation as marked by love and jealousy. Yet, there is hardly any literature available for a scholar willing to dig deeper into the life of this formidable woman who moved with him constantly, invested herself in the politics of Gandhi, went to jail in South Africa and India and was a devoted wife and mother in all respects. To be able to carve out an independent existence amidst the life of Gandhi was an insurmountable task but this is what Ba managed to attain.

The book by Manisha Chaudhary attempts to give voice and greater meaning to the life of Ba and does an excellent job of reconstructing her life as the one who took part in the satyagraha alongside Gandhi and gave meaning to his ideas. Due to the paucity of material available, the task of writing a book on Kasturba Gandhi turns out to be a difficult one. But Chaudhary, by adopting the method of bio-fiction, creates a narrative

of pain and happiness in a manner, Chaudhary gives a glimpse into her life and in how Kasturba was the backbone of the satyagraha, the cornerstones of the feelings of Ba as a woman makes the reader aware of the details to footnotes.

Chaudhary in the book traces the life of Kasturba from her death and in a very intimate spirit of Kasturba who is a remarkable testimony of concerns and devoted her life. At first glance can be seen but what Chaudhary does in her narrative to Kasturba's life. Chaudhary traces the journey of Kasturba, limited within the framework of a national figure in the past and peek into the childhood (popularly known as) from her married, living together and her role for swaraj. The instances of vivid descriptions which are unseen and unimaginable of Gandhi going to London and the separation between the longings. She writes:

The two stood facing each other. Much as she tried, she could not say a word to her father to his mother. Mohandas and Hari. He was struck down and held over himself. He kissed her and abandoned. Anguish rose in her heart, impossible.

The soul of the book lies in the dilemmas and turmoil in the times when Gandhi wanted separation and the nomadic

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Shobna Nijhawan, *Hindi Publishing in Colonial Lucknow: Gender, Genre, and Visuality in the Creation of a Literary 'Canon'*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018. 240 pages. ₹1,495.

In *Hindi Publishing in Colonial Lucknow*, Nijhawan takes forward ideas and research first put forward and explored in her earlier work on *Women and Girls in the Hindi Public Sphere*, published in 2012. This had focused on the emergence of periodicals for women and girls in Hindi, to argue that these helped shape nationalist feminist thought in the early 20th century. While the earlier volume traced the story of the emergence of the idiom and thought with reference to women's periodicals, the present work expands the canvas to Hindi publishing and the Hindi literary sphere, with Lucknow as the centre. For those unfamiliar with this world, it may help to know that the emergence of Hindi periodicals and publishing in Lucknow—till then known more for its Urdu press—was in itself a significant development, extending the frontiers beyond Benares and Allahabad. The book is written on the lines of a biography of the Ganga Pustak Mala (GPM), a publishing house which came into prominence between the 1920s and 1940s, under the stewardship of its editor-publisher Dulare Lal Bhargava, along with Rupnarayan Pandey, and the periodical *Sudha*, an illustrated literary, social and political monthly. It explores how 'an influential periodical and an aspiring average-sized publishing house contributed to the nationalization of certain aspects of middle-class identity, Hindu culture, and Hindi literature' (p. 223). Going further, it shows how this process contributed towards the 'formation of a historically contingent "canon" or repository of knowledge' (p. 223). The book engages with women and their roles in a Hindi mainstream literary periodical.

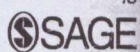
Nijhawan combines hard empirical research with an intricate interweave to present an argument which tells a micro-story which feeds into

a meta-narrative. Drawing sphere, she has chosen to af focusing on the genre of t publishing industry as a cc canon at an interesting co middle-class modernity, the phase in the assertion of col

The theorization of the ge our, although it emerges as a that 'it was in the periodic activities concerning the Hi social reforms and the polit published, promoted and de story is well-researched. As in building a distribution ne India to 'constantly conquer information about the vibra publishing scene' (p. 58).

However, it is in the unf whose first and several othe the drink being offered by a the fact that Nijhawan is treac grain is her forte. The insight of the visual representations plexity of the women at the ce chooses instead to move into 'canon' formation in the lite Chapter 3 on Literature for M issues and pages of *Sudha* to Hindi literature, its different p and an introduction to the Ind tion where the Hindi-Urdu t unity is brought in with a nua displayed in the section on E: Women, Nijhawan notes that layout for *Sudha* was announc shift towards the female read recognized, at least temporarily (p. 145). This resulted not only series edited by Shrimati Krisc cations for women going up f

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Lucknow: Gender, Genre, and the Public Sphere. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Nijhawan takes forward ideas from her earlier work on *Women and the Public Sphere* in 2012. This had focused on girls in Hindi, to argue that the public sphere in the early 20th century. The emergence of the idiom of the periodicals, the present work on the Hindi literary sphere, with its roots in this world, it may help to understand publishing in Lucknow— Lucknow itself a significant development in Allahabad. The book is published by GPM (GPM), a publisher between the 1920s and 1930s. Her Dulare Lal Bhargava, a periodical *Sudha*, an illustrated magazine how ‘an influential periodical house contributed to the formation of a new identity, Hindu culture, and shows how this process is highly contingent “canon” or negotiates with women and colonialism.

The book is filled with an intricate inter-relationship which feeds into

a meta-narrative. Drawing on her familiarity with the Hindi public sphere, she has chosen to approach the problem at a more complex level, focusing on the genre of the periodical, the structure of the evolving publishing industry as a commercial enterprise and the formation of a canon at an interesting juncture with regard to the intersection of middle-class modernity, the articulation of nationalist voices and a new phase in the assertion of colonial power.

The theorization of the genre of the periodical is an interesting endeavour, although it emerges as a rather belaboured exercise. Nijhawan’s point that ‘it was in the periodical that Hindi literary productions and other activities concerning the Hindi public sphere, such as language politics, social reforms and the political emancipation of women and men, were published, promoted and developed’ (p. 2) bears merit. The GPM Press story is well-researched. As also the significant part played by Bhargava in building a distribution network in major towns and cities of British India to ‘constantly conquer new markets’ (p. 58) even as he ‘circulated information about the vibrant emerging national and vernacular book publishing scene’ (p. 58).

However, it is in the unfolding and evolution of *Sudha* (a monthly whose first and several other front-cover illustrations depicted *sudha*, the drink being offered by a woman) that the book disappoints, despite the fact that Nijhawan is treading familiar ground and reading against the grain is her forte. The insights based on textual description and analysis of the visual representations lay the ground for interrogating the complexity of the women at the centre of this enterprise. However, Nijhawan chooses instead to move into a techno-theoretical mode to explore the ‘canon’ formation in the literary enterprise for middle-class readers. Chapter 3 on Literature for Middle Class Readers meanders through the issues and pages of *Sudha* to offer a short-guided tour of a history of Hindi literature, its different phases, linguistic streams, prominent faces and an introduction to the Indian short story. There is an interesting section where the Hindi–Urdu theme and the subject of Hindu–Muslim unity is brought in with a nuanced approach which the editors of *Sudha* displayed in the section on Essays on Politics. In the *Mahila Mala* for Women, Nijhawan notes that in 1931 when a new design and column layout for *Sudha* was announced, not only did the periodical witness ‘a shift towards the female reader ... but GPM Karyalay (GPMK) also recognized, at least temporarily, the need of suitable books for women...’ (p. 145). This resulted not only in the *Mahila Mala* (Garland for women) series edited by Shrimati Krishna Kumari but also the number of publications for women going up from 7 in September 1927 to 18 in June

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1932. These books were considered to be 'suitable gifts for the reading pleasure of daughters and wives', the author observes.

Chapter 4 explores Canon Formation with specific reference to *Sudha's* Repository of Knowledge. This is woven around concerns of the cultural history of the decades leading up to independence, the parameters of nationalist discourses on language, literature and identity, which found closure and which remained unresolved. Also considered is how did the period between the 1920s and 1940s 'bring to the fore a second wave of efforts to nationalize and modernize Indian traditions and to perhaps even "actualize" the nation' (p. 153). In fact, the chapter offers a rich description of the contents and illustrations in *Sudha*, with sections on: Hindustani Classical music, prose, poetry, readers' submissions, science and curiosities, art and painting, social and domestic advice columns, social reforms, women's society, cookery, child-rearing, home remedies, health, needlework, exercise, satirical humour, art prints, photographs, cartoons (political, social, literary) and satire, book reviews and editorials.

The source material Nijhawan puts together is awe-inspiring, as also the worlds she straddles, of Hindi literature, printing and publishing along with the running thread of a discussion on genre, structure and theory, specifically with regard to the reading of texts. However, given that this is an 'inquiry into what constituted textual knowledge and the visual presentation thereof in the early twentieth century Hindi literary sphere', (p. 224) Nijhawan misses out on exploring the questions that emerge from her narrative.

Citing Stuart Blackburn (Blackburn, Print, Folklore and Nationalism in Colonial South India, Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003, 2-3) Nijhawan observes that 'print did not create a rift in oral tradition and literary culture, but bridged both' (p. 225). She argues that while the visuals in *Sudha* called for women's professionalization in private and public spheres, they at the same time 'kept emancipatory movements for women under tight control of men' (p. 225). The act of making visible was not necessarily empowering or giving space to women's voices, she observes. *Sudha*, along with other contemporary periodicals in Hindi, including women's journals, 'shared a common goal: the creation and development of Hindi public spheres. They all brought their unique and creative approaches to their publishing projects....their projects were mutually inspiring and became orientation posts for those to follow' (p. 227). The author notes that case studies, such as this one of *Sudha*, are 'exciting, significant and necessary for the study of colonial, cultural and vernacular literary histories of South Asia' (p. 227).

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While largely agreeing with her, it may be worth noting that such research lays the basis for a more informed debate on critical questions, such as: Was there scope for other, non-middle class perspectives on women to emerge within the broader frame of the national movement which provides the context for the study? What was the nature of the interactions between the Hindi public sphere and publishing in the vernacular and the project of pushing Hindu culture as the constitutive frame for this and other language-based enterprises? Also, what scope was there to frame questions, including of roles and conduct in pluralist frames from diverse locations?

Indu Agnihotri

Independent Researcher, Delhi
iagnihotri53@gmail.com

Maitrayee Chaudhuri, *Refashioning India: Gender, Media, and a Transformed Public Discourse*. Hyderabad, India: Orient BlackSwan, 2017, 325 pages (hardcover). ISBN: 978-93-86689-00-9.

DOI: 10.1177/0971521520980857

Refashioning India is an aptly captivating title for the book under review that revolves around changing images and the recasting and representation of India through public discourse where the state, market and media play a crucial role. Gender becomes a common trope by which such discourses are created, managed and disseminated. One recurring theme that runs through this work is the rhetoric of creating a gender-equal/gender-just society and the sustenance of patriarchy through the politics of capitalism and neo-liberalism. The compilation of 11 essays in the book is an outcome of the author's continuous engagement, close and meticulous observation of the Indian political economy and expansion of media.

The book can be read into two inter-connected parts—gender discourses in the pre-liberalization and post-liberalization eras. The first two essays complement each other in a sense that one deals with the textual analysis of gender equality in government documents and the second essay looks at the status of women during the early years of Indian nationalism. Tracing the origin of state engagement with the question of gender, the first essay 'Citizens, Workers, Emblems of Culture: An Analysis

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Masculinities and Hierarchies in Haryana

SONAM GOYAL

The volume under review, *Gender, Power and Identity: Essays on Masculinities in Rural North India* by Prem Chowdhry, is a collection of essays based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork over several years in the state of Haryana. The book highlights the debates on gender binaries and how they are shaped and moulded with the help of folklore, customs, and societal laws under a patriarchal system. The essays range from a historical account of the making of “martial castes,” to the upward mobility of the lower castes, thus creating fissures in the society. Chowdhry has discussed different facets of masculinity in her book. In the introduction to the book, she has laid down the themes constructing a male, his space, his powers, and his limitations. The intersectional and relational linkages between different genders have been highlighted throughout the book.

Gender is an identity that is reproduced with experiences and repetition of certain acts which have popular support of those who wield power in society (Butler 1988). As per this structural division of labour, men have been made breadwinners and decision-makers while women have been consigned to unpaid domestic labour; which leads to endorsement of patriarchal desires like male-child preference and moral policing. Hence, something which is considered as an individual act is, in fact, borne out of the hegemonic power structure.

Chowdhry's arguments can be classified into three broader themes: first, construction of masculinity; second, exclusive ownership of spaces; and third, hierarchies between men based on different parameters.

Construction of Masculinity

Chowdhry has aptly articulated that essentialism informs debates on gender.

BOOK REVIEWS

Gender, Power and Identity: Essays on Masculinities in Rural North India by Prem Chowdhry, Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2019; pp vii + 288, ₹795.

Gender-based attribution of qualities—such as men are violent, well-built, and less religious, while women are caring, devout, and weak—are propositions to create binaries and are analysed in the book. Haryana historically, stayed under combat from different invaders and, hence, a community of “natural warriors” exists there. While constructing the concept of “masculinity,” she has held the British responsible for differentiating between the labour of army men and those men working in fields. Chowdhry argues that agriculture in Haryana was unsustainable and, hence, income was ensured only via service in the army. The army offered prestige, honour, and income to men. Relevance of patriotism in such martial castes was and is encouraged because only a “true man” can protect his motherland. Hence, all those “warriors” became patriots, while those serving the nation in other ways were mocked.

Apart from muscular strength, education ensured upward mobility of a man too. Chowdhry explains this through the example of her grandfather who rose in status through education and faced the dilemma of the rural youth: till the land or pursue a job after education. Just like army men, an educated man also became “man enough” with a rise in their status and material prosperity. Such men received higher dowry, marking their “masculine stature” in the society. However, the contest for status between men involved in martial and non-martial employment continued unabated.

To become a “man” in Haryana, one has to marry, and knowing the skewed

sex ratio in Haryana, it is not always easy. The author gives a detailed account of the many ways in which men seek a bride: bride price, levirate marriages,¹ secondary alliances, and so on. There are also instances where “groom price” is sought in order to imitate the upper caste, especially among Jats. Chowdhry presents a complex analysis where those who fail to get married become the muscle power for the Khaps and implement diktats on couples who disobey the rules of the “traditional panchayat.” This is complex because on the one hand, the gap between the number of men and women obstructs options for marriage and, on the other hand, caste diktats are flouted in the cases of secondary alliances, thereby giving an upper hand to caste leadership in deciding marital matters. Ideas of hypogamous, hypergamous, and isogamous marriages are reasons for complications in the rural society of Haryana. One can deduce that customary laws and norms are manipulated in the favour of the upper class and castes considered superior.

She argues that masculinity is an ideological construct in a patriarchal setting through which power is exercised over women and those on the margins of the caste hierarchy. Offering advice is a male prerogative in rural Haryana. Men can be bullied for being considerate to the women of the household. Violence is eulogised as a male trait in all circumstances and one becomes a “mard” when he beats his wife, or avenges the “honour” of the entire community by turning a legally wed couple into siblings, or uses foul language to mock other men. Violence is portrayed as a family matter, but Chowdhry points to the public approval in most cases, especially those involving a spectacle. Violence is thought to act as a deterrent, but it is hardly the case. She has claimed that “honour” is not just cultural; rather, it has a material and social worth attached to it as well. This is well explained in the book.

Is Everything a ‘Male Space’?

Chowdhry describes the village as a “male” space because women either are married off or married to someone from the

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village and are, hence, considered lesser residents and unsuitable for inheritance. In a village, there are spaces demarcated as public or private. Within these are spaces which are considered reserved "naturally" for males. This public-private dichotomy is intrinsic to debates on gender. Taking it further, the author divides the house into three: the core of the house is *baithak* where all decisions are taken and it is an exclusively male space; *ghar* is dedicated to women and, hence, no man prefers staying longer than needed in the *ghar*; and the area where cattle is kept and fed is called *gher*. The public extension of *baithak* is known as the *chaupal*. It is the common property of the village people, but it is accessible only to males. Women participate only when they are summoned for any dispute or called as an official member of the panchayat or are *anganwadi* workers. If one tries to assert statutory authority, then there is retaliation and violence. Chowdhry argues that women's representation is mere tokenism. However, before denouncing the work done by women representatives, one should analyse the changes in the policies and implementation in places where women are elected (Young 1997).

Public spaces are described as those where pleasure activities are undertaken, and which are "no-woman zones." One such place is around the *hukka*. Second is the *akharas*, which are portrayed as exclusive male space for sports. Features like strength, aggression, and hunger for success are attributed to males and, hence, only they should play this sport. Girls are discouraged as it is assumed to make them masculine and unfit as women. Drinking is considered a social activity, which can be enjoyed only by men in open spaces and where women should not be loitering. The author articulates it as "masculine collectivity" being formed. One should ask: What about those "men" who are not part of these public spaces? Are they considered "man enough"? A consequent explanation of this could have helped provide a better understanding of this.

Hierarchies in Being a 'Man'

Chapter 1 creates masculinity by giving it a physical attribute, while by Chapter 2 education gets linked to it. However, this

division unsettled the caste dynamics of Haryana. It was no longer the upper caste holding power; rather, the "martial castes" defined "honour" as well. For example, Jats, who are a dominant-cum-martial caste in Haryana, were classified as a tribe in the 19th century and became a caste in 1931. They were clubbed with the Sudras for judicial purposes and called an "agricultural tribe" for administrative, political, and economic purposes. Chowdhry adroitly maps the reshaping of the existing social structure due to reservation by the state which redefined these categories from legal and political perspectives. Therefore, it is evident that complications arising out of such colonial classification were not resolved uniformly; instead, they were "managed" contextually.

One can infer that "honour," prestige, and manhood depend on power relations and regional variations, and lower castes are kept behind in claiming any stake. The dominant castes look down upon Dalits and have been violent and aggressive towards them for decades. The upward mobility attained by the Dalit community owing to socio-economic reforms, which has led to inter-caste marriages and economic advancement due to reservation in government posts, has caused discomfort to the upholders of traditional caste hierarchies, leading to violence in many instances.

In matters related to caste, Haryana presents an interesting case where Chowdhry has distinguished between "mard" and "mardangi" in her book where the former is a quality which comes with land, property, and social status, while the latter is proven with the number of offspring one can reproduce. The author explains that homosexuals are accepted in Haryana but not promoted because they can never procreate and are, hence, discriminated against. A man has leverage as the blame of non-reproduction is always on the woman. This unproductive nature can cause distress for a man who is unable to perform. Judith Butler's (1988) argument on performativity creating gender seems apt for such traits given to men.

According to the author, age and experience denote rational thinking for people in Haryana. The young are considered

immature or desexualised and are, hence, under the aegis of the elderly. Hierarchy among men is further analysed through employment, which determines the marriage prospects for a man and, in turn, his "manliness." Unemployed men in rural areas either have to settle for a lesser match or no marriage at all, leading to frustration. The author brings in the aspect of "jobless growth" in the economy where education does not guarantee a respectable job and agriculture is not an option anymore. Many unemployed men are forced to submit to the customary laws of "traditional panchayat" as they are economically dependent on these elders, therefore raising doubts on their masculinity. Rapid urbanisation without simultaneous development has triggered an "insider-outsider" debate in Haryana, forcing another sense of exclusion. The author connects these frustrations, leading to increased crimes against girls in Haryana.

In a situation like this, the state is invoked which believes in egalitarianism, citizenship, and universal principles. However, when people from different backgrounds get recruited by the state, they corrupt the system with the bias ingrained in them socially. This contradiction is played out when a man/woman privileges the social sphere of the village over the secular sphere of the state. In cases of caste violence, the state's intervention has been identified as context-specific and not principled and seems a plausible reason for the strengthening of the traditional panchayat in Haryana. From the sarpanch to the chief minister, most of them cater to these caste affiliations and shirk from legal interventions. The tension between the "traditional panchayat" and the "statutory panchayat" is well articulated in the text. Yet, the resolution of the same is far from reality and one can see controversies on an everyday basis.

In Conclusion

We can sum up with a few questions which have remained untouched in the book: What kind of relationship exists between the upper caste and lower caste and within the lower caste between those that are not dominant in numbers or wealth? With such scarcity of eligible women for marriage, how are people

affording dowry? If representation does not mean redistribution of power in decision-making, then what solution will the author offer? The changing pattern in the caste panchayat should have been highlighted more as it is important to see the processes of hierarchy and dominance being broken. In the end, Chowdhry could have shed light on why certain dominant castes could attain the social

status of "honourable castes" while many within the lower castes were excluded.

Sonam Goyal (sonamgoyal0786@gmail.com) teaches at the Institute for Excellence in Higher Education, Bhopal.

NOTE

- 1 Karewa or levirate marriages in Haryanvi rural society was/is a common feature where a widow is married to the immediate younger brother or elder brother, or even in few cases to the father

of the deceased. This was done to embolden the common blood line theory among all the agnatic males of the family.

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A History of the Socially Excluded in Odisha

SANCHITA BAKSHI

The unique contribution of Biswamoy Pati's posthumous volume is its intimate rendering of Dalit and Adivasi lives. Pati moves away from the method of "everyday" or "spectacular protest," to explore, rather modestly, survival strategies. What does this complex survival life entail? What are the ways in which the Dalits and Adivasis live and push back against dominant orders? Drawing on rich archival and ethnographic material, spanning an extensive range of themes, the book places Odisha's "marginal people" at the centre of its analysis, providing a nuanced view of their interactions with the dominant sections.

Colonial Agrarian Interventions

Chapter 1 of the book situates the political economy context in which survival strategies are embedded. Pati argues that foremost amongst the changes introduced by the British were land revenue settlement policies. Hitherto unsurveyed tracts were marked, classified and land was accorded a new legal status as "property" that could be owned and controlled and from which more rent could be extracted. Plough cultivation was expanded in areas which were accustomed to shifting cultivation practices. Forested reserves, too, witnessed unprecedented entrenchment of British administrative system, undermining the influence of local tribal chiefs and village-level institutions.

Tribals and Dalits in Orissa: Towards a Social History of Exclusion, c 1800-1950 by Biswamoy Pati, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019; pp 248, ₹945.

In parts of the coastal tracts (Puri, Cuttack and Balasore), which were directly administered by the British, summary land settlements were undertaken. However, in several princely states, land settlements had more permanent basis. Tribal chiefs were incorporated through settlement policies and Brahminical caste system as "tributary chiefs" (princes) along with sections of "outsiders" who were settled as zamindars (p 5). Contrary to popular belief, this was not merely a matter of "formalising" traditional structures of power but one where a colonial support base was carefully nurtured and patronised. Backed by colonial overlords, several of these feudal chiefs exacted large revenue from the tribals and agriculturalists, earning these areas the epithet of *andharua mulak* or dark zones (p 5).

Diversity in Integration

Chapter 2 weaves an excellent account of the divergent strategies adopted by colonial capitalism for its growth and sustenance. Starting with Puri, Pati argues that in the early years, British search for legitimacy led them to Jagannath who was created the "presiding deity" of Odisha. Obtaining sanction from "Him" and negotiating with his

representatives, namely the Brahmins and the Raja of Puri, formed the basis of British entry. Celebrations like the annual *rathajatra* ritualised power structures, while playing a crucial role in urbanising the pilgrim town. Puri was an important source of revenue which came in the form of pilgrim tax. "Pilgrim hunters" made a living travelling all over the country, lending money to pilgrims (at 4 annas for every rupee), and securing promissory notes that pilgrims would pay upon their return. The "pilgrim invasion" in Puri translated not only in the transformation of demographics during the period of the *rathajatra*, but also the transformation of the religious town into a town of lodging houses where every resident was a "lodging house keeper." In these makeshift arrangements people slept in rooms with "perfect strangers." "We are told about forced recruitment of prostitutes by the dalals of central India and the sexual exploitation of women by the pandas (priests) of Puri" (p 44). In the process, Pati explains the condition of the town as it lived through massive famines and cholera epidemic compelling the British to inaugurate the Badadanda drainage scheme in 1891. Resonant with present-day concerns of "sanitising" cities, several laws came up to forcibly remove poor from public spaces for the "safety" of society (Bengal Leper Act, 1895). These social transformations bore spatial manifestation with the emergence of "two Puris" racially partitioned between the "good" and sanitary inner "sanatorium" of the white, and the remaining belonging to the natives.

In contrast, the entry of British in the princely state of Kalahandi owed much to the early discourse of the civilising

lentil (1.6 mt). The growth was spread over sub-Saharan Africa, North America, Australia, India and Myanmar. Based on the database for the period 2003–05 to 2013–15, the chapter presents projections of consumption, production, exports and imports for the triennium ending 2025. The model used for projections used data from 162 countries, and given the limitations of data in many countries, there may be deviations from the achieved performance. Going by the data available for recent years for India (GoI 2018, 2019) the projections made for 2025 appear to be quite off the mark. This may be largely due to the nature of the past data and the assumptions flowing from it. For instance, projected output of pulses for 2025 in India is 23.5 mt, and imports for the same year is placed at 4.3 mt. But the actual data show that the surge in production of pulses achieved during 2000–16 continued in the past few years as well. By 2017–18 the production reached 25.52 mt (GoI 2018). This was achieved due to horizontal expansion of area under pulses, and vertically in increasing the

yield levels of pulse crops. Between 2015–16 and 2017–18, the overall area under pulses increased by about 18% or 4.54 mh. While earlier the area increase was due to extension of chickpea to new areas, the recent increase in area is due to expansion of area under urad, tur and chickpea. During this short period, production increased by about 42%, from 16.32 mt to 25.42 mt (GoI 2019). Apart from the area increase, increase in yields contributed substantially to the growth of production. The yield of chickpea increased from 840 kg per hectare to 1,078, tur from 646 kg per hectare to 940, lentil from 705 to 1,034 and urad from 604 to 655 (GoI 2018).

The report under review is, perhaps, a first major comprehensive account at one place about the global production, trade and consumption of pulses. Of the two related aspects of pulses in the beginning of the report, the one on the nutritional dimension receives considerable attention, but the other relating to the contribution of root nodules of pulses fixing biological nitrogen and the potential of pulses substituting animal proteins

and together their contribution to sustainable agriculture in the context of climate change, it would be highly desirable to have yet another report from the authors.

D Narasimha Reddy (duvurunarasimha@gmail.com) taught economics at the University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad.

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Citizenship and Women's Agency On the Responsibility of Calibration

AARDRA SURENDRAN

Natasha Behl's crisp volume, *Gendered Citizenship: Understanding Gendered Violence in Democratic India*, seeks to contribute to the discussion on women's religious collectivisation and citizenship in the context of Punjab. The central focus in the book is on women's unequal experience of citizenship and their attempts to negotiate with this inequality. Behl seeks to establish a "line of sight" on sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV) of varying intensities, ranging from the heinous sexual assault and murder of Jyoti Singh in Delhi in 2012 to the constraints on women's religious practice gleaned also through the author's own experience in Punjab. The book argues that while such

Gendered Citizenship: Understanding Gendered Violence in Democratic India by Natasha Behl, New York: Oxford University Press, 2019; pp xi + 172, price not indicated.

violence may not appear comparable in terms of their intensities, there exists a common logic, of denying women full democratic participation in public spaces, that is at play in each of these instances, rendering citizenship an incomplete or even risky project for all women in India. Behl advances the framework of "situated citizenship" to explicate the gap that exists between the formal imagination and actual existence of citizenship, and terms the lived reality that results from such situatedness as "exclusionary inclusion."

Organised into six chapters, the volume seeks to integrate some debates on the failed promise of citizenship for marginalised sections, on the lacunae within mainstream political science in understanding the everyday operation of citizenship, and on women's agency in dealing with constraints imposed by the state as well as the community. The first two chapters establish the conceptual and methodological backdrop of the study, wherein the author makes a case for situated citizenship as a methodological approach to overcome the gender blindness of mainstream literature on citizenship and democratisation. Chapter 3 reviews some literature on the relationship between the state, law, and religion in India and points out how women's bodies have often been the sites of this contest. The chapter provides an overview of the rape and murder of Singh in 2012 and examines state and judicial responses to it. It also carries the responses of some legislators and office bearers of certain political parties to the incident,

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which highlight rampant patriarchy. By using these to establish the failure of legislative and constitutional mechanisms to ensure women's freedom, Behl advances the case for examining religion as a site of potential democracy for women.

Chapters 4 and 5 carry forward this attempt through ethnographic fieldwork carried out over a decade. The chapter documents Sikh respondents' attitudes to the state, secularism, and gender rights as well as three Sikh women's attempts to carve out a space of public religiosity through the establishment of women's devotional groups within a patriarchal religious organisation.

Behl makes a case for considering Sikh women's religious organisation as an attempt on their part at claiming their right to public participation, and in so doing advancing the republican take on participatory democracy and citizenship. She also points out that such participation is by nature a contradictory process in which women simultaneously breach and embrace various patriarchal norms, as action of this kind is not of the nature of struggle, but of the nature of negotiation. The final chapter summarises conclusions of the preceding chapters and provides an autobiographical entry point into the main question. The author notes how her examination of the relationship between women's bodies and public places, and of citizenship which in a sense mediates the two, was sharpened by her experience at her grandmother's funeral, where she was denied entry into the cremation site as she was a woman. Behl highlights the value of autoethnographic approaches in uncovering aspects of lived citizenship which mainstream political science refuses to engage with, and challenges the discipline to adopt newer approaches to knowledge production. The bold juxtaposition of contexts and the passionate call for methodological reorientation render the book a provocative fervour.

Formal and Substantive Democracy

The persistence of inequalities in democracy, despite the existence of constitutional guarantees, is not a contradiction specific to the Indian scenario. Neither is

it a new or unacknowledged contradiction within the writing (or social action) on this theme. That it appears further cleaved along the lines of inequality relevant to national contexts (class, race, caste, gender, religion, ethnicity, and so on) is also not a new intervention. Thus, the deployment of the frameworks of "situated citizenship" and "exclusionary inclusion" is at best a signifier of the existing discussion and political practice on the distance between formal and substantive equality in the domain of citizenship.

In light of the above, the niche carved out for the book is at best responsive to the purported gaps within "mainstream" political science in the United States (us), and is not reflective of the ebb and tide of social science writing within India on the themes of citizenship, democratisation, secularism, or religion. Behl argues that mainstream political science has treated citizenship within the liberal democratic framework as exhaustive of all possibilities of equality by reducing it to a legal status. The author is perhaps writing for an audience primarily located in the us. It is only fair, however, to expect a book about Indian realities to reflect some of the debates central to such characterisation that exist in India. The result of this absence is a comfortable, single-brushstroke picture of Indian democracy, secularism, religion, and gender, obliterating decades of nuanced scholarship:

prevailing academic understandings of the relationship between secular state and religious community in India often assume that state-citizen relations are democratic and religious relations are nondemocratic. When it comes to gender, scholars often assume that the liberal democratic state protects women through law as equal citizens, while religious communities subordinate women through traditional practice as unequal members. (p 6)

At least on the count of the limited promise of liberal democracy, one almost anticipates the acknowledgement of this debate within India, starting with the trenchant suspicions of the very framer of the Indian Constitution, only to be alarmed by its absence in the lengthy discussion on the conceptual backdrop. That B R Ambedkar resigned in protest of the same intervention of

religion in granting property rights to Hindu women does not even merit a footnote in complicating the Indian debates on women, religion, and citizenship. Even if we move on to the republican understanding of citizenship and focus on public participation as the key to democratisation, the debates on civil society organisation in India and the vast body of writing (recent and past) on its possibilities and constraints do not find even a cursory mention in the book.¹

Indian Model of Secularism

Debates on what constitutes secularism in the Indian context, a theme that occupied much of the imagination and energy of Indian social scientists post the Shah Bano case and the demolition of the Babri Masjid,² the variety of models scholars have attributed to secularism in practice in India, and its limitations and potential, have all been reduced to the debate on the uniform civil code (ucc). The basic distinction in the models of secularism adopted by the us and India goes unacknowledged, leading to a misrepresentation of the idea in its barest constitutional form. Romila Thapar (2013) has argued that antecedents of secular thought in India lie within the Bhakti and Sufi traditions, which elevated the individual (as opposed to community) and devotion (as opposed to ritual worship) as relevant categories of spiritual emancipation, in contrast with the orthodoxy of Brahminism. The extremely complex debate on the relationship between religion and women, with its ramifications extending to matters as vast as caste endogamy, partition, and Hindu fundamentalism, has been reduced to the idea that religion is conventionally seen as an undemocratic site for gender freedoms. Despite the author's disavowal of colonial characterisations of the state, the "third world" state renders itself rather easily into "unevenness" in the narrative. When the question refuses to be about the nature of the state as an institution in its ability to emancipate, and insists on being about third world states or the Indian state in particular, Behl unfortunately succumbs to some of the very tendencies she intends to guard against. The absence of any comparative

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insight about the state in her own context and its treatment of women (not just women of colour) adds to the narrowness of the perspective. Instead of characterising streams of literature representing various tendencies in argument, the book chooses easy dichotomies and oppositions, establishing in the process several unidimensional caricatures of scholarly work in, from and about India.

Another prominent (yet incorrect) assertion is that academic thinking on religious organisation has universally considered it undemocratic. A plethora of scholars located across the social sciences in India have examined the limits and possibilities of religious organisation in India, refusing to eulogise them as revolutionary while acknowledging the limited challenges they offered to existing hierarchies of their times.³ Several others have also pointed to problematic aspects of such mobilisation and its interplay with global flows of capital.⁴ As soon as one moves away from the comfort of liberal theorisation, religion, like the state, is apparent as a form of congealed structural inequalities. Insofar as its existence in society is governed by institutional arrangements that are unequal, there is always potential for subversion, negotiation, change as well as further exploitation. Such potential has been identified and mobilised for various ends by movements beginning with Buddhism, ranging through Bhakti and Sufi traditions, and several new religious movements (NRMs). There are imaginations of democracy, equality, and individualism within each of them. However, it is important not to confuse such mobilisation as providing an alternative site to the freedoms guaranteed by citizenship, which is a unique historico-political category.

How the Marginalised Negotiate?

Do marginalised groups see alternative sites of citizenship like community or religion as replacing the formal constitutional promise? There is always a strategic acknowledgement of temporal authority in providing legitimacy to equality claims among marginalised groups, even if they may not think of such authority as unproblematic or egalitarian.

Examples are the continuing mass mobilisation for temple entry by Dalits in several parts of the country, or the fight for the entry of women into the Sabarimala temple. These are significant not because these communities crave self-actualisation or see Hinduism as an egalitarian religion, but because they see a distinctly political element to the struggle. Ronki Ram's writing on Dalit Sikhs has pointed out the distinctly political and iconoclastic character of Dalit mobilisation through *deras* (Ram 2004, 2008). The resolution of inequality in all these cases, and several others, is imagined as impossible without relying on the constitutional promise of citizenship, and legal battles associated with it, in addition to social transformations of various kinds.

Citizenship is itself a status won after arduous struggle, and is, in fact, an ongoing one. Most contemporary mobilisations to prevent the erosion of this status acknowledge citizenship—the very existence of a political framework imagined in the language of rights—as an unprecedented equality claim, particularly in the feudal context of caste-ridden India. Vibrant movements of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes hark back to the legacy of Ambedkar in its totality—he drafted the Constitution and subsequently converted to Buddhism—precisely because they see the necessity of assertion on both constitutional and extra-constitutional grounds to enliven all possibilities of democracy. The either/or approach to the problem seems to be an academic phenomenon, absent in mobilisation around the theme. All these actors understand that the state or the judiciary are not completely egalitarian institutions. That does not, however, lead them into abandoning these as sites of struggle in exclusive pursuit of alternative sites of liberatory politics. It is useful to remember that the framework of citizenship is dynamic, and popular movements, including feminist ones, have often successfully intervened in widening its ambit. The analysis provides a dynamic view of authority structures in their ability to morph and congeal across formal and informal distinctions, but fails to accord

such dynamism to the relationship between citizens and the state.

While fieldwork centrally engages with the theme of women's religious collectivisation, the book does not present any analysis of the writing on the diverse forms of women's collectivisation in India or the history of women's attempts to claim public spaces through religion or otherwise.⁵ I cite two starkly different examples to depict the complexity of this theme. One coherent body of writing on the theme in India has examined community-level mobilisation of Hindu women through devotional as well as martial groups, and their assimilation and active participation in the Hindu Rashtra project.⁶ Another has identified women as active participants in the self-respect movement in Tamil Nadu, founded on the principles of rationalism.⁷ Thus, the relationship between women's collectivisation and public participation, or their imagination of its contribution to citizenship, even when restricted to questions of faith, cannot be reduced to any homogeneous character.

SGBV: Dangers of Appropriation

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, central to the book is the extremely tenuous juxtaposition of the gang rape and murder of Singh in Delhi in 2012 with the constraints on public religious participation of Sikh women (instanced by the author's own experience of being denied the opportunity to attend her grandmother's funeral).

I put my experience in direct relation with the gang rape case and with the findings from the Sikh community to call attention to the dangers of SGBV, from its most extraordinary and horrific expression to the more commonplace and mundane expression in daily life. (pp 114–115)

While Behl repeatedly states that she has no intentions of flattening the difference between these varied forms of SGBV, the necessity of this juxtaposition to make a general case for the distance between formal and substantive democracy for women is spectacularly unclear, and borders on sensationalist. If, as Behl claims, she writes because she does not consider gendered violence as an abstract

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concept but a lived embodied experience, the least that is expected is the responsibility to acknowledge the gulfs of difference that separate the visceral physical annihilation of Singh from her own experience of unfreedom before writing, "I too am a victim" (p 122).

Addressing the gap between the formal and the substantive is among the central tasks of any progressive social science. Since the repetitiveness of this task reflects the persistence of powerful social structures, novelty of argument is not necessarily a premium demand on scholars who document and characterise its forms and counters to it. However, in inheriting this legacy and seeking to document emergent lacunae between what ought to be and what is, it is important to not lose sight of specificities and succumb to tempting generalisations. More importantly, in seeking to identify how disenfranchised communities deal with these constraints, it is vital to not jump to conclusions about their priorities and to not confuse explanation with prescription. It is perhaps relevant in the context of "first world" academics writing on the "third world" that data is "cogenerated," it is, however, misleading when theory is not.

Aandra Surendran (aandra@la.iith.ac.in) teaches at the Department of Liberal Arts, Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad.

NOTES

- 1 See Kaviraj and Khilnani (2001), Elliot (2003), Chatterjee (2004), Chandhoke (2011), Gudavarthy (2012, 2013), for some examples.
- 2 See Bhargava (1998), Chandhoke (1999), Srinivasan (2007), Sunderrajan and Needham (2007) for some examples. Sunderrajan's position finds place in the book, yet the diversity of perspectives presented in a volume co-edited by her is absent.
- 3 See O'Connell (2003), Dube (1998), Thapar (2013) and Chandramohan (2016) for an outline of this discussion.
- 4 See Mayaram (2004) and Sehgal (2007) for two empirical discussions.
- 5 See Sinclair Brull (1997) for a specific discussion of this relationship.
- 6 This branch of writing has been vibrant in the past two decades, with important contributions from Sarkar (1999), Sehgal (2007), Sen (2008), Parashar (2010), and Govinda (2013).
- 7 For a brief introduction, see Anandi (1991), Geetha (1998), Vijaya (1993).

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Walking the High Desert: Encounters With Rural America Along the Oregon Desert Trail, by Ellen Waterston, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2020, 248 pp., 5.5 × 8.5 in, 1 map, ISBN: 9780295747507

Rarely does a hiking trail guidebook suggest that readers will be channeling their “inner Carlos Castaneda” (6). In *Walking the High Desert*, environmental humanist Ellen Waterston provides an engaging commentary on many aspects of life and land in southeastern Oregon. The book’s subtitle, *Encounters With Rural America Along the Oregon Desert Trail*, helps orient the reader toward a discussion of the values and distinctiveness of the people and communities that dot the arid landscape along the recently established Oregon Desert Trail. The resourceful local residents work hard, get ‘er done, as they learn to figure things out for themselves.

Geography’s human-environment identity is on full display in Waterston’s discussions as she weaves description of sections of the trail with the history of human use and abuse of the Northern Basin and Range section of the Great Basin Desert. The book is beautifully written and engaging. Waterston, a former High Desert rancher, weaves her regional knowledge and experiences into a captivating journey across space and time. Her writing style conveys a sense of place(s), illuminating the 750-mile-long trail which was inspired by the Hayduke Trail of similar length in Utah and Arizona. The book is organized geographically (from west to east), with four major sections (groups of chapters that each cover about 200 miles) that address the Central Oregon Volcanics, the West Basin and Range, the East Basin and Range, and the Owyhee Canyonlands. A single map, positioned after the table of contents, provides a limited, but useful reference.

Material and ideas in *Walking the High Desert* can inform/advance geography education in several ways. Those teaching the regional geography of the United States can use examples from the book to convey specifics about this desert environment. Individuals who teach about the social and political aspects of human (mis)use of landscapes will find several good examples. In addition, the book does a very nice job of sharing considerable geographic information to a broader audience.

Many geographers are intrigued with and have a desire to explore (perhaps wander within) the less traveled and more wide open spaces. Their goal may be to reach a spot with an inspiring vista that enables deeper thinking. Some travelers might hope to find solace. Still others may be driven by a goal to set foot in every county across the United States. Whatever motivates one to travel to the High Desert country of southeastern Oregon, *Walking the High Desert* will provide insights and inspiration to plan and execute a visit. Relevant landscape photographs are available on a website about the trail maintained by the Oregon Natural Desert Association (2020), which also provides more information and a few helpful maps. I found myself frequently using

Google Maps to gain a clear sky satellite view of the natural landmarks, vegetation cover, and human settlements mentioned along sections of the trail.

Writing about a desert environment frequently gets an author discussing the availability of water. The resource is of considerable importance for those who scrape out a livelihood in the area. Situated in the rain shadow to the east of the Cascades, some of the cold desert weather stations in the region receive an average of less than 10 inches (254 mm) of precipitation each year. Playas help document the seasonality of snow melt and water availability. Seasonality of water availability also drives the timing of wildflower life cycles and the arrival of migratory birds. Access to potable water is an important theme for those who will need to restock their supply while hiking the trail. Waterston also identifies the selective availability of hot springs for a good, relaxing soak following a few days of rugged hiking.

Trail hikers who want to learn more about the geologic history of the local basalt flows and fault block mountains should plan to tap into other sources. Rock hounds, on the other hand, will find a few good suggestions for places to look for thundereggs, agate, jasper, and other gemstones. Steens Mountain, a 50-mile (80-km) long fault block escarpment is a high point along the trail at 9733 feet (2966 m). Rising 4200 feet (1280 m) above the Alvord Desert, a diversity of flora exists including the ubiquitous sage brush and several bunchgrasses. Junipers, aspens, and mountain mahogany are among the trees and shrubs that can be found. Plan to check out other sources for information about the physiology of the dominant plants in the region. Wildlife hazards include snakes and ticks. Discussion of four-legged animals, in addition to cattle, includes the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge where one might spot bighorn sheep and mule deer. Waterston informs readers about wild horses and burros in the region, along with historical and contemporary political challenges the Bureau of Land Management faces in managing corrals and a program for animal adoption.

In her discussion of High Desert people and places, Waterston addresses issues that are local in context but have implications for regional to national conversations. How best should public lands be managed? Do certain species (e.g., sage grouse) need federal protection? How best can we tap into the common sense/local knowledge/wisdom of the ranchers who inhabit this harsh landscape? What should we make of the incident/confrontation at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge? Will the development of the hiking trail alter the character of the region? The author’s commentary helps the reader understand the larger context of the complex character of the many issues facing the region.

The Oregon Desert Trail is entirely on public land in a region that some describe as the empty quarter. Others suggest the area is a sage brush ocean. Advantages of the openness will be appreciated by those who want to partake in stargazing. The region provides the majority of top dark sky sites within Oregon and is one of the better locations within the lower 48. Unfortunately, concerns exist about a trend toward increasing light pollution, especially for locations near the western end of the trail.

Waterston shares her wisdom and wit related to local linguistics, including knowledge of Paiute words for some of the features and colors of the region. She does a very nice job discussing the sometimes humorous distinctiveness that can be heard when listening to the conversations among ranchers in the area. Waterston, an award winning literary artist, greatly appreciates and supports the local arts community. Within each section of the trail, we learn about resident artists and/or opportunities to appreciate environmental humanism.

Waterston even discusses the question: What is a trail? Clearly there are utilitarian aspects (e.g., a pathway to get from here to there). However, the author's writing style highlights the trail as an opportunity to engage with the

environment, finding locations to pause and ponder. That reflection might result in a better appreciation of the need for wilderness areas. Waterston suggests that traveling through High Desert country will enable you to find new ways to connect with the environment and yourself and gain a sense of shared humanity. For those with an appreciation for humanistic connections, this book will be a wonderful companion if you walk along the Oregon Desert Trail.

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John Harrington Jr.
Independent Scholar, Bay Center, Washington, USA
✉ johnharringtonjr@gmail.com

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BOOK REVIEW

Nature Shock: Getting Lost in America, by Jon T. Coleman, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2020, 360 pp., \$30.00 (hardcover), ISBN: 9780300227147

As we navigate space in the twenty-first century, we often rely on smart devices to direct every turn and even alert us upon arrival. Scary times might arise when our immediate surroundings appear unrecognizable. In unfamiliar situations, we may panic and experience mental disorientation or “nature shock.” Why does this happen? Spatial thoughts inhabit the hippocampus, which is the region of the brain where memories and emotions are processed. Nature shock can affect anyone, even skilled navigators and explorers like the Spanish conquistador Hernando De Soto.

Jon Coleman’s *Nature shock: Getting lost in America* describes the phenomenon of nature shock and how North Americans’ relation to space has changed over five centuries, alongside family bonds, community ties, and communication tools such as letters, newspapers, books, and maps. *Nature shock* details the experience of space in North America through the progressing intrusion on American Indigenous land from the coast to the interior of the continent, as well as the ensuing conflicts of nation-building. As a historian and professor of history, Coleman provides a thoroughly researched and chronological progression of place-making in which themes of power, place, social relations, and communication are present. Compiled in a 30-page Notes section, Coleman’s archival sources include “conquistador narratives, local frontier histories, personal correspondence, newspaper articles, outdoor magazine articles, and the memoirs of hikers and climbers who sought to find themselves in the wilderness” (7). The book reminds geography educators that spatial thinking—how people reason about locations across space—is interdependent with human-environment relations. Readers can expect to be transported to a past era when “getting lost” did not have the same “spatial grammar” used in contemporary advertisements, which market adventure and getting lost through curated vacation experiences. Coleman concludes *Nature shock* by reflecting on the necessity of getting lost in an ever-modernizing world.

To explicate this phenomenon, Coleman structures *Nature shock* chronologically, using the progression of time to detail how our relationship with space has changed. With eight chapters, the book describes North America’s transition from relational to individual spaces. Relational spaces involve traversing the environment through social bonds, or our relationships with others. In the time of nation-building, newcomers traveling through space unaccompanied often resulted in deaths. On the other end of the spectrum, individual space can be navigated alone, using the available communication tools such as maps, geographic positioning systems (GPS), and other technologies to move through humanized landscapes like cities, roads, and even nature trails.

The chapters are meant to be read in sequence as they “track the changes in North American spatial cognition” (7). The introductory chapter sets the stage and is particularly helpful in understanding the book’s purpose as well as the ground rules: all exemplar stories are derived from the North American scene and do not include people lost in oceans, cities, or suburbs. Chapters one (“Brutal symmetry”) and two (“Helpful woods and violent waters”) lay the ground for the concept of nature shock and relational space. Chapters three (“Children of the revolution”), four (“Homing”), and five (“Dead-certain mental compass”) further explore nature shock and reveal a historical transition from relational space to individual space. Finally, chapters six (“Keep your head”) and seven (“Male pattern trail loss”) detail modern forms of nature shock as people navigate individual space.

Each chapter contains several subsections; most are individual stories or cases that enable readers to encounter the extent to which nature shock affected peoples of differing demographics and places across space. Nature shock “rattled people no matter their race, gender, rank, real estate holdings, or celebrity profile” (291). However, at times, nature shock took on distinctive political and gendered characteristics. For example, chapter two details how early American literature reassured New Englanders if they got lost in the wilderness, Natives would come to their rescue. The real situation, though, was that Natives were returning more prominent or valuable colonists: “watchful Indians waited for lost colonists to wear themselves down and stumble into vulnerable positions before approaching them” (78). In this environment that lacked the place-making features the colonists were accustomed to, lost people were intentionally positioned and moved across space like political pawns. Gender played a role in how space was experienced. For example, the social norm was for New England women to be “fused” to men in their shared physical space; women were made to believe they needed men to survive on the arduous frontier. Therefore, a woman living alone or navigating space unaccompanied disrupted the order of social relations, a view which reinforced relational space.

In modern times of individual space, nature—now called “wilderness” due to the loss of the frontier—was still perceived by some to be experienced solely by men. Chapter seven details the perceptions of Edward Abbey, an American national park employee and author on wilderness thought. Abbey approached *terra incognita* with a yearning for nature shock, which he would then quickly overcome with his “macho wilderness” approach, wherein “going on vacation turned into a blood sport” (243). In Abbey’s view, this sport was only to be played by men, for the wilderness was not a place for wives, family units, or even cars. On the other

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hand, individual space allowed women to find strength and solitude in navigating space alone. The communication tools of maps, trails, and other wilderness amenities gave women a “chance to break free from male-dominated relationships and refine personal freedom” (246). Toward that end, readers will acquire a deep comprehension of nature experience and spatial cognition through Coleman’s use of multiple perspectives and examples throughout the text.


As a geographer, I valued these in-depth localized stories and varied experiences of human-environment interactions over the last 500 years of North American occupancy. The meticulously researched text is both informative and entertaining, as some stories are quite humorous. For example, Coleman recounts how some of De Soto’s men were ostensibly “lost” and “opted to eat grapes with the heathens rather than swallow the daily rations of misery De Soto was serving” (45). What is more, these examples of nature shock, relational and individual space help explicate some of the fundamentals of human-environment geographic thought. However, as *Nature shock* is not a geography (text)book, the concepts—such as the social construction of nature and a clearer conception of place and place-making—were not readily evident. To be sure, this omission does not detract from the book’s objectives. Instead, it may render some readers eager to seek more information about underlying processes that influence different environmental experiences. For example, Coleman details that colonizers could not visually recognize American Indigenous resource and land management systems. Newcomers could not perceive the anthropogenic landscapes, such as a cleared portion of land, which was identified as naturally-occurring meadows. The colonizers could not see that these were indeed human

artifacts of land management. How these sorts of human-environment interactions and misunderstandings occurred not communicated.

Overall, *Nature shock* is a remarkable book as it establishes a unique confluence of history, space, and place. *Nature shock* offers readers insights into how we have achieved the ability to traverse our humanized world so albeit with the assistance of smart devices. Even our “wilderness” experiences are crafted in advance for through trails, maps, and other communication tools that reduce the chances of becoming lost. Readers interested in the environment, especially outdoor recreation in North America; academics and educators in geography, history, ecology, and the like; and the general public will appreciate *Nature shock*. Coleman warns that experiencing nature shock is still possible as it is a “human rather than historical condition, getting lost [has] changed with the times, but never disappeared” (67). Nonetheless, perhaps an occasional and brief exposure to, or experience of, controlled nature shock is now necessary to refresh our cognitive geography.

Christina Lopez
Department of Geography, Texas State University,
San Marcos, Texas, USA
✉ cwr41@txstate.edu

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Book Reviews

Suranjan Das and Achintya Kumar Dutta (eds.), *Dreadful Diseases in Colonial Bengal: Cholera, Malaria and Smallpox, A Documentation*, Delhi: Primus, 2021, pages i-viii+397, Rs 1250.

This edited volume by Professors Suranjan Das and Achintya Kumar Dutta is a 'Documentation' of the experiences with the epidemic diseases, cholera, malaria and smallpox, in colonial Bengal. The volume comprises eight *Bengal Public Health Reports*, for the years 1926 to 1940, *Extracts from Reports on Malaria* by Major A.B. Fry, Dr. C.A. Bentley and Major. G. Covell, and a *Report on the Working of the Anti-malaria Campaign in Rural Areas of Bengal with Quinine and Plasmochin*, in 1933-1934.

The background to these twentieth century reports is provided in the Introduction. Cholera first struck Jessore in 1817, caused by lack of sanitation, and use of impure water for drinking, bathing and washing, and it soon spread to other regions in the province in the form of an epidemic. Despite medical intervention, a staggering 23 million lives were lost to cholera between 1865 and 1947. After Snow's discovery, public health officials accepted that provision of adequate and clean water was essential to combat cholera. While water purification may have been successful for the army, the local population was not benefitted. The authors point out that *Public Health Reports* of the 1930s referred to official initiatives to disinfect ponds, wells etc., and public awareness programs were launched, but in reality these were not done in a timely manner nor were steps taken to identify the focal points of the disease. Public health officials did not undertake regular inspections. Hospitals in Calcutta could not deal with the influx of patients. Yet there is evidence that health propaganda did work. Thus, *Bentley's Report on Cholera*, (1920) mentions village women using boiled water.

Malaria was widespread from the 1860s, with Burdwan being the worst affected. It not only caused deaths but also affected birth rates. Those who survived suffered listlessness, weakness, and mental turpitude and became easy victims of tuberculosis, pneumonia and beri beri. The poor suffered the most, especially if they caught malaria during the harvesting season since they could not work and fell into the trap of indebtedness. Neither preventive nor curative measures were satisfactory. The opening

of dispensaries and the free distribution of quinine did check epidemics, though there were shortages and black marketing.

There were three severe smallpox epidemics in the nineteenth century, with a more virulent form in the first half of the twentieth century. Between 1901 and 1940, smallpox caused 667,945 deaths, with south and south west Bengal suffering the most. The precautionary measures of isolation of smallpox patients and bringing them to the notice of the Health Department were outlined in the Epidemic Diseases Act 1897. While official records refer to the preference for indigenous medicine, the efficacy of vaccination seems to have influenced a large section of the people, mostly in urban areas. According to the authors, if vaccination and re-vaccination had been made compulsory earlier than was done, the extent of the epidemic could have been curbed. While the British Raj extracted huge revenues from India, they were unwilling to spend on public health. The situation worsened after 1919 when provincial and local administrative bodies with scanty finances and poor infrastructure were burdened with the responsibility of public health. There were few doctors and hospitals and dispensaries served only a small section of the population. While colonial intervention was motivated by colonial requirements, initiatives in the surrounding areas of plantations, mines and administrative centres did bring medical benefits to Indians.

The *Public Health Reports* present statistical data, district wise, on cholera, smallpox, fevers and malaria, with graphs showing mortality and rainfall, and maps, reflecting mortality caused by these diseases. The vaccinal conditions of smallpox patients treated at various medical institutions, are shown in charts. They also have data on smallpox mortality in other provinces of British India, which would be very useful for comparative studies. The *Bengal Public Health Report* of 1926, by Bentley reported an increase in anti-cholera inoculation, disinfection of water supplies, and educational propaganda through lantern lectures. There was acceptance of smallpox vaccination, though some persons delayed vaccination till after exposure to the infection, and then blamed vaccination, when they subsequently got smallpox. There was no separate hospital for smallpox patients, only separate wards in some hospitals in the large cities. The work of the village health societies in anti-malarial activities is mentioned: cutting jungles, cleansing weeds from tanks, kerosining tanks and undertaking educational propaganda. The *Reports of 1930, 1932 and 1936* are by R.B. Khambata, Director of Public Health. The seasonal incidence of cholera, rising in October, and smallpox in December are noted. The relation between cholera mortality and rainfall pointed to a peak during the monsoons. The *Report of 1938* showed a big drop in cholera mortality in 1937 but it rose again in 1938 because of floods. Assistance to local bodies was provided through combined mobile medical and sanitary units consisting of a medical licentiate, a compounder and a medical

carrier of drugs health propagandists they were not the utilisation of the Health Department given with quinine

Major Fry the country was He commented described their were the distribution the root cause of mosquito larva clean, now the that he was always self-help, but a compulsion to solution. While medicine, a small it led to renal to create distrust

Bentley's Report published in 19 by the colonial observed that the in the West and fertile, land was given a rest, large annually flooded of the arable land Bengal, the river delta had been the surrounding contended that changes in the were few rivers and from fields destroyed by the the natural process difficult and, and there was required deep inundation. The River water in

carrier of drugs. Both the 1936 and 1938 *Reports* speak of extensive public health propaganda. Chairmen of district boards however complained that they were not consulted by district officers, who selected the schemes for the utilisation of grants, which the boards had to implement. The Public Health Department gave instructions regarding dosage of plasmochin to be given with quinine for treatment of malaria patients.

Major Fry's *First Report on Malaria in Bengal* of 1912 observed that the country was entirely agricultural and the population mainly rural. He commented on the physique, diet and clothing, of the villagers, and described their houses as being scrupulously clean. He believed markets were the distribution centres of malaria and lack of village sanitation was the root cause of endemic malaria. Fry found tanks with fish to be free of mosquito larvae. He observed that in the old days landlords kept tanks clean, now the villagers wanted the Government to do so. Fry remarked that he was always received in the villages with friendliness. He advocated self-help, but since there was a total lack of public spirit, he held that compulsion to adopt anti-malarial measures and take quinine was the solution. While educated Bengalis believed in the benefits of western medicine, a small group led by Homeopaths opposed quinine and held that it led to renal troubles and impotence. Fry believed that it was far easier to create distrust and suspicion than to allay it.

Bentley's Report on *How to Reduce Malaria in Bengal by Irrigation* was published in 1925. The authors note that this was not given due cognizance by the colonial government, due to financial considerations. Bentley observed that there was a rise in the population in East Bengal and a decline in the West and Centre, due to malaria. The soil in the East was more fertile, land was never allowed to remain fallow, cultivated fields were never given a rest, lands adjacent to rivers did not require manure, lowlands were annually flooded, and there was no rotation of crops, because a greater part of the arable land was refreshed with deposit of river mud. But in Central Bengal, the rivers Bhagirathi, Padma and Madhumati and the Ganges delta had been raised above flood level. Since the beds were higher than the surrounding countryside, they were no longer able to drain. Bentley contended that railway construction had been responsible for disastrous changes in the delta in the previous seventy years. Before the railways there were few river embankments, hence river water flowed on to the fields and from field to field. This natural process of flush and flood had been destroyed by the railways. Embankments were secured to prevent flooding, the natural process of deltaic irrigation was interrupted, boat traffic became difficult and, with simultaneous epidemics of malaria, agriculture declined and there was depopulation. Embankments increased malaria since they required deep excavation. The village houses had high plinths to prevent inundation. These did not give rise to malaria as long as they were flooded. River water in the flood season contained carbon dioxide so the reaction

became acidic and anopheles larvae did not flourish in river water due to flooding. Bentley asserted that few realised the dangers of embanking of delta tracts and that partial reclamation of lowlands was always conducive to malaria.

The Report by Major Covell on *Malaria in Calcutta* traced the history of malaria and pointed out that Bentley's comprehensive scheme for malaria control was not implemented. The *Indian Medical Gazette* had noted as early as 1900 that a small amount was sanctioned by the Calcutta Corporation for malaria. According to Covell, the malarial mosquitoes to be feared were *A. stephensi*, which bred in cisterns and fountains and *Aedes. aegypti*, which was a carrier of dengue and yellow fever. The measures recommended by Covell were: anti-malarial operations to be directed against these two species, the training of staff, annual spleen census of school children and hospitals and dispensaries to keep a record of malaria cases. Covell suggested that the Control Officer should visit Bombay and study malaria operations there.

In this context reference is made by this reviewer to what Bentley and Covell had to say about malaria in Bombay city. Bentley recommended preventive measures (1912), which included covering of wells, introduction of fish to control mosquito larvae, gratuitous distribution of quinine by philanthropic agencies, collecting a weekly return of cases from all public and private dispensaries, conducting spleen census of children, examination of the blood of patients attending dispensaries, and examination at the Bombay Bacteriological Laboratory, of all species of mosquitoes found at different times of the year and of samples of larvae. A special malaria department was created under the supervision of Bombay's Health Officer. The Bombay Government sanctioned funding, and the Municipal Act was amended, giving the Municipal Commissioner enhanced powers for dealing with mosquito breeding grounds, taking action in cases where municipal action was defied. Success was achieved in controlling malaria before the First World War, but when controls were allowed to lapse, as a measure of economy, the incidence of the disease increased. The vigorous implementation of anti-malarial measures was fortunately resumed, in the 1920s, and, in the following decade, the *Urbs Prima in Indis* saw declining spleen rates. Covell (1928) in his study concluded that *A. stephensi* was the carrier, found in permanent breeding places, including wells, cisterns, fountains, water used in building construction, etc. His recommendation that all breeding places be eliminated was pushed with vigour, and only 1,200 remained open out of 4,000 wells by 1933. *Gambusia*, fish to eat mosquito larvae, was used in wells with good effect and the incidence of malaria was lower than it had ever been.

The last report in this volume is on the experiment in rural Bengal with Quinine and Plasmochin, in 1933-34. Plasmochin, developed by Bayer, along with quinine had proved to be a useful drug in malaria cure.

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Das and Dutta of health and medicine cholera in colonial a comparative analysis and its impact on socio-economic nature, extent and the indigenous resources and analyses, the source material, including newspaper Bengali.

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In one of his lectures Centre, State University Foucault argued that involved itself in various patients and diseases instead of an individual with normalising of the wishes of the people Attewell explores networks of power category. For this from colonial Bengal and British Burma

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The experiment was carried out in Burdwan showing fever incidence in the experimental area reduced to 50 per cent of the outside area. Bentley had proved that a frontal attack on mosquitoes and a flank attack was necessary. He had advised irrigation schemes to reduce mosquitoes and to improve the condition of the people. The other recommendations were small fish to kill larvae, the use of mosquito nets, repellents, protective clothing, and the application of gauze to windows and doors.

Das and Dutta have identified areas for further research, in the study of health and medicine in colonial Bengal. They are: the social history of cholera in colonial Bengal; how famine and flood influenced its spread; a comparative analysis of cholera outbreaks in different parts of Bengal and its impact on regional demography, economy and public health; the socio-economic background of the persons affected by malaria; and the nature, extent and impact of medical intervention to control smallpox and the indigenous response to vaccination. For these historical investigations and analyses, the documents in this volume would be invaluable primary source material, complemented and supplemented by non-official sources including newspaper reports, pamphlets and contemporary writings in Bengali.

Mridula Ramanna is former Head, Department of History, SIES College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Mumbai.

Rohan Deb Roy and Guy N.A. Attewell, *Locating the Medical: Explorations in South Asian History*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018, vi+307 pages, Rs 950

In one of his lectures delivered at the Institute of Social Medicine (Biomedical Centre, State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) in October 1974, Michel Foucault argued that since the eighteenth century, medicine had continually involved itself in what was 'not its business', that is, in matters other than patients and diseases. Medicine during this period became a 'social practice instead of an individual one' and was endowed with 'an authoritarian power with normalising functions that went beyond the existence of diseases and the wishes of the patient'. The present volume by Rohan Deb Roy and Guy Attewell explores this connection of medicine with social practices and networks of power thereby challenging the 'out there-ness' of medicine as a category. For this purpose, it covers a wide spatio-temporal scope ranging from colonial Bengal to contemporary Ladakh, from the Andaman Islands and British Burma to contemporary Maharashtra (p. 2).

A common question that has been explored extensively by historians

Market Mindset Mars Medical Care in China

K SRINATH REDDY

China is a socialist country governed by a communist party. It has declared its commitment to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) well before the 2030 target set by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Yet, increasing commercialisation of its medical care system runs counter to the country's professed ideology and proclaimed commitment to UHC. The rise of "market socialism" in China, since the time of Deng Xiaoping, has transformed the nature of the Chinese economy and, along with it, the structure and style of its healthcare system. What were the domestic political forces that swept the country on to that path and what have been the consequences? Which are the international entities that are participating in and propelling that transformation?

In a meticulously researched critique, Rama Baru and Madhurima Nundy dissect the policy shifts that have radically altered the character of the Chinese healthcare system. The authors repeatedly refer to the continuing ideological battle between the pro-market group ("neo-liberals") and the pro-government group ("social democrats") in defining the role of the public and private sectors. It appears that behind the monolithic facade of the Chinese Communist Party, these struggles have continued since the 1990s with the balance of decision-making power shifting over time to the neo-liberals and healthcare moving inexorably towards the pro-market model. Even in the preface, the authors offer the reader their assessment of how this shift to market socialism "had negative consequences for public health institutions, healthcare outcomes and the management of infectious diseases" (p xiii). The last is a reference to the rise of tuberculosis, which embarrassed policymakers and, along with demonstrations of public discontent against poor services and rising

Commercialisation of Medical Care in China: Changing Landscapes by Rama V Baru and Madhurima Nundy, *Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2020; pp xviii + 112, ₹695.*

healthcare costs, compelled the party leadership to undertake publicly financed healthcare reforms. However, despite this attempt to strengthen the health system and improve the coverage of health insurance, private sector prominence and inequities in healthcare continued to become the increasingly visible hallmarks of a commercialised healthcare system.

Reforming Public Healthcare

The authors describe how public sector healthcare facilities underwent a series of reforms since 1978, altering their character and undermining their social mission. The reforms began with the dismantling of the Cooperative Medical Scheme that served the needs of rural communities. This caused rural distress due to rising barriers of access and affordability as well as poor quality of care. The second phase commenced in 2003 to advance financial reforms and hospital autonomy. Healthcare equity was advocated by Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, in response to public discontent. The outbreak of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) cast a poor light on the Chinese health system as global criticism poured in. This too strengthened the political resolve for health system reform. Demand-side financing was advanced through social insurance schemes to address out-of-pocket expenditure. Autonomisation of public hospitals, however, moved them away from their social mission and disrupted the referral system. The three insurance schemes that were operating to provide partial financial protection did not combine well to provide uniform coverage or depth of services.

The third phase of reforms (2009–2012) applied some correctives to curb

the perverse incentive of public hospitals to sell drugs and provide unnecessary services to earn revenue. The public health system was strengthened at the primary level, while accommodating market interests in the secondary and tertiary care sectors. Wide ranging consultations with domestic and international experts led to the 2009 healthcare reforms, which, in the view of Baru and Nundy, provided a consensus on healthcare financing but left ambiguity on delivery of services. An attempt was made to restore the social function of hospitals, but separation of administrative, operational, financial, and supervisory functions led to disconnects and emphasised operational efficiency and financial gain over public service goals.

The fourth and still ongoing phase of reforms, commencing in 2013, adopted a pro-market approach with "engagement of the private sector in all aspects of provisioning." Several joint ventures were initiated to bind the public and private sectors together. Baru and Nundy point out that "the growth in the utilisation of the private sector signalled the inequities in public provisioning due to autonomisation and the gaps in the social insurance schemes" (p 32). The private sector was seen by many seeking care to be providing services of better quality than the public sector. The techno-managerial model of private hospitals outdid the financially strained and bureaucratically hampered public hospitals in gaining the support of policymakers, but was not committed to health equity, which was an integral part of the country's foundational ethos.

Public sector healthcare facilities suffered a decline in quality and erosion of commitment to public service, as reduced public financing compelled many of them to adopt money-generating practices, which were antithetical to the tenets of appropriate and affordable care. It has been said that China evolved a public sector with a private sector mindset. Added to that were the multiple layers of bureaucratic controls and a labyrinth of reporting structures that eroded efficiency. Autonomy for public hospitals moved from a public service efficiency-enhancing construct to a socially uncommitted

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revenue-generating mission. Corrective measures that were initiated in 2009 were only partially successful when the push for privatisation gained ascendancy in 2013.

Towards Privatisation

Baru and Nundy cite a Shanghai health economist to describe three types of commercialisation of public hospitals: management by private companies; transfer to private ownership; and collocation of private hospitals in or beside public hospitals (p 45). If this sounds eerily like some of the policies being advocated in India today, we better be warned by the Chinese experience. The insurance system too, despite the intent to merge different schemes into one, deals only with the curative services and "has broken the link between the preventive and curative services." Again, a warning for India, as we expand and integrate our health insurance programmes to cover hospital care only.

The private sector in China, as in many low- and middle-income countries, is heterogeneous. It ranges from practitioners of Chinese medicine and former barefoot doctors to organised private hospitals established by both national investors and foreign corporate hospital chains. While there is a large and diverse private sector presence even at the primary healthcare level, both in rural and urban areas, the growth of private hospitals at the secondary and tertiary care levels has been an urban phenomenon. Technology companies and specialist doctors from the West became the new evangelists for the transformation of Chinese medical practice. While the Chinese industry soon took over much of the manufacturing of medical technologies, for domestic use and export, technology-intensive and expensive models of healthcare became the adopted pattern in the private hospitals, whether owned by foreign or Chinese private entities. Baru and Nundy conclude, "The recent trend in the growth of the private sector suggests that there is no reversal possible" (p 75). Apart from the cost, the disconnect of these hospitals from primary and preventive care raises concerns about their value in a framework of

universal health coverage that requires integrated care.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) grew steadily as vehicles for enabling the private sector to spread its engagement in healthcare. Apart from contracted services, facilitated collocation in public sector healthcare facilities and even transfer of management control of some such hospitals enabled the private sector to expand its footprint. Local governments permitted such arrangements to retain some control, while the private sector felt safe to operate under their protection. However, the egalitarian commitment to people's health receded into the background as the commercial character of the PPP-run services became dominant.

The emergence of the Medical Industrial Complex (MIC) features prominently as a theme in the book. When the public sector was starved of government funds and was forced to adopt profit-making practices, the privatisation process began from within the established structures. The organised private sector grew to supplant the weakened public sector, especially in the cities. Foreign investments were warmly welcomed into the healthcare sector and American corporate hospitals were permitted to open, operate, and expand. Foreign-trained Chinese doctors were welcomed back, with concessions, to staff such hospitals. Medical technologies were promoted by international drugs and devices companies, both to replicate occidental healthcare models and to entrain local doctors into expensive technology-dependent care practices. Investment firms rushed in to promote healthcare as a business. Real estate firms also invested in acquiring or building hospitals for commercial operations. Global consultancy firms entered to offer private sector friendly policy prescriptions. An ensemble cast of private sector promoters thus gathered to produce a magnum opus of commercial healthcare, even as the low-budget public sector slipped into a minor supportive role.

'A Point of No Return'

Pessimism about the irreversibility of commercialisation of medical care in China is a running thread throughout the book. The following are among statements

which reflect disappointment that borders on despair:

We would argue that the Chinese reform has reached a point of no return and therefore the idea of the 'public' in public hospitals has long been lost. (p 45)

There are concerns that the Chinese health services have travelled too far a distance from a comprehensive approach, where the role of preventive, curative and rehabilitative services are integrated. There are serious concerns around what this will mean for both financial sustainability and equity in the future. (p 96)

From what the book reveals, in sharp detail, such anguish at the market makeover of an egalitarian socialist model appears understandable.

The book was written in the pre-COVID-19 era. Did the experience of mobilising the health system for a massive national response to COVID-19 change that market mindset? Was the vital importance of the public sector, at all levels of care, adequately recognised? How did the for-profit private sector measure up when challenged by a national health emergency? Will a new round of ideological debate bring back the commitment to an efficient, well-integrated, equitable and public sector led health system that delivers universal health care? The authors now need to explore these questions, perhaps, in another book soon. In the meanwhile, this book is highly recommended reading as it offers a scholarly analysis of how China's health system has altered course as new ideological propellers and economic growth-oriented coordinates guided its overall domestic policies and international engagement.

Views are personal.

K Srinath Reddy (ksrinath.reddy@phfi.org) is President, Public Health Foundation of India, New Delhi.

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Book Review

✓ Nilanjan Sarkar and Vikas K. Verma (eds), *Streaming the Past Peninsular India in History: Essays in Honour of T. K. Venkatasubramaniam*, Delhi: Primus Books, 2019, 372 pages, Rs 1200

This book in honour of Professor T.K. Venkatasubramaniam, with an enchanting cover, is divided into two parts, with a collection of eight and four essays respectively. This is a good effort to mark the processes of change and continuity in peninsular India.

The writings of many scholars have successfully established the significance of regions in Indian History and one can see a change in the titles of books, which till a few decades ago covered the whole of India. The effort to visit peninsular India in this book has been quite successful as it highlights the interactions in the region.

The twelve essays preceded by a fitting introduction, cover a wide range of topics from Megalithic cultures till the early modern period (eighteenth century) of Indian History. Written for TKV (as Professor T.K. Venkatasubramaniam is fondly known), the book brings together the writings of TKV's colleagues and students.

The Introduction, 'Streams into Histories' by Nilanjan Sarkar and Vikas K. Verma, highlights the general trend of taking historical development in the south as a supplement to the major political changes in the north (north India-centric writing of Indian history). The discussion on Megalithic Cultures and iron technology in Tamil Nadu by Rupendra Kumar Chattopadhyay and Dipsikha Acharya brings to light the early use of iron technology in Tamil Nadu during the Megalithic period. Interestingly, weapons were made before agricultural tools. This essay guides us to the emergence of early chiefs and origin of social hierarchies. The reader would appreciate the research and understand the earliest structure of society and its networks of procurement. The following essay by Vijaya Ramaswamy on Water Management in Early Tamil Nadu shows the next level of social and economic development, agrarian expansion and efforts towards ensuring better means of irrigation for the same. The relationship between settlements and sources of water bring out the complex nature of the man-nature relationship. The significance of water-management in present times makes this essay quite relevant. Vigilance maintained over water tanks as expressed through a Sangam poem on page no. 97 of the

book connects to the significance of water and its management for humans.

The third essay on Archaeological excavations at Porunthal in Tamil Nadu by K. Rajan highlights the features of the early economy. The editors have arranged the essays in order to give the readers a chronological understanding of cultural developments right since the Megalithic age. One can appreciate the gradual process of increasing complexity in contemporary society by following these essays. Royal patronage and the role it played in promoting economic interests gradually strengthened the structure of state in these areas. Another interesting aspect of this study is the first use of AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry) dating technology for study and research at this site in Tamil Nadu. This technological advancement has removed the limitations of other epigraphic sources. Movement of core trading activities from west to east are discussed by Vikas K. Verma in the essay on Trade in Early Tamilaham. Well-grounded in archaeological data, this essay focuses on the trading network between Muziris and Arikamedu (the popular names have been used in this review). The author's observation that mountain passes facilitated trading activities across the two *ghats* reminds one of the studies by H.P. Ray which highlight the presence of Buddhist monasteries on the trade routes in the context of Deccan. The essay discussed here thus, not only reinforces the earlier arguments but also paves the way for future research on these aspects of Tamil history. Referring to the networks of trade and exchange, the essay opens up the possibilities for further study of the relationship between South and South-East Asia.

Analysis of Early Historic Coinage by P. Shanmugam brings to light the monetary traditions of uninscribed silver punch-marked coins of Magadha which influenced early historic Tamil Nadu. This essay brings to light the growing interests of the state in economic activities for many purposes. State control over minting of coins indicates the evolution of the state in the area under study. Processes of agrarian expansion in 12th-16th century Tamil Nadu has been discussed by Sreelatha Yegneshwar through a survey of land grants in fallow areas. She brings to light the emerging social hierarchisation and readjustments of power balance in society. Y. Subbarayalu discusses Royal Punishment in the Chola State and with the help of six inscriptions highlights the role played by the army in collection of outstanding revenue when not at war. The role played by local goddesses in cult syncretisation, ideology and patronage in Tamil Nadu is discussed in detail by R. Mahalakshmi. The ideological inclinations of Chola, Chera and Pandya rulers strengthened the processes of consolidation of political authority.

Economic Transformations in Kalinga and Dakshina Kosala are discussed by Bhairabi Prasad Sahu and the processes of state formation in the Odisha region helps compare and contrast with the situation in Tamil Nadu. The emergence of localities during early historical centuries is one

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of the key factors discussed in the essay. By bringing out the continuities between early historical and early medieval centuries, the essay makes a successful argument in favour of 'change through continuity'. The early medieval centuries (a topic of great academic interest) laid the foundations for an asymmetrical social structure with a widening of the orbit of peasant activity. These along with many other developments helped in the fashioning of the identity of the region. Local chiefs and their interaction with other contemporary political powers (such as the Mauryas) played a vital role in the making of this region. No doubt, by the 4th–5th centuries, the Vedic-shastric-epic-Puranic ideas found a place in the epigraphic records of many dynasties associated with the region. The essay re-establishes that the notion of Kali Age did not actually represent any social crisis but marked a major change in the transformation of social order.

Discussion on medieval state of Bijapur by Subha Narayanan highlights the various processes through which Bijapur maintained an identity distinct from the Bahmani state. Patronage to Shias and affinities with Persian cultural traditions were some of the interesting aspects of this process. The narrative on Ramaraya by Nilanjan Sarkar focusses on the treatment and reporting of events like wars and how they shape history-writing beyond narratives of victory and defeats. Speaking about the significance of narratives Sarkar rightly asserts, 'narratives do not necessarily have the last word'. Sarkar emphasises more on 'social processes, popular reinterpretation and cultural accretions of generations.' Discussion on eighteenth century poetry by Kesavan Veluthat brings to light the power and role of narratives in facilitating the spread of ideas through the illustration of literary traditions like *Mahisasatakam*. Veluthat brings out the inherent social and political protest in contemporary literary traditions.

The book under review, begins with a fitting Introduction to the academic personality of TKV and is also enriched by two appendices on TKV and his many publications. With maps, plates, illustrations and an exhaustive appendix, this book is a must read for scholars of Indian History and for the general reader who would enjoy being introduced to the diversity of our cultural heritage spanning several centuries. The essays put together in this book not only make interesting reading but also set firm ground for following a wider perspective and understanding of the many histories of peninsular India. One can say that the book under review is a successful attempt to identify the richness of Peninsular India and a good tribute to TKV.

Saurabh Kumar is a research scholar at the Department of History, University of Delhi, Delhi.

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MARCH 2021

Book Reviews

ANA DELGADO (Ed.) (2016), *Technoscience and Citizenship: Ethics and Governance in the Digital Society*. Switzerland: Springer, 189 pp., ₹9,039, ISBN: 9783319324128 (Hardcover).

A burgeoning terrain of scholarship in the oeuvre of science and technology studies (STS) pertains to understanding the uncertainties and disruptions engendered by emerging technologies. Increasing technoscientific interventions in the life-world of citizens have prompted scholars to interrogate the ethical and governance challenges created by these innovations and their commercial applications. This edited volume can be situated within this very landscape. It develops an impressive transdisciplinary perspective and seeks to delve into the reconfiguration of power relations in the pursuit of promising technological inventions. The book is an outcome of the Technolife project, supported by the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7; 2007–2013) of the European Commission. In congruence with this project's stated aim of representing socio-technical imaginaries and ethical issues in science, technology and policy development, the volume's eleven essays—thematically divided into four parts—meticulously appraise the emergence and implications of three types of technologies: digital maps, body enhancements and biometrics.

Ana Delgado sets the tone for the book in the Introduction, posing some pressing questions related to 'how technologies might enter people's worlds to produce change' (p. xii). The chapters constituting Part One, 'The Governance of Emerging Technologies', focus primarily on governance and undertake a fascinating interrogation of public reactions and institutional developments in response to particular processes of technological emergence. In Chapter 1, Roger Strand and Silvio Funtowicz take forward Wynne's (1993) insistence on 'institutional reflexivity', to make a case for reflexivity on part of researchers who are well placed to represent the visions, hopes and aspirations of the public as they participate in designing ethical frameworks for new and emerging fields of science and technology. Such researchers, according to Strand and Funtowicz, can serve as active partners in the innovation discourse by acknowledging their embeddedness in the larger political context, thereby granting true meaning to the notion of participation. The subject

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matter of Chapter 2 is about public articulations that remain at the margins of representation, which, in their attempt to accommodate technological innovation and change, evoke the category of the 'public spectre'. Kim Jepsen, Ana Delgado and Margareta Bertilsson interestingly characterise the public spectre as a political symbol, which epitomises the multiple and contested ways in which technologically affected people articulate their citizenship claims. This chapter also facilitates a theoretical underpinning of the remaining essays in this volume, as it proposes an approach to visibilise those voices that often fall out of the ambit of formal representative politics.

Part Two, 'Governing the Human Body and Mind', highlights the manner in which the human body becomes the terrain of technological intervention, acted upon simultaneously by science, government and industry. In Chapter 3, Kim Jepsen offers a sociological analysis of how acquiring a bionic implant radically changes the lives of hearing-impaired individuals and maintains that the cochlear implant (CI) carries 'designs on citizenship' that can be understood as being 'intimately tied to how social belonging is affected and social worlds are shaped by new technologies' (p. 46). The author persuasively argues for a shift in methodological focus towards 'situated knowledge', by deconstructing the narratives around scientific assessments of CI users' experience, which conveniently legitimised the discourse of liberation from a disability that the 'bionic ear' promised. Jepsen's justification of discarding complete aperspectivity in favour of alternative experiences of social reality is reminiscent of standpoint epistemologists (Haraway, 1991; Harding, 1992) and, furthermore, Jepsen insightfully carries forward their arguments by using the debates around the CI to navigate the controversial social worlds that this technology generates.

Authored by Søren Holm, Chapter 4 overviews the competing claims regarding body modification and enhancement, with reference to the right of 'morphological freedom'. The author cleverly captures the contradiction inherent in the practices of bodily modification for medical treatment on the one hand and bodily enhancement on the other hand, using the same set of technologies. Holm also examines *the implications of disparate accessibility to body enhancement technologies, which compromises commitments of social justice. Invoking the Rawlsian postulation that inequalities can be permitted only if they benefit the 'worst-off' members of the society, Holm demonstrates how unequal access to enhancement technologies can be ethically problematic for social policy.* Where he falls short in this chapter is in his failure to expand his argument in the face of a libertarian critique (Nozick, 1974) of Rawls, which would have justified these inequalities as long as they were produced in a legitimate manner. Similar themes reappear in Chapter 5, wherein Miquel Barceló and Louis Lemkow draw on fictional prose to explore the speculative potential of these texts with regard to futuristic technologies and their political and ethical implications. The selection of works analysed in this chapter have a subtle bearing on the thematic orientation of this section of the book, as they reinforce the idea of a quest for human identity and the control of technoscientific

innovation—be it through implants, enhancements or prose. As such, the grouping of these three essays works quite well.

The three essays in the third segment of the book, ‘Governing Citizen’s Movements’, cogently bring out the tussle in striking a balance between state deployment of technological machinery to ‘secure’ citizens and preserving the freedom of those very citizens. In Chapter 6, Krístrún Gunnarsdóttir problematises the free movement of data as effectively the fifth freedom under the Single Market of the European Economic Area (EEA). She exposes how the ideal of European political integration and social cohesion has furthered a securitisation agenda founded on biometric registries and cutting-edge ICTs. Within such a setting, where the preponderance of surveillance technologies centres primarily on ‘publics-as-threat’ (p. 94), citizens have no meaningful defence apart from self-censorship. While this is not an ingenuous observation on part of Gunnarsdóttir—various iterations of this claim have been made in response to Aadhaar in India—it is nevertheless significant because as Gunnarsdóttir points out, it highlights the political insecurities of modern state systems that employ securitisation as the tool to manage dissenters.

Katrin Laas-Mikko and Margit Sutrop in Chapter 7 offer a window into the functioning of ‘second-generation biometrics’ in Europe and accentuate the ethical concerns that emerge from the processing of personal data of citizens without informing them. They argue that violations of privacy through behaviour detection technologies in public places jeopardise values central to democratic societies, such as autonomy, liberty and trust. The expense of prioritising security to serve the ideal of integration, especially in the European Union, is also underscored by Kjetil Rommetveit in Chapter 8. He calls attention to a ‘biometrics vision’ of European societies, which envelops them in a security regime executed through interoperable information integration systems. This technology clears the way for government agencies to monitor and mine information about citizens, exercise large-scale surveillance on them and control the mobility of migrants. Although the chapters in this section bring to fore the paradox of resorting to technological means to ‘secure’ citizens, while simultaneously threatening citizenship, they do not seem to go beyond this critique of biometric technologies to advance tangible solutions. Proposals regarding inclusive and deliberative public scrutiny of policy decisions in the realm of science and technology are hardly new (Árnason, 2012; Frankenfeld, 1992; Irwin, 2001), and it remains to be seen how these will materialise in case of ubiquitous technological platforms like biometrics.

The final part of the book, ‘Governing Spaces’, shifts the focus of enquiry from technoscientific governance of citizens’ bodies and mobility to technological interventions in refining space through geo-technologies. In Chapter 9, Kjetil Rommetveit, Ângela Guimarães Pereira and Tiago Pedrosa explore the dynamics of expert-lay interplay by untangling the skeins of a continuum of usage/manipulation that GIS technologies facilitate. On the one hand, these technologies enable private interests to produce geo-referenced data on consumer choices and also make available global images that can traverse national and cultural boundaries and generate discourses around notions of vulnerability and limitations. But on the other hand,

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beyond the orbit of the professional community, cyber-cartography practices serve as platforms for organising new forms of geo-referenced communities and mobilisation for social action. The authors thus reify the emergence of new communities of experts, whose connections are facilitated by these virtual technologies, and who exercise their claims of citizenship by devising their own routes of accessing technology. It would have been further enlightening, however, had the authors explored the crucial question of how far these modalities of action—(re)constructing urban imaginaries and (re)appropriating public spaces by ‘lay cartographers’—achieve legitimisation and to what extent do they translate into a collective experience, embedded as they are in some form of technological prowess.

Fanny Verrax in Chapter 10 offers a broad-brush introduction to various conversations occurring within the realm of GIS ethics and questions the adequacy of URISA’s (Urban and Regional Information Systems Association) professional Code of Ethics. In congruence with the previous chapter, she argues for a redefinition of the expert–lay divide by engaging all stakeholders, and not simply professionals, in the discourse around GIS ethics. Furthermore, she insists that in order to efficiently address and regulate GIS technologies, we need to develop specific ethical frameworks that are sensitive to the social and political implications of these technical systems and that go beyond a general frame of ICT ethics. In the final chapter of the book (Chapter 11), Paula de Curvelo and Ângela Pereira trace the multiple complexities inherent in geo-engineering technologies by focusing on the controversies and debates around them. They have also undertaken a comprehensive mapping of the methods and practices that fall within the purview of geo-engineering. The authors situate these in the interconnected domains of science, society and policy and establish in no uncertain terms the need for more democratic decision-making in the area of geo-engineering.

What is remarkable here is the dexterity with which the binding argument weaving through different sections of the book is reified—whether it is the ethical issues raised by the modifications of the human body or the tracking and controlling of citizens’ movements or the dispersal and regulation of geospatial data or the deliberate manipulation of Earth’s climate, the fundamental pursuit remains the identification of those master values that we as a society are willing to take responsibility for.

An important signpost that anchors the essays of this volume is the conceptualisation of citizens not solely as claim-making individuals who are insistent on realising their entitlements through institutions, but citizens as users and appropriators of technology who challenge the monopoly of those very platforms that produce technologies in the first place. The most significant contribution of this volume, then, is in successfully foregrounding new formations of the public who are not only utilising emerging technologies but are also engaging in a critical dialogue with the sociopolitical constellations within which these technologies are embedded. In that sense, this interdisciplinary collection of essays mirrors the spirit of the Technolife project, of not simply regulating or controlling emerging technologies

but also becoming involved with them so as to negotiate the political and ethical frameworks that circumscribe them.

The volume makes a valuable contribution towards advancing our understanding of the intersections between technology, politics and ethics, drawing together ideas and examples from various fields and combining them in an engaging exploration of the notion of citizenship. Each author has sought an exhaustive coverage of the knowledge debates in his/her area of interest, and extensive bibliographic references lead the reader to further resources. The contents of this volume will resonate not only with scholars of STS but also with ethicists and political theorists who foray into technology's interaction with their respective disciplines.

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Nishtha Bharti

PhD Scholar

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

IIT Delhi, Hauz Khas

New Delhi 110016

E-mail: nishtha447@gmail.com

LILLY IRANI (2019), *Chasing Innovation: Making Entrepreneurial Citizens in Modern India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 304 pp., 10 b/w illustrations, \$29.95 (Paperback), ISBN: 9780691175140; \$99.95 (Hardcover), ISBN: 9780691175133.

DOI: 10.1177/0971721820960016

Chasing Innovation is a multi-level ethnographic study on the shifts that have occurred within the discourses of entrepreneurialism, citizenship and innovation. It scrutinises the varied wavelengths of poverty through the prism of nation-building in order to argue for an observation of the diffused value that lies dormant within it. Crucial to this approach towards understanding poverty as a dormant source

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Knowing Contemporary China A Challenge for India

PARTHA S GHOSH

The timing of this book could not have been more propitious. Since April 2020, when China “allegedly” occupied about 1,000 square kilometres (sq km) of “contested” territory along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), several Indians seem to have emerged as experts on China. Many of them can be found on India’s television channels. What they have exposed, however, is the abysmal state of knowledge on China in the country (Ghosh 2020; Ghosh and Sen 2021). It is a truism that loses little potency in repetition: compared to the West, Chinese society remains largely opaque to us. Against this background, Ananth Krishnan’s *India’s China Challenge: A Journey through China’s Rise and What It Means for India* will do much to quench the thirst of Indian readers curious to know more about contemporary China. Krishnan was the long-time China correspondent for the *Hindu* newspaper and *India Today* weekly. Based out of Beijing, his decade-long stint in China allowed him to travel to and report from every province in the country. It is these experiences and insights that form the bedrock of *India’s China Challenge*.

To put the importance of the book in perspective, a recent statement by S Jaishankar, India’s external affairs minister, may be pertinent. During his keynote address for the 13th All India Conference of China Studies (28 January 2021), he noted:

For all the differences and disagreements that we may have had on the boundary, the central fact was that border areas still remained fundamentally peaceful. The last loss of life before 2020 was, in fact, as far back as 1975. That is why the events in Eastern Ladakh last year have so profoundly disturbed the relationship. ... [T]hree mutuals—mutual respect, mutual sensitivity, and mutual interests—are its determining

BOOK REVIEWS

India’s China Challenge: A Journey through China’s Rise and What It Means for India
by Ananth Krishnan, New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2020; pp 417, ₹599.

factors. ... The India–China relationship is today truly at a crossroads. ... Respecting the three mutuals ... will surely help us make the right decisions. (MEA 2021)

Krishnan’s book touches upon almost every aspect of contemporary China, ranging from the complexity of Chinese politics to the border dispute, and from the country’s massive manufacturing base to the impact of Bollywood on its popular culture. These and many other topics are explored across 24 chapters organised into six parts: Politics, Economy, Diplomacy, History, Frontiers, and Portraits. An epilogue brings the story up to the very present, exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath in China. In it, Krishnan answers whether China had initially concealed facts related to the outbreak, which befuddled the initial global response:

On 30 December [2019], eight doctors sent warnings about the outbreak on chat groups. Among the whistle-blowers was Li Wenliang, an ophthalmologist. The eight were hauled up by the police for “spreading rumours” and were forced to sign statements withdrawing their claims. It is now clear that the Wuhan government lied about the number of infections until at least 16 January [2020], which was incidentally, when the city and province’s annual political Congress ended. (p 380)

To explore the question of freedom of conscience and the state’s repression aimed at throttling it, Krishnan’s discussion of Mao Yushi’s criticisms of the Chinese economic models contained in Mao Zedong’s Great Leap Forward (1958) and

the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) serve as case studies. When China banned Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, ostensibly in response to violence in Urumqi (Xinjiang) on 5 July 2009, and replaced them with an indigenous version called Weibo, Mao Yushi continued to write critically. To him Mao Zedong was “entirely mad.” Mao Yushi’s essay, “Returning Mao Zedong to Human Form,” written in 2011 “set China’s internet on fire” (pp 4–6). In light of India’s ongoing farmers’ agitation and the government’s response to browbeat Twitter for allegedly internationalising the event, and substitute it with a copycat version called Koo, the Chinese experience with Weibo should make for interesting reading.

India–China Relations

Not surprisingly, and as the book’s title suggests, Krishnan pays considerable attention to the question of China’s relations with India and to the centrality of border disputes to that relationship (Parts III, IV and V). India and China have fundamentally different assumptions about the border. To start with, they contest even its length. According to India, it is 3,488 km long; the Chinese claim it is only 2,000 km. India claims 38,000 sq km of China-controlled land in Ladakh, which the Chinese include as part of Tibet. China does not recognise the border as it is delineated between Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and its province of Xinjiang (p 177). The border question which India considers central to the relationship irritates China, which thinks it can be shelved in favour of other mundane issues like economic cooperation.

In the weeks after the Doklam stand-off began in mid-June 2017, India–China relations fell off a cliff. Those two months were among the strangest I’d experienced in a decade in China. For seventy-two days, I would go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building every afternoon to listen to what became an almost daily rant aimed at India. I hadn’t, in a decade, seen the atmosphere so vitiated. (p 183)

How do the Chinese assess Jawaharlal Nehru’s role in negotiating the border question? With regard to the 1962 war, Krishnan quotes China scholar John

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Garver, according to whom Mao thought it necessary to teach Nehru a lesson he would not soon forget. In Mao's words,

If we strike, we must strike big ... resolutely hit the wolf and make it hurt. We can guarantee that for a long time to come they will not dare to come again to conduct aggression against China's borders. (p 246)

For Krishnan, Nehru's maximalist position on the border question ("there was nothing to discuss") left little room for a negotiated settlement:

The full record of the Nehru-Zhou talks—which laid bare the countries' differing approaches and intent towards settling the dispute—should be essential reading for any student of this period of history. ... [They] leave the impression that only one side was serious about making concessions in the talks. (pp 227–28)¹

Krishnan surmises that the many rounds of talks that have been taking place between the two sides offer some hope still for a negotiated settlement. In this regard, something that was recently suggested by a Chinese academic deserves attention. In a web-based colloquium organised by the National Committee on us-China Relations on 9 October 2020, titled "Tensions in the Himalayas," Shen Dingli of Fudan University underlined the "disputed" nature of the India-China border. He suggested that the best way forward would be to declare a "demilitarized zone" and wait—perhaps optimistically—for a better time to arrive, a time that could well be years in the future. To do this, he proposed that China and India should first define a reasonable area of dispute. They should then turn that mutually agreed area into a temporary area of peace, allowing for stability, disengagement, and demilitarisation. And in due course, both countries may learn to respect each other and find a long-term solution (NCUSCR 2020).

Even as attempts are made to read the proverbial tea leaves and analyse recent developments threadbare, Krishnan also offers sobering observations on how the Chinese view India.

[Although] India sees China as an equal ... the Chinese strategic thinkers ... see it as somewhat insulting that [Indians] ... dare to think of themselves as being at par with a five-times-larger economy and a country that spends at least four times more on its military. For many Chinese strategists, it is

the reluctance to acknowledge this power differential that is at the heart of the multiple problems confronting the relationship. (p 158; emphasis added)

Added to this contemporary comparison is the baggage of history:

a hundred years on after Tagore's visit [in 1924 and 1928], the idea of India as a weak, colonised power still persists within China's strategic community. The image of Indians who policed the streets of Shanghai and Hong Kong at the behest of their British masters remains deeply etched in public consciousness. (p 159; emphasis added)

Both these factors serve to make China-India negotiations further intractable.

Knowing China Better

Of the many other fascinating topics covered by Krishnan, particularly noteworthy are his discussion of the unprecedented repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang, the popular revival of Buddhism, the prevalence of high-level corruption across the country, and the popularity of Bollywood cinema. Uighur Muslims are today under siege in China as the state makes a concerted effort to deracinate them. For example, at the time of the founding of the People's Republic of China, just 6% of the province's population was Han Chinese. Today, that number stands at 40%. In the provincial capital of Urumqi, Uighurs were traditionally in the majority, but are now an ever-shrinking minority (pp 298–99). Not surprisingly, they resent the international indifference to their plight. Some prominent voices from the region are especially critical of India, drawing an uncomfortable distinction between India's concern for Tibetans while turning a blind eye to the plight of the Uighurs. "It's because we are Muslims," they feel. They are no less critical of Pakistan also in this regard which, they argue, does

not care about Xinjiang Muslims because "they follow their masters in Beijing" (p 311).

Given the Chinese state's self-avowedly areligious character, the suppression of Islamic religiosity in Xinjiang can at the very least be explained, though not condoned. From such a vantage point, however, it becomes difficult to understand the surprising and growing popularity of Buddhism across the country. The official census puts the Buddhist population at 100 million; but unofficial estimates say that the real number could well be in excess of 300 million. One explanation offered by Krishnan is the growing alienation and stress that has been brought about by rapid urbanisation (pp 290–93). The modernisation of Chinese society also seems to be the cause for increased levels of corruption. Many in India may believe that an all-powerful communist state would not tolerate corruption. But as Krishnan shows, the scale of corruption in China dwarfs that in India:

Chinese authorities have themselves estimated that as much as 800 billion yuan (Rs 8 lakh crore) may have been taken out of the country as ill-gotten wealth. The Rs 4,479 crore supposedly stashed by 339 Indians in Swiss banks pales in comparison. (p 35)

The popularity of Bollywood offers yet another interesting point of comparison with India. A good proportion of China's youth is enchanted by India's film icon Aamir Khan, who has achieved some kind of cult status. The Aamir Khan Fan Club has at least 1,00,000 members, 500 of whom are active. PK was a runaway success and was the first Indian film to earn as much as 100 million yuan (about \$15 million). Khan's next film *Dangal* was an even bigger hit, grossing a whopping 1 billion plus yuan.

EPW Index

An author-title index for EPW has been prepared for the years from 1968 to 2012. The PDFs of the Index have been uploaded, year-wise, on the EPW website. Visitors can download the index for all the years from the site. (The Index for a few years is yet to be prepared and will be uploaded when ready.)

EPW would like to acknowledge the help of the staff of the library of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai, in preparing the index under a project supported by the RD Tata Trust.

Today, "Uncle Aamir" is "a household name in China." But we would do well to note that his popularity rests on his personal appeal, not necessarily the appeal of Bollywood writ large. But the very factors that attract such a large fan following—a focus on social ills, gender relations, inequality, etc—may well attract the attention of a disapproving state and party. As Krishnan notes,

The [Chinese] films that make it to the movie theatres, more often than not, are ones that carry a message that the Communist Party is the most comfortable with. And that message is, to borrow a phrase from an Aamir movie [*Three Idiots*]: all is well. (pp 357–61)

To conclude, let me return to the theme I began this review with: India needs to know China better. Krishnan makes this point evocatively:

You spend a year, and you know enough to hesitate. You spend a decade, and the

complexity overwhelms you so much that you realise it would be a fool's errand to try to make any sense of the place. This summed up my China experience too. Of all the stereotypes about the "the Chinese" I encountered in India, one I heard most often—and one that particularly annoyed me—was the notion that "all Chinese think alike". ... *If India is to have a better grasp of its neighbour, there's no doubt we—in the media, and the academic and the business communities—need to place far more attention and investment in China than we currently devote.* (pp 333–34; emphasis added)

Partha S Ghosh (parsarg@gmail.com) is senior fellow, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi. He was formerly ICSSR National Fellow and taught South Asian studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

NOTE

- ¹ In this connection some valuable perspectives can as well be culled from Ramesh (2019: 506–22, 669–70).

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Policy versus Pretence Tackling Air Pollution in India

SANTOSH HARISH

Air pollution was only beginning to get acknowledged as a public health crisis by the political class in India when COVID-19 redefined how a public health crisis is perceived for a generation. And now, either seeking to improve the "ease of doing business" or being unwilling to impose costs on polluters citing the economic crisis, there is a real risk that the Indian state may regress on its recent, tentative steps.

Air: Pollution, Climate Change and India's Choice Between Policy and Pretence by Dean Spears is an instructive reading to navigate this moment. Two themes surface repeatedly in this book. First, Spears argues that the notion of a trade-off between development and environment is vastly overstated, and especially when we consider the impacts of pollution exposure on early childhood development, the two converge. Second, he discusses how governments often engage in the pretence of appearing to be serious

Air: Pollution, Climate Change and India's Choice Between Policy and Pretence by Dean Spears, Noida: HarperCollins, 2019; pp x + 258, ₹250.

about environment, while doing little in practice to make substantive progress. Both these themes have important implications on sustaining progress on environmental outcomes in the coming years.

Outline

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1 focuses on air quality and discusses three important sources of pollution (household biomass burning, stubble burning and coal power), and the health impacts, particularly on children. Part 2 discusses climate change: how India is especially vulnerable to a warmer world, and how accounting for adverse health impacts linked to climate change and air pollution justifies more ambitious mitigation pathways. Spears argues that India can tackle the health crisis linked to air

quality domestically, while citing the same policy efforts to signal leadership at the global climate negotiations. In the concluding Part 3, Spears reflects on the role of the political class, experts and voters in framing and prioritising meaningful environmental policy.

The book draws extensively from the environmental economics literature, and especially the author's own body of work with his collaborators. As a result, the book also provides a peek into quasi-experimental methods to investigate the effects of pollution on health. This could be especially valuable for researchers and government officials approaching air pollution from other vantage points. Notably, most of the research cited here is based in India.

While drawing from his body of work, Spears also draws parallels from his sanitation policy work to identify two key insights that hinder a variety of development and environmental outcomes in India. One, on how effective the government can be in meeting certain types of targets (toilets for all), while flailing at broader structural changes (providing reliable water supply). And two, on the critical role that social inequalities play in sustaining widely shared habits and traditions that block progress towards

be adherent, which even Non-Brahmins concede is a Brahmin prerogative. Young presents us one exception here, a Brahmin who has since been hailed as Ramanuja of the present, for daring to ordain and consort with sudras and Dalits. She also points to governmental efforts to set up schools of spiritual learning for Non-Brahmins and Dalits, backed by court rulings, but notes that these have not been sustainable.

Even as Non-Brahmin sectarians challenge Brahmin reluctance to be their spiritual mentors and protest being kept out of spiritual communities and temple-related rituals, such as chanting from the Tamil spiritual corpus of texts, they are not frontal in their opposition: they appear to want to achieve a separate but equal status. And besides, they are uneasy with the strident and passionate language of rights, as put forth by the Self-respect movement, and many expressed their misgivings over the latter, even as they noted that in their younger days they had been drawn to it. The Dalits who appear in the book are clearly drawn to Gandhi than Periyar or Ambedkar. While all Non-Brahmins featured in the book profess a caste-free religiosity, it is not clear if the Bhagavatas wish to remain fraternal with Dalits in the broad sense of the term.

Young does not comment or gloss such views for us, but only presents them. She is more forthright in her pointing to the privileges and claims exercised by Brahmins, which she contrasts with the richer and more layered history and content of Srivaisnavism. In this context, she distinguishes between the two strands of Brahmin Vaisnavites: the Northerners (Vadakalai) and the Southerners (Thenkalais) and notes that the latter, were more eclectic and egalitarian and favoured the use of Tamil as a language of worship, and that they were often disdained as not being Brahmin enough. On the other hand, the Thenkalai group too was not particularly forthcoming when it came to heeding the spiritual claims put forth by the Non-Brahmins, possibly because, Young reasons, they sensed a challenge to the general Brahmanical control over the temple, the priesthood and the system of shares that separated out temple honours. In this context, she reviews the history of legal struggles to access and equality, and points to the equivocal stance adopted by judges, which, in practice, endorses Brahmin claims.

Missing in Young's appraisal of the social, civic and spiritual progress of Tamil Brahmins (which she does in the last two chapters of the book) is a critical sense of their claims to exclusivity. Brahmin exclusiveness rests on its perceived privileged relationship to scriptural and philosophical traditions of learning, but

this is asserted rather than demonstrated, given that apart from a handful of them, Brahmins are not familiar with these latter. Further, the priesthood that is often viewed as an iconic symbol of privilege was not historically in possession of this learning either, being trained only in secondary rituals. The fictions that underwrite Brahmin claims to exclusivity including in the secular sphere of the arts, which Young concedes have been challenged, need to be further interrogated.

Curiously, Young has not sought to visit the temples and associations of Srivaisnavites of Southern Tamil Nadu, which have had a longer history of ecumenism, with respect to doctrine as well as practice. Tamil scholars such as Tho. Paramasivam have written extensively on the subject: Paramasivam's masterly book on the Alagar Kovil, the temple of Alagar in Madurai, is a wonderful historical and ethnographic account of the temple and its festivals, and how a provisional and liminal communitas has been built and sustained over centuries.

While valuable as an account of a field of experience that has attracted little scholarly attention, Young's narrative does not quite produce for the reader the 'turbulence' promised in the title. While it invokes conjuncture and context, and gestures towards the importance of place-making and everyday religiosity, it does not seek to locate these within a broader social history of Tamil life, as it has unfolded in post-independent India.

V. Geetha
Historian, Chennai

POWERSHIFT: India-China Relations in a Multipolar World by Zorawar Daulet Singh. Macmillan, New Delhi, 2020.

THIS book presents China-India relations both shaping, as also being shaped by, a larger Asian rejuvenation in the midst of a global transition towards a reformed multipolar order. At the core, however, the author contends how their disputed border remains the most formidable challenge which calls for not just more objective analysis but also locating these in their changed power profiles where mutual equations have become far too intertwined with their regional and global interface. He especially cautions Indian experts to steer clear from rhetorical assessments of China from either romantic or utilitarian extremes.

Second, Daulet Singh shows how their 1980s template of ensuring 'peace and tranquility' along disputed borders – that saw Beijing offer in 1993 critical nuclear

fuel for India's Tarapore reactor after the US and France had abruptly refused supplies, sign two most detailed confidence building agreements in 1993 and 1996, and then stand firmly neutral in the 1999 India-Pakistan Kargil War – has become far too fragile. This template finally failed them in their prolonged violent face-off in 2020, which has seen both sides desperately exploring newer equilibria in their relations. Other than their intentions, their force and infrastructure modernization has itself increased both the frequency and intensity of their border face-offs which alludes to an urgent need for revamping their extant methods and mechanisms for resolving recurring tensions.

Based on the author's engagement with the archives and his earlier work, *Power and Diplomacy* (2018), this volume explicates various complicated British legacies that underlie Indian discourses being animated with polemics. He shows how India's northern borders were not even on the original agenda of the much fabled 1914 Simla Conference of which the McMahon Line was nothing but an afterthought that was summarily rejected by China's nationalist government. Its insignificance was further reinforced by continued British ambivalence on its sanctity. The British were willing to concede Tawang to the Tibetans for their explicit recognition for the rest of this line. Indeed, till Major Bob Khatling's February 1951 expedition, Tawang was under the *de facto* control of Tibetans. Till 1947, they had continued to claim not just Tawang but Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and parts of Ladakh to create some kind of federation of Tibetan-speaking Himalayan nations. This explains India signing a spate of agreements with these Himalayan kingdoms.

Likewise, the western sector was also never resolved by the British; they were not interested in border demarcation but only in ensuring their 'exclusive' access for commerce. So, as China liberated Tibet in 1951, it surreptitiously expanded its control across this larger Aksai Chin region. Later, realizing the precarious nature of what came to be called its soft underbelly, the Chinese became insistent on India accepting this entire region as being part of China and as a bargain offered to even recognize the McMahon Line. India, on the other, could never appreciate this swap between the two sectors as it took the McMahon Line as being the settled border. After half a century of negotiations when India finally accepted to go for the package deal, this boundary question had been subsumed by their larger geopolitical dynamics as emerging economies. The author contends that the unprecedented rise of China and now its early recovery from the Covid-19

pandemic, has further exacerbated their asymmetry where even an external balancer (read the US) can no longer offset the 'structural superiority' of China.

For Daulet Singh, more specifically, it is the rise of Asia, decline of the West, and changing China-South Asia equations that are shaping India's immediate periphery as the most contentious region for China-India relations. He believes China is least bothered about South Asia's domestic politics as it focuses on protecting its larger economic investments. It is South Asian regimes that often assume China to be their insurance against western pressures or hedge against India's interference in their internal affairs. For India, China's intrusion in its periphery is often responded to emotionally, making it overlook their critical 'overlapping interests'. He concludes that in the face of a 5-1 advantage in economic power – which is even greater when measured in high technology, human and scientific capital – history offers no example of accommodation between a major power (China) and a rising power (India).

Powershift alludes to China's two big rapprochements – first with the US in the 1970s and then with Russia in the 1990s – and how both were the *consequence* and not the *cause* of the grand political detente (emphasis in original). But today's China remains extremely sensitive to any third country taking sides in what it now calls its 'great power competition' with the US. The author believes that the informal Modi-Xi summits of 2018 and 2019 had briefly cast a reset in their relations based on the premise of India abiding by 'strategic autonomy' whereas most Chinese increasingly see India as choosing to stand with the US. For the immediate, he believes India must begin from the border; give up ideas of extended deterrence by responding on the seas to China's challenge in the Himalayas, and suggests creating agreed buffers in the grey zones, coordinate patrolling to avoid violent scuffles and then gradually explore new equilibria of cooperation and contestations in their broader strategic equations as two emerging powers.

While the book stands out for its exhaustive analysis that makes an important value addition to the spirited India-China discourse, it also often becomes repetitive, and prescriptive, revealing an unwanted flab that may be trimmed in its subsequent reprint.

Swaran Singh
Professor and Chairman, Centre for
International Politics, Organization and
Disarmament, JNU, New Delhi

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Feb. 2021

BOOK REVIEWS

Language, social media and ideologies: translingual englishes, facebook and authenticities, Sender Dovchin, Perth, WA, Australia, Springer, 2020, X + 83 pp., €49.99 (soft cover), ISBN: 978-3-030-26138-2, (eBook), ISBN: 978-3-030-26139-9

The present book explores the role of English on social media by scrutinising the EFL university learners in Mongolia and Japan. The book consists of several sections including an acknowledgement, an abstract, nine chapters, and a bibliography. The whole book presents a comprehensive examination of the active role of English in social media, especially in an East Asia context.

Chapter 1, *Peripheralized Englishes, Social Media and (In)Authenticity*, introduces two main aspects of the entire work. In the first aspect, the author tries to explore the complex relationship between English and transnational EFL university students as social media users. She recognises the language used on social media as 'peripheralized Englishes.' The second aspect, however, emphasises some strong claims regarding the authenticity and legitimacy of the social media English used by EFL students in Mongolia and Japan. The widespread language ideology was addressed in a letter to Mongolian Parliament, 2007, written by a number of Mongolian scholars. The fundamental hint of this letter was to defend the Mongolian language from English and other foreign languages, because they were considered threats to the general national security, linguistic and cultural authenticity, and legitimacy of Mongolia as an independent nation (Dovchin 2018). This idea is highly appreciated in that we should preserve languages from distinction through various language policies and strategies.

Chapter 2, *Translingual Englishes and the Global Spread of Authenticity*, elaborates on the concept of 'Translingual Englishes' by exploring how the concept of authenticity is transgressed as a result of different processes. Canagarajah (2013) asserts that translingual English is about how individuals mobilise different semiotic resources and adopt different negotiation strategies to make meanings across linguistic boundaries, rather than focusing on fixed grammar, forms and discrete language systems. Overall, as author suggests, "the prevailing ethos of [translingual] approaches implies that language is organically organised around miscellaneous semiotic resources, whilst operating in a discursively integrative universe (P.13).

Chapter 3, *Synchronous and Asynchronous Participants of Facebook*, presents the ethnographic qualitative research method conducted in order to examine the online digital language used on Facebook. Mongolian students participated in the synchronous social media interactions (e.g. chat rooms and live updates on Facebook); meanwhile, Japanese students took part in the asynchronous social media interactions (e.g. emails and discussion boards) that channelled a one-way connection. In this vein, Gillin (2007, i) truly expresses, 'the real influencers are no longer marketing experts, nor the traditional media that has always controlled and filtered marketing messages, but millions of ordinary people who are determining in direct and powerful ways what people hear, say, and believe.' At last, the concept of 'trans-textual and modal analysis is highlighted as the main tool to code the materials.

Chapter 4, *African American Vernacular English, Hip-Hop and 'Keepin' It Real'*, Chapter 5, *Heavy Englishes and the Enactment of Authentic Self*, and Chapter 6, *Inverted Englishes, 'In-Group' Talks and Authenticity*, illustrate the ways Mongolian EFL university students are involved in a synchronic use of English on Facebook. Students use translingual English in a unique and creative way through different strategies such as the relocalization of multiple hip-hop

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oriented transnational sources, the heavy import of English, or inverting English mainly through syllabic inversion. However, the metalinguistic conceptions behind these translingual uses of English are claimed to be linguistically authentic and legitimate and to express their language identities. These three chapters truly demonstrate the systematic use and changes of language under different environmental factors. As a result, these data considerably ascertain and highlight the claims raised in the previous chapters.

Chapter 7, 'Ghost Englishes', *Realness*, *Native Speakerism*, and *Authenticity*, and the penultimate chapter, *Idiomatic Englishes*, *Onomatopes*, *Authenticities*, present how Japanese EFL students are engaged in an asynchronic use of translingual Englishes through the reinvention of different linguistic and cultural materials within their linguistic practices. They idealise the language used by the native speakers on social media, what is called *ghost Englishes*, and experience a mischievous learning environment by trusting the real context and see this experience as using the authentic language.

The last chapter, *Translingual Englishes*, *Social Media*, *Language Ideologies*, *Critical Pedagogy*, intertwines all of the aforementioned themes of the book to comprehend the vision and insight of learners' community. Dovchin praises the outlook expressed by EFL university students' on sociolinguistic realities. She criticises the high dependency on idealised forms of language that will trigger 'monolingualism and monoculturalism' and recommends a descending emphasis on the concept of linguistic authenticity. To update the pedagogical system, then, adding *translingual Englishes in social media* as a topic to the present curriculum seems essential, considering the rapid growth of social media and its impact on language.

The book provides an excellent approach to the critically minded community of applied linguists, serving as a refreshing and much needed contribution to the field. Engaging a variety of Facebook data, the book predominantly highlights the presence of English on social media as a mode of *translinguality*, by providing a manifold combination of sources, genres, modes, styles, and productions, and by explicitly addressing comprehensive sociocultural, historical, and ideological venues focusing on EFL university students in East Asia (Mongolia and Japan). The scope of the book underlines the significance of multifarious ideologies of linguistic authenticity considering their usage of 'translingual Englishes' on social media.

Overall, Dovchin's rich and deep contribution to the study of language on social media paves new and challenging paths for researchers, bringing to the fore the significance of the diverse criteria, identities, beliefs, and ideas about the notion of linguistic authenticity. Her project could inspire explorations of the notion of 'translingual Englishes' on social media in critical EFL educational contexts despite the complexity of modern linguistic experiences.

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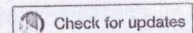
Amin Karimnia

Department of English, Fasa Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran

✉ aminkarimnia@yahoo.com

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BOOK REVIEW

Foreign Language Proficiency in Higher Education, edited by Paula Winke & Susan Gass, Cham, Switzerland, Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2019, 318 pp., \$149.99 (hardcover), ISBN 978-3030010058

The nature of second language (L2) proficiency has been the object of much theoretical discussion (Byrnes, 1987; Thomas, 1994) and empirical investigation (Leclercq, Edmonds, & Hilton, 2014). This book attempts to address the issues of L2 proficiency from different perspectives, based on the data collected from the "The Language Flagship Proficiency Initiative" project which is a US federally funded grant awarded to Michigan State University, the University of Minnesota and the University of Utah. The initiative, housed at Michigan State University, aims to provide a systematic exploration of issues related to the assessment of L2 proficiency development, and demonstrate how the introduction of informed assessment practices into established language programs exerts an influence on pedagogical practices and proficiency outcomes (Gass, Winke, & van Gorp, 2016). In addition, the book includes experiences and reports from other US institutions in order to provide a broad range of efforts to document language proficiency assessment experiences and practices. This book is thematically divided into four parts. The first part begins with two preliminary chapters which introduce US proficiency testing and examine the influence of performance-based assessment. The remainder of the book is organized into three sections: curricular issues, assessment, and instructors and learners.

Part I (Chapters 1-2) deals with proficiency testing and the impact of performance-based assessment in US universities. Chapter 1 by Susan Gass and Paula Winke provides background information for the "The Language Flagship Proficiency Initiative" project and offers a brief overview of the ensuing 14 chapters in the book. The next chapter by Benjamin Rifkin examines the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines which provide nationally recognized benchmark performance indicators to evaluate language learners' performance, and the World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning which offer language instructors a curricular framework to help them design the curriculum for world language programs. Rifkin argues that these performance metrics and language curricula can also serve as a model for other liberal arts disciplines. These two chapters are intended to offer the reader a brief overview of L2 proficiency testing in the US and the impact of language proficiency testing on language teaching and learning. At the same time, the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning are introduced to show their important roles played in language instruction and testing.

Part II (Chapters 3-7) moves on to curriculum design and proficiency assessment. It is made up of four chapters which approach different language curricula in different university contexts. Chapter 3 by Hacking, Rubio, and Tschirner begins with an examination of the relationship between vocabulary size and reading proficiency for college-level students of Chinese, Russian and Spanish at the University of Utah. The findings show a strong correlation between receptive vocabulary knowledge and level of reading proficiency for all three languages. Chapter 4 by Soneson and Tarone describe an ongoing Proficiency Assessment for Curricular Enhancement (PACE) project at the University of Minnesota that incorporates curriculum design and reports on the results of L2 proficiency assessment in seven language programs there. They argue that foreign language programs can be greatly enhanced by standardized assessments, professional development, and student involvement in self-assessment. Chapter 5 by Kagan and Kudyma approaches the impact of assessment on curricular design for second-generation heritage

learners of Russian at the University of California, Los Angeles. It focuses on an integrated test that assesses all four skills, and assesses learners' grammatical competence, vocabulary knowledge, and pragmatic competence. Chapter 6 by Winke, Gass, and Heidrich offers an overview of foreign language proficiency testing at the Michigan State University, the University of Minnesota and the University of Utah, comparing the collected data in areas of listening, speaking and reading with the data of John Carroll (1967) to revisit the status of current L2 proficiency, and identifying possible predictors of L2 proficiency.

Part III (Chapters 7-12) is focused on assessments and learning outcomes. In this section, six chapters delve into assessment with many of the same languages dealt with in Part 1. Chapter 7 by Cox, Bown, and Bell focuses on the effect of the language used (L1 vs. L2) for the test questions on reading test performance. Their investigation demonstrates that when the questions are in the L2, the scores are lower, and then explains why some test-takers prefer L2 questions while others prefer L1 (English) questions. Chapter 8 by Rubio and Hacking picks up on the vexing question of proficiency and performance. Their research shows that proficiency tests may not always be the most suitable tool to measure language learning during the initial semesters of college instruction. The following two chapters examine the issue of self-assessment with an aim to help students learn to help themselves understand and increase language proficiency. Chapter 9 by Tigchelaar attempts to probe the relationship between self-assessments and OPIc ratings of oral proficiency in French. The findings contribute to the wider discussion of self-assessment in language learning and have important implications for language assessment, instruction, and assessment research. Chapter 10 by Sweet, Mack, and Olivero-Agney investigates the efficacy of an integrated standardized L2 self-assessment protocol (BOSSA) at the University of Minnesota. The study reveals that large-scale self-assessments can successfully support learners, instructors, and language programs through facilitating self-awareness, learner agency and awareness of the language learning process.

The last two chapters in this section mainly explore learning outcomes. Chapter 11 by Vanpee and Soneson focuses on the influence of systematic proficiency assessments on the development of Arabic proficiency. The findings demonstrate how the triangulation of efforts of proficiency assessment, self-assessment, and professional development can ultimately result in large gains in student proficiency in Arabic. The final chapter of this section by Davidson and Shaw offers a cross-linguistic and cross-skill perspective on second language development in study abroad. The findings report substantial proficiency gains in speaking, reading and listening across study-abroad programs for Arabic, Chinese and Russian.

Part IV (Chapters 13-15) focuses on the issue of instructors and learners. The three chapters in this section investigate the teaching and learning of three languages: Japanese, Spanish, and Chinese. Chapter 13 by Dillard examines an approach to Japanese teacher development in higher education, based on the work discussed by Vanpee and Soneson (Chapter 11) regarding PACE. It details a study which examines two Japanese instructors within the framework of activity theory and micro-interactional analysis, demonstrating the role of professional development for language teachers in increasing language learners' L2 proficiency levels. Her findings corroborate the view that a combination of regular workshops and sustained instructional inquiry groups can be particularly effective in enhancing teacher professional development. The next chapter by Maloney investigates the important topic of students' digital literacy practices and the factors affecting engagement. The findings indicate significant correlations among language proficiency, language majors, study abroad experience and reported levels of digital literacy. Chapter 15 by Polio is centered around the relationship between proficiency test scores and classroom practices for learners of Chinese, and conducts a mixed-methods study which combines quantitative data from proficiency scores with qualitative data from classroom observations and focus group interviews. Her study found that classroom teaching practices have some potential to explain

the test scores, which will inform future instruction within a language program. In addition, the study provides suggestions on how to conduct mixed-method evaluation studies in the future, and evaluates the use of a general observation form to capture the nature of classroom instruction. The book concludes with an afterword by Margaret Malone who sums up the chapters and offers some valuable suggestions for future research and action.

In summary, this volume first deals with foreign language proficiency testing in the context of US universities. Next, it investigates the issue of proficiency assessment and curriculum design. Then, it explores the relationship between language assessment and learning outcomes. Lastly, it focuses on assessment factors in the classroom context, in particular, instructors and learners. What unifies the contributions is their attention to how to assess foreign language proficiency which plays an important role in the L2 development of university students.

Due to the diversity in focus and methodology, the contributions to this volume show how current initiatives have expanded the growing assessment expertise of university professionals with regard to languages taught at U.S. universities. However, there are several minor limitations in this volume in terms of language testing and assessment instruments, the scope of L2 proficiency assessment, and the small number of participating institutions. First, there is a lack of research examining psycholinguistic indicators or predictors of L2 proficiency to measure both the productive and receptive skills of L2 learners. Second, different testing and measurement instruments such as observation protocols and portfolios could have been employed in order to validate or triangulate the research findings of this volume, and would have increased its methodological rigor. These changes would enable researchers to better see learners' longitudinal development rather than just moment-in-time trends. Finally, data collected from the relatively small sample of universities or colleges cannot be generalized to represent learning outcomes across the entire US higher institutions of learning. Therefore, more research is needed to focus on the participating institutions, replication of studies, renewed efforts for student self-assessment, increased professional development, and more support for a national study.

Notwithstanding the minor shortcomings, the chapters of this volume, which all deal with L2 proficiency assessment from an SLA perspective, contribute to a deeper understanding of the concept of proficiency, and provide a variety of answers to the question of how best to assess L2 proficiency. They offer insight into the proficiency levels university students can attain, the possibility of positive washback on language instruction in higher education, and reasonable expectations for language learning and instruction. In addition, work in the world languages field that focuses on the influence of performance assessment can serve as a model for other post-secondary liberal arts disciplines to develop their own discipline-specific performance benchmarks, and design and implement the corresponding curricula. As such, this volume is expected to help researchers and instructors adapt their assessment practices and curriculum design when necessary. It can also be an invaluable source for graduate students who are interested in language testing and assessment, language curriculum, and foreign language instruction.

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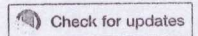
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Gaoxin Li

School of International Education, Jishou University, Jishou, China

✉ xindavidlee@qq.com  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0626-6902>

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BOOK REVIEW

✓ **Evaluating language assessments**, by Antony J. Kunnan, New York, NY, Routledge.
2018. 273 pp., \$39.95 (paperback), ISBN: 978-0-415-89777-8

The book describes an ethical approach to the evaluation of language assessments in pursuit of fairness and justice principles. Argument-based validation is used to ascertain the presence or absence of these principles in the assessment process and consequences. Claims derived from the fairness principle, opportunity-to-learn, meaningfulness, and absence of bias, as well as the claim for washback and consequences referenced from the justice principle, are analyzed using the argumentation methodology. The book concludes with a discussion of how to advance fairness and justice in language testing with suggestions for implementation. This book forms an important addition to previous publications in the area as it provides a sound and well-grounded knowledge base and a rigorous, clearly presented complementary validation methodology. It can be used as a reference and guidebook for a wide readership. Some drawbacks are noted, especially the exclusive use of tests to exemplify the fairness and justice principles and validation process, and the focus on English language assessment.

The current COVID-19 crisis has challenged fundamental understandings in all spheres of life. Though the long-lasting impact of this unprecedented period is still unknown, it is bound to reshape future norms and behaviors worldwide (Harari, 2020). Such is the case in the field of language evaluation, where formerly routine practices and considerations have been (and are being) reshuffled in search of solutions for the constrained reality brought on by the pandemic. One of these solutions for high-stakes language proficiency tests is the move from testing centers to at-home on-line administration. In a recent review of some of these tests, Isbell and Kremmel (2020) note issues that have arisen due to the novel test administration conditions, from exam security and technological availability to the validity of comparable test scores across test-taking settings. The review highlights the disparity amongst test takers, as for example some of the special home-test sections are either not available in designated geographical areas or require specific digital platforms, hence compromising fairness and equity. An emergent concern that therefore runs across this new reality of global and local chaotic uncertainties is the pressing need to safeguard individual and group rights in the testing cycle and in its subsequent consequences. Thus, the fairness and justice lens through which Kunnan has chosen to examine the evaluation of language assessment in this book (though published prior to the Covid-19 outbreak), is extremely pertinent now, perhaps more than ever before.

The book falls under the category of what Davies (2008) in his review of language testing textbooks termed "principles", a category added to his previous discussions and disseminations of "knowledge and skills". The focus on principles acknowledges current understandings as to the pivotal social role of tests and their effect on the lives of individuals, and the need for a critical approach towards language assessment. Principles, according to Davies, "concern the proper use of language tests, their fairness and impact, including questions of ethics and professionalism, thus a consideration of the growing professionalism of language testing, of the responsibilities of language testers and of the impact of their work on a range of stakeholders and of the ethical choices they must make" (p. 328). The significance of these growing understandings is mirrored in Kunnan's ethics-based approach to language evaluation, as well as in yet another recent book with a similar thematic focus by McNamara, Knoch & Fan, *Fairness, Justice and Language Assessment* (2019). These publications are instrumental for promoting professional knowledge,

within and outside the language testing community, to enhance awareness and generate discourse on the fundamentals of ethics in language assessment.

As stated in the preface to the Kunnan publication, "What is central and important about the argument in the book is the pursuit of fairness and justice in the various contexts of language assessments" (p. xv). Drawing on historical accounts and on moral philosophical thought in both general and language specific measurement, the book sets out to examine the extent to which the rights of test takers may be jeopardized in the different stages of the process. The review and analyses are intertwined with an introduction to and implementation of a complementary validity research methodology in the form of evidence-based argumentation (based on Toulmin's argumentation model), used to ascertain and validate the presence or absence of the principles of fairness and justice. The reader is provided with a clear step-by-step outline of the argumentation process from the setting of principles and sub-principles, in this case the fundamental guidelines and standards of fairness and justice that provide the underlying backbone of the book. The chapters then proceed to the operationalization of the principles into claims and sub-claims, the articulation of warrants which will then be evaluated via research studies culminating in backing which supports the claim, or in a rebuttal claim which requires further examination. The evaluation process is demonstrated through illustrative examples of research conducted on mostly large-scale language tests that are employed as monitoring and surveillance devices for gatekeeping and selection for diverse high-stakes purposes. Drawing on these examples, the different chapters critically question the fairness of the planned procedure and assessment instruments, and the extent to which the obtained evidence supports the just or unjust conduct of governmental or institutional bodies. Such is the case, for example, with regard to the process, format and selection criteria in tests for immigrants and citizenship (such as the US Naturalization Test), and tests for examining reading ability in the first and second languages (such as university ESL placement tests). Instances of active public involvement and protest against injustice, as in the case of the New York Common Core Assessments, are brought forth to illuminate the importance of engaged active advocacy towards the ethical use of language assessment.

The book is comprised of ten chapters, which take the reader through a critical introduction to the topic of fair, just and ethical assessments in language teaching and learning. The first four chapters frame and position the topic within the evaluation domain, leading towards the formation of fairness and justice principles and claims. Having presented the Toulmin's process of argumentation, the author moves on to use this framework in the next four chapters to consider and analyze claims derived from the fairness principle (chapters 5-7), and the justice principle (chapter 8). The concepts presented are central to the assessment process and essential for advancing appreciation of the scope and significance of the ethical issues at hand. Chapter 5 explores the notion of "opportunity-to-learn" and its impact on students' achievements. The concept, analyzed from the fairness perspective, focuses on learning opportunities and affordances, such as the provision of adequate study time and the availability of technological facilities and the acquisition of technological skills. In the language study and assessment domain, such provisions will entail opportunities that guide the learners and test takers to acquire the intricacies of the language, i.e., moving beyond the mere decoding of texts to embedded semiotic meanings and social practices. Claims are made for the critical inclusion of the above to ensure fairness in both learning and test taking opportunities. As was previously noted the centrality of these claims is strikingly visible in the current epidemic-dominant reality, where opportunities for learning and assessment are unevenly distributed. The next concept discussed (in Chapter 6) is "meaningfulness", presented as interchangeable with the wide ranging understandings and manifestations of validity. In accordance with the argumentation analysis process, aspects of meaningfulness

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relevant to the fairness principle are examined, from pre-test planning in the form of setting test specifications, to the cognitive capacity test takers use in the assessment process, moving to the analysis of the construct being assessed, and finally culminating with the consequences of assessment. The argumentation process in each case is clearly described showing either support or rebuttal of the relevant claims, and the discussion is substantiated by informative empirical studies.

The absence of bias as a threat to the fairness argument is the topic of the next chapter. Having identified potential sources of construct irrelevant variance that may cause bias (cognitive, affective and physical), the chapter proceeds to discuss the absence of bias studies, especially in the form of accommodations for learners with disabilities and English language learners, elaborating on the modes of analyses used and their findings. Moving from the fairness to the justice principle, Chapter 8 explores the paramount importance of the washback and consequences claim through an analysis of three high-stakes tests in the area of immigration and citizenship (from the Netherlands, Australia and the US). The systematic examination raises questions as to whether the reviewed testing practice "promotes positive values and advances justice" (p. 212), and the extent to which the testing process is beneficial not only to the test takers but also to other stakeholders.

The book concludes with a discussion of how to advance fairness and justice in language testing. Two suggestions are presented: The first is to adopt diverse language assessment scenarios that require reflective ethical decision-making. The second looks at "expanding the curriculum" of language testing courses to include an "Ethical-Critique" dimension, one which emphasizes the themes highlighted in the book by elaborating on issues such as the history of the field, political motivation as the basis for assessment tools and procedures, social cultural assumptions and relevant philosophical foundations (p. 237). It is believed that the inclusion and discussion of these topics can provide a solid ethical basis for prospective language testing professionals.

The book is an important addition to previous publications in the area. It provides a sound and well-grounded knowledge base in the areas of language assessment principles and their validation. The writing is cohesive and clear, with smooth transitions from one phase to the next that allow for easy navigation. This publication could serve as a course book and a reference guide for those wishing to expand their knowledge in both the theoretical and practical aspects of evaluating language assessment, and provide professional development to aspiring and existing language testers. The contents of the book are especially relevant and valuable for language teachers, as previous research on language assessment literacy amongst language practitioners has repeatedly shown the need to consolidate their awareness and knowledge base on the social role of tests. It can also serve to reinforce the commitment and responsibility of language testers in different capacities to ensure the ethical dimension of the assessment process, including the consequences of assessment measures. Moreover, since the arguments are clearly laid out, supported by an abundance of findings from research studies, as well as by accessible graphic representations, it may also be suitable for readers outside the professional language testing community, i.e., specialists in other areas or anyone interested in the power of language tests and how to ensure beneficial unbiased evaluation.

There are, however, some drawbacks that should be noted. The first and major one comprises of two inter-related variables: the almost exclusive reference to studies on large-scale tests, and the near absence of other assessment tools. Though the book aims for evaluating language assessment as a comprehensive framework, large-scale language tests used as top-down assessment instruments form the bulk of the evidence provided. This is closely connected to the emphasis on external rather than classroom assessment, and stands in stark contrast to the current focus on the role of teachers as assessors, on classroom assessment and on incorporating

a variety of assessment instruments, formal and informal, in the assessment process. Though the classroom setting is mentioned as an important site where fairness and justice ought to be guarded and promoted, very few examples of classroom assessment studies are included in the various sections of the book, and these appear almost exclusively in the "Language Assessment Scenarios" in chapter nine. With regard to alternatives in assessment, one can justifiably argue that the development and implementation of different assessment tools such as the portfolio for example, should also be scrutinized from an ethical perspective. The absence of assessment tools other than tests reflects a worrisome motif in some of the language testing scholarship and in the professionalization of language testers. It coincides with findings from the Brown and Bailey research from over a decade ago (2008) on the contents of language assessment courses, which found that the majority of the topics studied had to do with tests, or in Kunnan's words when citing this research, "most of the courses focus on traditional components and offer few newer areas of interest, including alternative assessment" (p. 240). Brown and Bailey contend that there was only one item in their research questionnaire on "alternative assessment procedures", and that "[P]erhaps, in any future replications, more items should be provided for alternatives within language testing" (p. 373), a point well-taken here as well. This issue is brought up in the book in chapter nine, as part of the discussion on advancing fairness and justice in professional frameworks, intended for developing language assessment literacy. The lack of reference to classroom and alternative assessment in the book weakens this argument. The question that arises is whether alternative (and/or internal) assessment involves unique fairness and justice issues or dilemmas, and whether alignment or adaptation of the investigations detailed here is required. For example, what are the ethical considerations and implications of an ongoing and varied assessment process (rather than a single testing occasion), where the individuals being assessed are actively involved in the different stages of the assessment process, and where some of the assessed artifacts are performed outside the formal assessment context. The series editors may want to consider this for future referencing as the picture presented is incomplete, and the evaluative framework offered needs to be sufficiently dynamic and inclusive to acknowledge that tests are just one part of the story.

Though as noted the book was published prior to the present crisis, the above issue is even more striking considering the existing reality, where alternative forms of formal and informal assessment measures are encouraged to assess alternative forms of teaching and learning, synchronous and asynchronous, individual and collective. In the review mentioned of the current state of home-tests, Isbell and Kremmel (2020) provide us with food for thought as they speculate that "[L]anguage testing professionals may also take this involuntary caesura to ponder whether language tests could not be re-imagined on a broader scale moving forward" (p. 17).

Finally, two more criticisms are warranted: as is noted by the author (p. 262), the book relies mostly on English language tests as the illustrative studies offered for each of the claims. This is far removed from the current multilingual global reality and reinforces the hegemony of the English language as the language of assessment over other languages. Moreover, recent projects and research studies offer the format of multilingual or bi-multilingual tests as a means for creating assessment tools that are fair and relevant to the test takers and can minimize misuse and bias, as in the case of tests for immigrants (Shohamy & Menken, 2015). And last but not least: The title of the book could have benefitted from an emphasis on the fairness and justice angle to accentuate its uniqueness and important focus in the evaluation of language assessments.

Notwithstanding the above, the book is highly recommended as a worthwhile addition to the ethical debate in language testing and to ethical professional practice. The theoretical framework and accompanying illustrative research methodology will guide assessment specialists and other

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professionals grappling with the universal right to fair assessment regardless of social and governmental circumstances, as well as with the responsibility of test developers and assessment institutions to provide assessment that is just and beneficial to all members of society.

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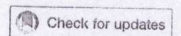
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Ofra Inbar-Lourie

✉ ofrain@tauex.tau.ac.il  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2392-2206>

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Books

WANDERERS, KINGS, MERCHANTS: The Story of India Through its Languages by Peggy Mohan. Penguin Random House, Gurgaon, 2021.

WRITING the past of the nations or regions is a consolidated practice in History and allied disciplines, and so are Historical Linguistics and Sociolinguistics the established approaches to make sense of the past and the present of languages. What has been lacking is linguistic history – history of language or languages, save few like Ostler and Schulman.

Given the dearth of engagement with the history of language, any attempt towards linguistic history deserves appreciation and Mohan's book particularly so for being the first of its kind that weaves the past of select languages of India in the interesting, rather inevitable theme of migration. The book relates *the story of India through its languages* (and that's the subtitle of the book) having chosen the languages, namely, Sanskrit, Malayalam, Hindi-Urdu, Nagamese and Indian English. Peggy limns a fascinating picture of these languages where migration happens to be the

guiding and elucidating theme that cuts across the time and space these languages inhabit. Indeed, the last decade has seen a surge of interest in language and migration and this book can be seen as one of them but stands out for its focus on India in general and for its concrete anchor on select languages representing the wide canvas of the subcontinent. What follows is not a neat summary of each chapter but my notes or responses to the ideas presented across the chapters.

The book opens with the chapter 'A Tiramisu Bear', telling one curious fact that among polar or grizzly bears only males migrate and female do not, and the population sustenance or the spread is linked to this. This acts as a guiding analogy that works across the stories of the languages that come ahead in the book. Before we see what the individual stories are like, it is important to note a few important points. As much as this is a story of Indian languages, it is also, importantly, the story of Peggy herself. Peggy is a polyglot with Creole English (a Caribbean language) as her first language, and Bhojpuri (coming from paternal side her father being a Trinidadian Bhojpuri/Indian) and Canadian English

(coming from her maternal side), besides several European and Indian languages added (see p. 2-3). She is a trained linguist who has worked on Trinidad Bhojpuri, taught linguistics, and been an expert witness in terrorism trials. Her fiction *Jahajin* is a riveting account the weary migrants settled into life as indentured labourers on the sugar estates. So, here is a book coming from a polyglot, linguist who is not blinded by mere theoretical bookish models, not restrained by the limiting Eurocentric approaches, but open to insights coming from the fringe. And that is evident from the references she brings in from recent genetic research or the insights drawn from evolutionary biology or as mentioned above, drawing parallels from the patterns of polar or gizzly bears.

Another upside of the book is that it has something phenomenal to say. The 'focus of the book is not on the languages themselves, but on what language can tell us about migrations and the fusion and change they bring' (p. 16-17). One such insight being that the suddenness in change seems to be more probable in certain instances than the generally held idea that any change in connection to the structure of language has to be gradual. This insight comes from juxtaposing the stories of creoles or multilayered languages across the globe. These ideas have been put to work to make sense of language not as a form but as a process (p. 15). All of this, in a way, invests into relating the story of 'the little people' (to use her often employed phrase) which is barely told, known or thought of, and this is immanent through the story of every language in the book. In terms of the method, it 'is like the difference between the approaches of anatomy and physiology, with physiology being the one that studies how things work, and not simply what they look like' (p. 15).

The second chapter of the eight chaptered book called 'the hidden story of Sanskrit' is a core and dense chapter of which I discuss two points here. The typical narrative of the Aryan invasion has been set aside by the idea of gradual migration (p. 26). This consisted of males migrating and marrying the local women for progeny. The idea of maternal/paternal substratum typically found in case of creoles is also parallel only to an extent. And in connection to Sanskrit there are several layers at which creole like definiteness barely applies. This is supported by the reference to the genetic research regarding mtDNA and Y-DNA (p.26, 28). Drawing references from a journal called *BMC Evolutionary Biology* (p. 29) the male migration in the Bronze Age that took place from the Pontic-Caspic region is further attested. One prominent and ever puz-

zling linguistic feature of Vedic is 'retroflexion'. The retroflex are the speech sounds unique to Dravidian languages and Indic languages where the tongue is folded back to touch the roof of mouth to produce the series T, Th, D, Dh, N, and S and L, the first five of these are sounds that are represented in the third row of the alphabet chart of Indian scripts that follow Devanagari distribution. This feature has been discussed at length. The issue being when and how come Sanskrit – an Indo European (hereafter, IE) language – gathered these sounds. None of the other IE languages have these. Madhav Deshpande's views have been brought in and responded to in connection to retroflexion.

Works of Emmenau, Mehandale, Jan Gonda, Witzel have been referred to give an elaborate account of retroflexion. The author agrees with Deshpande on retroflexion not being an original Sanskrit feature, but doubts his argument that it had been introduced into recitation over several centuries. She believes that such changes, additions happened rather suddenly, based on the parallels drawn from how it operates or operated in the Carribean. She argues that were this retroflexion to be resisted deliberately, it would have been rather easy to do so as a conscious effort as the language of liturgy and instruction is more open to be rigid. Effectively, this addition of retroflexion to the language was rather sudden and unplanned.

She later draws a convincing parallel of Livonian – a Finno Ugric language and Latvian. The point is though Livonian got extinct as such, i.e. no native speaker remained, certain grammatical features like tonality or the contrastive tone were retained in Latvian. Thus, Livonian did survive in face of Latvian in a sense. This example serves as a parallel to explain how a feature like retroflexion – a non-Indo European one, got assimilated in Vedic Sanskrit. The story of Sanskrit has two steps. The first being the entry in the northwest and the second when the Vedic practices got rather consolidated under the Kuru regime, and this was the 'expansionist phase, backed by military might, rejigged *shruta* rituals and the beginnings of grew into a caste-system in Kurukshetra, the 'land of Manu' (p. 73).

The third chapter on Malayalam is based on the idea of how the Namboodiri Brahmins' migration, to an extent, is a replay of the story of Sanskrit in the northwest – the difference being it would have been more peaceful and most probably rather devoid of the second step. Peggy does raise the question of unusual loss of the person, number, gender marking on Malayalam verbs – which other Dravidian languages have. She evokes a parallel to Marathi habitual forms of the

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verb where person marking is lost but number and gender are retained. However, this loss of the marking on verbs in Malayalam remains unexplained, though she does mention similar loss in Nagamese when compared to its Assamese counterpart. One important otherness of Malayalam is the fusion literary language style called Maniprvalam which stands out for its heavy Sanskritisation and that is explained with apt examples.

The next chapter, how the Indo-Aryan languages were born, rightly accounts for the marking of the gender on the verbs in the western Indo-Aryan languages like Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati etc. and its absence in Sanskrit. However, Dravidian languages (except Malayalam as mentioned above) do have such markings on the verb. So, the idea is to say structurally some grammatical features are rather more like Dravidian and starkly unlike the IE or Sanskrit. The idea of substratum does come through to explain some facts here. However, when it comes to a feature like ergativity (this is that strange sentence where one has to begin ones sentence with *ne* as in *usne*, and in some tenses or moods you cannot begin with *vo* etc. at all), having discussed internal genesis theories, she also brings in research that hints towards the extinct, unknown/undeciphered Harappan languages which could have had ergativity. The otherness of the eastern varieties is also discussed in comparison. Ideally more such features could be studied which are neither explainable from the Dravidian or the IE sides, to see into the heads of 'the little people' of the past – who are saved in these grammatical structural features.

Chapter five, To Urdu and Hindi via Turki, brings forth the hitherto unexplored and unarticulated mediation of Turki or Turkic languages in shaping Hindi/Urdu. Though present day form evinces the Turkic to a very limited extent, once upon a time, Turkic languages like Uzbeki, Chughtai played a significant role for a limited period before Persian decisively took over. One apparently surprising but actually rather predictable feature was the contemporaneity of Khusro's language. And the language has remained largely unchanged when compared to Khusro's expression, and it is the literary styles of Sanskritized Hindi and Persianized Urdu that extend the impression of the changed language. The vowel shifts (Ordu > Urdu, o changing to u), consonant shifts (Kha > h. Khanum > hanim across Turkish-Uzbeki-Urdu is a fresh piece of information. This opens up the possibility of future research to explore Urdu vowel system vis-à-vis the vowel shifts that took place between Persian and Turkish (or Turkic languages) before and after they

(the vowels and the vocabulary containing those vowels) arrived in Hindi-Urdu.

Chapter six on Nagamese juxtaposes its case with Sanskrit, Malayalam and other languages discussed and the intriguing part of it is that despite there being no apartheid situation this language has come into existence, and is observable peacefully while the first languages of the Naga people continue to coexist. The contrast with the other cases is that there is no engulfing of any language by spread of Nagamese, and that 'the first intruder, in the Naga case, was not a human migrant but the market which brought the tribes out their mountain strongholds' (p. 220). The author rightly classifies Nagamese as the youngest Magadhan language – a new addition to the group. Also, the author notes how it has lost the markers on the verbs like Malayalam. And though this is an instance of simplification of the paradigm (i.e. reducing the number of distinct forms), a typical feature of creole, both Malayalam and Nagamese lack other characteristics of creole.

Chapter seven, Indian English as an invasive species, draws a parallel to the two steps of Sanskrit. Except that unlike the pre-Vedic, Vedic migrants, the British didn't make India their home forever. Also, the second step is marked by independence where the life of English is organically held even in the absence of the British. English now enters the bilingual repertoire of a child way earlier and faster than it would in the British times. And that there is a kind of diglossia between English and Indian languages. It is apprehended as the slow variant of language death (p. 242). However, at present, English plays a functional role (like one shopkeeper being able to carry out the conversation only related to selling, convincing etc.) while speakers of Indian English being mostly diglossic.

The final chapter, Confluence, highlights the 'bittersweet story of convergence'. It cautions us with the overriding theme of punctuated equilibria where individual languages need not go wrong to be ruined but it is the environment that may change all of sudden, giving a massive blow or another life to the languages. The sheer variety of cases, like Prakrits which are quite close to the target language, then creoles which have grammatical structure of the older languages in mind and vocabulary of the new dominant and then we have cases like Urdu and Malayalam which follow the verbs of one source but have affinity to nouns from another source.

So, is this a book of conjectures? Yes. We come across parallels drawn and the cases of languages juxta-

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posed with lots of 'would haves' across the book. But these are intelligent conjectures, and the juxtapositioning and the parallels are convincingly argued to make the story of every language compelling. As goes the Henri Poincare's quote, 'it is far better to foresee even without certainty than not to foresee at all'; this book offers a hindsight, a way to look into the past and the present of languages based on what has happened or generally happens to languages, the process or the physiology that lends the insightful hindsight.

We are witnessing a time when several kinds of claims of purity are being made, racial purity being one. This book narrating the story of convergence, of intricate and inextricable mixing and layers of encounters and coexistence can be read as the one that underscores the inclusive, hybrid, multilayered idea of India. May this story of languages of India help us change the language of our story of India.

Chinmay Dharurkar
Research Centre for History and
Culture, Beijing Normal
University and BNU-HKBU United
International College, Zhuhai

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**LANGUAGE POLITICS AND PUBLIC SPHERE
IN NORTH INDIA: Making of the Maithili
Movement** by Mithilesh Kumar Jha. Oxford Uni-
versity Press, Delhi, 2018.

REGIONS and spaces that are significant for the mythic and modern history of Mithila and the Maithili language appear in Mithilesh Kumar Jha's *Language Politics and Public Sphere in North India: Making of the Maithili Movement*. The title links the book to the field of literary and print history whose proliferation over past decades has revealed varying dimensions of the modern polities of North India. This study would have bene-fited from a closer engagement with the

* Rochelle Pinto is the author of *Translation, Script, Orality: Becoming a Language of State* (Orient Blackswan).

claims and conclusions of these texts as they impinge on the question of Maithili, though the author does present the themes of various pertinent texts in the introductory sections. However, with recent attempts to emphasize a singular language for the country, this detailed account of a region in what is often represented as a uniformly Hindi-speaking territory is a useful contribution.

Jha's work makes it apparent that linguistic identities and literary imaginations that were an uneasy parallel to the emerging dominance of Hindi were nonetheless not symmetrical with each other. Instead, each acquired different dimensions and representational values across history. Thus Maithili, as this book indicates, appears to have developed neither a popular written idiom nor become a vehicle of popular political representation until the late 20th century. Languages such as Maithili were not positioned to be the bearers of sub-nationalist identities. They were philologically contained as dialects, which allowed for them to be interpreted in administrative terms as localized and therefore subordinate variants to Hindi.

The striking aspect of the movement is the preponderance of the Mithila region as a defining cultural symbol that acquired modern dimensions, but that remained an exclusively brahmanical referent through the late 19th and early 20th century. While the claim for Mithila took on the dimensions of a territorialized and linguistically defined nationalism, an idea that was paramount at the turn of the century, it did not substantially alter or expand its symbolic or ideological potential to represent interests other than those of a fragmented brahmanical elite until the late 20th century.

Though the author references theories and arguments indicating that the surge towards linguistic nationalities was not a natural but a dominant process, the book retains a strong loyalty to Maithili nationalism. The trajectory of argument is shaped by the expectation that a modern linguistic identity would be voiced around Maithili as a natural political phenomenon. As a result, the story of Maithili tends to be driven by its deviance from the timeline of dominant linguistic nationalities, which occasionally makes for difficult reading, as each source is mined for its perspective on the issue, leading to repetition.

However, the text also highlights dimensions of language use that emerged in relation to political structures such as the Darbhanga Raj, which was significant to the renewal of Mithila as a cultural symbol and to the development of a modern infrastructure for language. Rather than reproducing the philological pattern

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of a linear inevitable progression towards the present, the author points to the conflicting philological positions for Maithili, as he states, 'looking westward from the company seat at Kolkata... Maithili... appeared to be a dialect of Bengali. However, looking eastward from the Mughal Imperial seat at Delhi for philologists like Kellog and Hoernle, Maithili appeared to be a dialect of eastern Hindi.' The text mentions the role of Buddhist literature such as the *Charya Padas*, and its significance as a linguistic lineage for a cluster of regional languages such as Assamese, Bengali and Maithili.

Seeing the mass movement for state recognition as the only form of success for a linguistic movement, leads to a conflation of claims for Mithila those for Maithili, though there are many indications that both were not necessarily as significant for some of the protagonists discussed. For instance, the first two histories of Mithila were written in Urdu in 1868 and 1883, the book states, indicating the need to separate conceptions of region and language. While Grierson's grammar appeared in 1880, the same year that the Darbhanga Raj extended its support for Maithili print, Hindi was made the language of the courts in 1881. The ambiguous actions of the Darbhanga Raj and associations of Maithil upper caste elite indicate that Maithili was envisioned neither as the language of administration nor of religious modernity by those who sought to be significant figures in modern politics. It was Calcutta University which first recognized Maithili as a subject of study in 1917. Other aspects likewise, do not lend themselves to the model of a singular territorialized language with a singular script. Mithilakshar or Tirhuta as a script was used to write Sanskrit dramas, in which dialogues were rendered in Maithili. Thus, Sanskrit and Maithili textual production continued simultaneously, without a naturalized convergence of language and script. These details suggest a more complicated relationship of language to script other than the division between unlettered speakers of Maithili and a Maithil elite seeking recognition for the region. In fact, the text indicates the diverse roles of Arabic, Urdu, Persian, Sanskrit, and Hindu, aside from various other languages that were thrust into marginal roles by the emergence of Hindi, such as Bhojpuri.

Varying geographies and their asymmetries make for interesting details. While the Mithila region did not have physical boundaries, its empirical referents acquired prominence, as it historicized. Against the idea of a homogenous linguistic region, the book reveals that a sizeable number of Maithili speakers live in the Terai/Madheshi region of Nepal, and that the language

emerged in print in Jaipur, Banaras, Allahabad, and Kolkata.

One of the more interesting chapters of the book is the one tracing post-independent politics when Mithila as a region acquired more democratic dimensions through the vision of socialists such as Lakshman Jha, who demanded statehood as a means to resolve problems of floods and famine, rather than the restoration of social orthodoxy. This is also the chapter that reveals that the exclusion of Maithili could also signal different forms of inclusion. Thus, Maithili was removed from the Bihar Public Service Commission exams, which saw mass protests, while in 1980, the Maithili-speaking chief minister made Urdu the second language of state. Given that this is the only point where a popular claim for Mithila appears, it is not clear whether popular writing or print ever bridged the gap between Maithili speakers and the Maithil elite.

The first chapter presents the Congress and left-ist conceptions of nation as broadly identical in advocating cultural plurality and religious secularism. This flattened perspective enables an anodyne depiction of Savarkar's Hindutva, which, the text states, 'takes the idea of the Indian nation prior to both pre-colonial and pre-Mughal times.' Though intended only as a thumbnail sketch in the book, this depiction is more reflective of what has become the contemporary common sense on nationalism, as accounts of the uses of nationalism by the Congress and the left would challenge this. Further, this formulation elides the explicit exclusion that is inherent to Savarkar's conception of Hindutva. A few more details and dates would help illuminate the connotations to the names for Mithila, such as Tirhutiya. The book appears not to have undergone a process of editing, an omission that draws as much attention to the publisher as to the author.

Rochelle Pinto

Independent researcher, Bengaluru

TALK ON THE WILD SIDE: Why Language Can't be Tamed by Lane Greene. Hachette Book Group, US, 2018.

THE threat to the existence of languages seems unreal to Lane Greene for whom language is like a wolf – robust, organic and evolving to suit the changing conditions in the wild. With infectious enthusiasm, the polyglottic columnist considers the deep strangeness of language to be its saviour against potential vulnerability. After all it is human invention that is bound to evolve

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of a linear inevitable progression towards the present, the author points to the conflicting philological positions for Maithili, as he states, 'looking westward from the company seat at Kolkata... Maithili... appeared to be a dialect of Bengali. However, looking eastward from the Mughal Imperial seat at Delhi for philologists like Kellog and Hoernle, Maithili appeared to be a dialect of eastern Hindi.' The text mentions the role of Buddhist literature such as the *Charya Padas*, and its significance as a linguistic lineage for a cluster of regional languages such as Assamese, Bengali and Maithili.

Seeing the mass movement for state recognition as the only form of success for a linguistic movement, leads to a conflation of claims for Mithila those for Maithili, though there are many indications that both were not necessarily as significant for some of the protagonists discussed. For instance, the first two histories of Mithila were written in Urdu in 1868 and 1883, the book states, indicating the need to separate conceptions of region and language. While Grierson's grammar appeared in 1880, the same year that the Darbhanga Raj extended its support for Maithili print, Hindi was made the language of the courts in 1881. The ambiguous actions of the Darbhanga Raj and associations of Maithil upper caste elite indicate that Maithili was envisioned neither as the language of administration nor of religious modernity by those who sought to be significant figures in modern politics. It was Calcutta University which first recognized Maithili as a subject of study in 1917. Other aspects likewise, do not lend themselves to the model of a singular territorialized language with a singular script. Mithilakshar or Tirhuta as a script was used to write Sanskrit dramas, in which dialogues were rendered in Maithili. Thus, Sanskrit and Maithili textual production continued simultaneously, without a naturalized convergence of language and script. These details suggest a more complicated relationship of language to script other than the division between unlettered speakers of Maithili and a Maithil elite seeking recognition for the region. In fact, the text indicates the diverse roles of Arabic, Urdu, Persian, Sanskrit, and Hindu, aside from various other languages that were thrust into marginal roles by the emergence of Hindi, such as Bhojpuri.

Varying geographies and their asymmetries make for interesting details. While the Mithila region did not have physical boundaries, its empirical referents acquired prominence, as it historicized. Against the idea of a homogenous linguistic region, the book reveals that a sizeable number of Maithili speakers live in the Terai/Madheshi region of Nepal, and that the language

emerged in print in Jaipur, Banaras, Allahabad, and Kolkata.

One of the more interesting chapters of the book is the one tracing post-independent politics when Mithila as a region acquired more democratic dimensions through the vision of socialists such as Lakshman Jha, who demanded statehood as a means to resolve problems of floods and famine, rather than the restoration of social orthodoxy. This is also the chapter that reveals that the exclusion of Maithili could also signal different forms of inclusion. Thus, Maithili was removed from the Bihar Public Service Commission exams, which saw mass protests, while in 1980, the Maithili-speaking chief minister made Urdu the second language of state. Given that this is the only point where a popular claim for Mithila appears, it is not clear whether popular writing or print ever bridged the gap between Maithili speakers and the Maithil elite.

The first chapter presents the Congress and left-ist conceptions of nation as broadly identical in advocating cultural plurality and religious secularism. This flattened perspective enables an anodyne depiction of Savarkar's Hindutva, which, the text states, 'takes the idea of the Indian nation prior to both pre-colonial and pre-Mughal times.' Though intended only as a thumbnail sketch in the book, this depiction is more reflective of what has become the contemporary common sense on nationalism, as accounts of the uses of nationalism by the Congress and the left would challenge this. Further, this formulation elides the explicit exclusion that is inherent to Savarkar's conception of Hindutva. A few more details and dates would help illuminate the connotations to the names for Mithila, such as Tirhutiya. The book appears not to have undergone a process of editing, an omission that draws as much attention to the publisher as to the author.

Rochelle Pinto

Independent researcher, Bengaluru

TALK ON THE WILD SIDE: Why Language Can't be Tamed by Lane Greene. Hachette Book Group, US, 2018.

THE threat to the existence of languages seems unreal to Lane Greene for whom language is like a wolf – robust, organic and evolving to suit the changing conditions in the wild. With infectious enthusiasm, the polyglottic columnist considers the deep strangeness of language to be its saviour against potential vulnerability. After all it is human invention that is bound to evolve

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with time with different users contextualizing it to suit their communication needs. If that be so, why shifts in expressions and meanings of words should be worrisome? It is only the purists who love one dialect and may take it as an imminent sign of linguistic ruin.

Written words do abide by grammatical conventions, but it is the spoken language which is continually in flux 'providing speaker a menu of options for getting ideas effectively into the reader's mind.' Each language has two sides to it – one formal and the other normal, with the formal having a limited role. Profiling the changes that are sweeping the language (English), Greene wonders when the purists will appreciate normal English as relevant because 'formal written language isn't the only form of language that matters.' Language is a many-faceted thing. Slang and dialect, jocular and off-beat, teen-speak and text-driven, and corporate jargon and political ramble. Do these forms pose a threat to language or enhance its versatility? While this could be open to differing interpretations, it does show that each facet fills a distinct need. 'Not all language is well behaved, nor does it need to be.'

Erudite and ebullient, *Talk on the Wild Side* argues that decentralized changes are not only acceptable but inherent to language. Else, neither will language live nor will it continue to be spoken by people. Humans have done important things with languages and continue to do without letting them fall apart into pieces. The wild side of language is that it is adaptable, but that hardly applies to native languages which easily fall prey to the hegemony of dominant ones. That being not the subject of his inquiry, Greene instead argues that language doesn't fall apart even when people do novel things with it or adapt it to suit varied needs. Every language, therefore, remains a unique product of human genius.

The core idea behind this immensely readable book is that language is always changing, influenced by externalities of the times. The words may not mean the same they did a century ago, and there is nothing wrong with it because languages always evolve towards simplicity. Greene cites the word *buxom*, which originally meant pliable, then happy/gay, and now, a large-chested woman. The need is to accept language as it remains relevant to the context in which it is adapted. The fact that English language enriches itself by integrating words from other languages (especially Hindi) every other year bears testimony to its absorptive capacity of integrating words from other cultures. That is the dynamic nature of language.

However, there are purists who fear that such integration corrupts language, and which may eventu-

ally bring its terminal decline. Such impression may be far from the truth. Most language experts today – those who really understand what language is and how it works, rather than those who focus on how they think it ought to work – sit closer to the descriptivist camp, rather than being prescriptivists. Arguing instead that the latter group is wrong, Greene feels that language can never be tamed or shaped to the will of a select few prescriptivists who keep nuances of grammar closer to their chest without realizing that the regimentation of language may bring its downfall. Language should be allowed to evolve.

Talk on the Wild Side is full of sweet spots that unfold many aspects of language in an ever-changing world. It is both a guide to the great debates and controversies of usage, as well as a love letter to language itself. It touches upon contemporary developments in technology to generate and create languages, or to help with translations. These aren't flawless! However, letting the power of language slip into the domain of technology is fraught with political control. As language is inextricably connected to power, majority-language nationalism may lead to political upheaval. Allowing the one who's holding the sword will eventually decide who's mispronouncing the word. The future of language, therefore, should be in the hands of those who use it. Instead of attempting to tame it, we should allow it to roam freely and evolve in its own way. Greene is clear that neither is thought language nor grammar. Language is culture, dynamic and evolving.

Sudhendar Sharma

Independent writer, researcher and academic

TURBULENT TRANSFORMATIONS: Non-Brahmin Srivaisnavism on Religion, Caste and Politics in Tamil Nadu by Katherine Young. Orient Blackswan, Hyderabad, 2021.

Turbulent Transformations brings a critical caste lens to the study of what has been viewed as a significant sectarian (pertaining to a definable sect) religious tradition in Tamil Nadu, Srivaisnavism. At a time, when the term Hindu appears infinitely extendable, and capable of assimilating a range of positions, arguments and beliefs, it is sobering to remember that not too long ago, the term did not have the meaning it does today. Religious practice hinged on sectarian beliefs and organi-

* V. Geetha is the author (along with S. V. Rajadurai) of *Towards a Non-Brahmin Millennium: From Iyothee Thass to Periyar*, among other books.

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She Opened The Sluices

Budhini Mejhan, a unique victim of the Nehruvian dream, stands for other unfortunates. This novel intensifies her story.

Ashutosh Kumar Thakur

AT a seminar, acclaimed Malayali author Sarah Joseph heard about Budhini for the first time from poet and political activist Civic Chandran, who had written a poem on her. He asked Sarah Joseph if she could elaborate it into a story. It was a theme that touched Sarah deeply and stayed in her mind for long.

Chandran found the story of Budhini in an article, 'Recovering Budhini Mejhan from the silted landscapes of modern India', by Chitra Padmanabhan, published in *The Hindu* on June 2, 2012. Sarah Joseph read the article several times and then embarked on extensive research related to the subject.

On December 6, 1959, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru went to Dhanbad district in Jharkhand to inaugurate the Panchet Dam across the Damodar river. A fifteen-year-old girl, Budhini, chosen by the Damodar Valley Corporation, welcomed him with a garland and placed a tikka on his forehead. When these ceremonial gestures were interpreted as an act of matrimony by elders in the orthodox Santhal society she came from, Budhini was ostracised by her village and let go from her job as a construction worker, citing violation of age-old tribal traditions. Budhini was thence outlawed for 'marrying outside

her community'.

Budhini Mejhan's is the tale of an uprooted life, refracted here through the contemporary, and fictional, lens of Rupri Murmu, a young journalist distantly related to her and determined to excavate her story. In this reimagined history, Sarah Joseph evokes Budhini with vigour, authority and panache in her novel Budhini, conjuring up a robust and endearing feminine character and reminding us of some of the lives and stories too precious to be forgotten.

Translated by her daughter and novelist Sangeetha Sreenivasan, Sarah Joseph's novel powerfully invokes the politics of our relentless modernisation and the dangers of being indifferent to ecological realities. Sarah, once intrigued by her subject, went back and read more about Budhini. She decided to visit the place where her character lived.

However, her journey had an unexpected and dramatic twist when she met the still alive Budhini—Sarah, all this time, had the idea that Budhini had passed away years ago. Thus, uniquely, the protagonist of a future novel herself welcomed the writer.

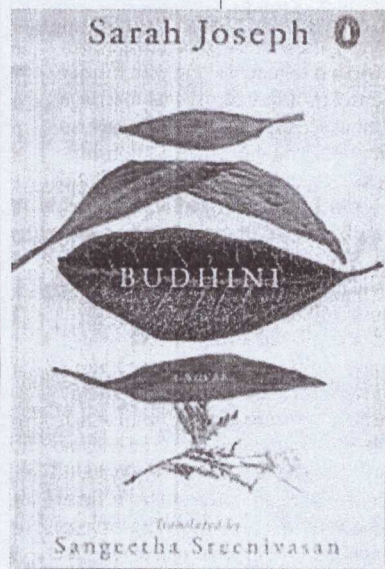
"Our people would like to believe that the woman committed suicide years back," Rupri Murmu told her friend Suchitra, a freelance photographer. They were talking about Budhini Mejhan on their way from Calcutta to Dhanbad. Rupri had received a text from her cousin, Mukul Murmu, who worked in a crockery shop in Dhanbad, saying that Budhini was still alive. The message had literally shocked Rupri.

Much before a newspaper report reached Rupri and made her resolve firmer, she had started her research on Budhini, her village and the many other neighbouring villages, thanks to her Dadu, Jagdip Murmu. It had disappointed Rupri when she had to introduce Budhini's story to the editor. The name hadn't captured his attention. "Who is she?" he had asked.

Then there is the fictional rendering of that rarest of meetings with Budhini—one of those literary wonderments. Sarah Joseph writes about this precious moment with consummate novelistic skill—her first encounter with a character of her novel who

IN THIS REIMAGINED HISTORY, SARAH JOSEPH EVOKES BUDHINI WITH VIGOUR, AUTHORITY AND PANACHE, CREATING A ROBUST AND ENDEARING FEMININE CHARACTER.

Sarah Joseph
BUDHINI |
Translated by
Sangeetha
Sreenivasan |
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House |
256 pages |
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Criminalisation of Cross-border Migration

Gendered Stories of Resistance in South Asia

JEMIMAH GOMES

Issues of immigration and cross-border mobility have always generated fervent reactions in national policy debates around citizenship and security. While migration control is hardly a new aspect of this debate, there has been in recent times a greater blurring of distinctions between criminal justice and immigration policy—a shift that Western scholarship has termed “cimmigration” (Stumpf 2006). Parallel to, or rather preceding this, are the discourses on migration, securitisation and criminalisation that have the power to frame migrants as deviant characters and security risks, delegitimising them in society.

In India, these trends were perhaps most visible in the passing of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019 and the updation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), which, taken together, redefined the contours of citizenship for “illegal” migrants—to the exclusion of primarily the Muslim migrant population. While the discursive criminalisation of Muslim migrants or refugees began much earlier, it was apparent in the narratives of “illegal immigrant” and “infiltrators” that coloured the debates on citizenship and security. The legislative arsenal of CAA–NRC was supplemented by a host of other confinement and criminalisation tactics, from expanding deportation powers to construction of networks of detention centres.

It is this shift towards greater criminal enforcement of migration law violations that merits the intervention of a criminal justice perspective into the field of migration, which has traditionally been the ambit of human rights, demography and refugee studies. These perspectives, however, cannot proceed without being cognisant of the experiences of those at

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Women, Mobility and Incarceration: Love and Recasting of Self across the Bangladesh–India Border by Rimple Mehta, *Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2018; pp xix + 161, price not indicated.*

the centre of these discourses. Who are these migrants that have been or are at the risk of being criminalised? How do we begin to understand their identities (often times not completely dissimilar to those of citizens)? What are their perceptions of and aspirations from border-crossing? And in light of their experiences, are the state responses of criminalisation and incarceration justified?

Multiple Vulnerabilities

Finally, if migrant populations are vulnerable groups, women migrants are even more so. Although the feminisation of migration is one of the most significant changes in global migration patterns, female mobility continues to be seen through a gender-biased lens (Castles and Miller 2003). Women migrants who find themselves in conflict with the law have to negotiate borders, legislation and carceral spaces that are inherently masculine. The processes of border crossing and incarceration doubly victimise them.

It is within this context that Rimple Mehta’s book cuts through the discourses on citizenship, migration, border crossing and criminal justice from a feminist standpoint, to make visible the migrants themselves. The author considers the cases of Bangladeshi women prisoners—charged under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and incarcerated in two correctional homes in Kolkata—and their experience of crossing numerous borders, both physical and social.

The Bangladeshi women’s reasons for coming to India are varied, but predominantly to escape multiple situations of vulnerability and oppression, such as violent and abusive marriages, in search of livelihoods and in pursuit of a better life. The women are mostly young, a majority of them are Muslim, hailing from extremely impoverished backgrounds, and having little to no formal education. From a criminal justice perspective, they comprise one of the most vulnerable of prison populations.

Through a rich narrative, the author shines light on the trajectory of their lived experiences moving across social and political boundaries, their interactions with the border regime, and then, within the criminal justice system. Mehta maps these continually transformative experiences, their impact on the women’s perceptions and changing responses to their imprisonment—in part acceptance, negotiation and resistance—as they form a give-and-take relationship with the system, while carving out a space to exist within it.

The book is a part of the Routledge Studies in Criminal Justice, Borders and Citizenship series and is based on the author’s doctoral thesis. It is structured into four chapters in addition to an introduction and reflections of the author. Chapter 1 presents the research method followed, while the remaining three fieldwork chapters discuss thematically the issues emerging out of the narratives presented.

Prison Research

“Prisons create their own borders,” the author states in Chapter 1, before detailing the rituals involved in entering the prison. Structurally, the prison is an institution of surveillance; neither researcher nor subjects are exempt from this. For instance, Mehta notes the changing gestures, behaviours and narratives of the Bangladeshi women in the prison spaces where they were subjected to a discursive surveillance, to those where they felt less threatened by the power structures within the prison walls. Mehta, on her part, had to abandon her “sampling

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strategy” in lieu of interviewing those decided by the prison staff.

Thus, while the challenges of ethnographic research are well known, researching within a prison brings in added complexities of space, prison timings, dictates and oversight of the prison staff, etc. Although the chapter is essentially an account of the research methodology employed, it can also be seen as a stand-alone in how to do ethnographic research in prisons. The author succeeds in drawing the reader into a new and unfamiliar world behind the prison walls, and laying out the inherent nuances and challenges involved in navigating this space.

Understanding Borders

Throughout their incarceration, the Bangladeshi women grapple with the questions of *bhool* and *aporadh*, whether their journey across the border was a mistake or a crime. Prior to ascertaining this, it is important to know how the women perceived the borders that they had crossed. What were their experiences of the act of border-crossing and how did these influence the understanding of borders?

While the conceptualisations of borders given by the women in their narratives are varied, what is striking is that almost all are at odds with the statist notion of territorial borders. Owing to their limited education, the porousness of the border, ease of border-crossing and the cultural and historical ties between the two countries, for the Bangladeshi women, the notion of a Bangladesh–India border was hard to fathom. They viewed the two countries as: “flowing into one,” “one within the other,” or “one big country” (pp 54–58). Some raised valid questions regarding the flow of goods across the border, but limit on mobility of people, which further obscured their understanding of the territorial distinctions.

Following their interaction with the criminal justice system in India, the women were made aware of the “illegality” of their actions. Even so, they struggled to reconcile themselves to the fact that they had committed a crime in the absence of a “victim.” It is evident here that the understanding of illegality is far from universal.

The author notes that while some of the women were trafficked across the border, others crossed them, ignorant of the criminal repercussions. This is where the present account diverges from other migration experiences—especially those in the West—where border crossing is understood as illegal, but undertaken as a necessary risk, depending on the conditions surrounding migration. The author has not attempted to provide a perspective on the implications of this “unintentional migration,” one of the most compelling aspects of the book. It would have been interesting to know how the criminal justice policy can be sensitised to this unique mobility, essential in adding to its discourse on a victim-centric approach.

The women’s interactions with the processes and institutions of criminal justice system in India—police, trials, lawyers, courts and the prison—are also detailed in this chapter. The author presents the women’s distinctive experiences of acclimatisation as they navigate multiple prison hierarchies. Most prominent is the “us” versus “them” divide between the Bangladeshi and Indian prisoners, with the latter perceived as more privileged. Mehta connects this to the preferential treatment meted out to citizens by India’s criminal justice system in terms of mental, physical and emotional facilities, which further exacerbates the divide (p 81).

From their fragmented conceptualisation of territorial boundaries, Chapter 3 shifts the narrative to transgressions that the Bangladeshi women are acutely aware of: those of societal codes of honour or *maan-shonmaan*. Like in other patriarchal societies, norms around honour are instilled in the psyche of women from an early age and inform their behaviour and identity. As one of the respondent states, “Maan-shonmaan is the most important thing in a woman’s life. If maan-shonmaan is lost, what is left with a woman?” (p 97)

A breaking of this code as a result of their present imprisonment—but even before by moving out of home, engaging in “immoral” sex work, etc—chips away at their identity, and the author details the constant efforts of the women to preserve and reclaim their honour and, thus, their sense of self. This is done through

various acts of negotiation, compromise and resistance, with the women sometimes diluting, but never completely abandoning these codes.

There was also a prevalent anxiety about the process of deportation or “pushback” and returning home “depleted” of their honour, which would affect their future lives. Thus, even after state surveillance has ceased, the women continue to be subject to familial and societal surveillance through these honour codes, and there is a sense that imprisonment has not really ended, only reverted to a different form.

The author’s attention to the expected discrimination and vulnerability that the Bangladeshi women envisage upon their return home could be taken forward in research on stigma faced by migrants in home countries (as opposed to within the receiving country which is well-documented). This could further pave a way for understanding why remigration among deportees is so prevalent, an intention articulated by many of the women in their narratives (Schuster and Majidi 2015).

Love as Resistance

In Chapter 4, the author sets out to explore the women’s experiences of violence and exploitation at the hands of smugglers, traffickers, brothel owners, border security force personnel, and the police. Within the prison, this violence continued in the form of verbal and psychological abuse. However, the women observably resisted engaging with these narratives of violence in favour of expressions and narratives of love—romantic and platonic—with both men and women.

Mehta notes, “It was a certain idea of being in love in the institutional space of a prison which provides them with the strength to go through their everyday lives” (p 122), Frankl’s (1959) “will to meaning” in his acclaimed prison memoir *The Will to Meaning: Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy*. However, the author warns against downplaying this aspect as frivolous romance. Through expressing publicly an emotion that is relegated to the private sphere and by making visible their desires, the Bangladeshi women both resist the patriarchal structures that the prison imposes on them while simultaneously carving out

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for themselves a “new” identity, within the prison. Mehta skilfully identifies this aspect of resistance and makes room for these new, unanticipated narratives, successfully framing them within the categories of resistance.

Conclusions

Mehta’s immersive account is an exemplar of engaging academic writing. She writes lucidly and evocatively, invoking her compelling fieldwork narratives and stories into theoretical discussions. While this book will be useful to those involved in fields of criminology, sociology, migration studies, immigration law, gender studies and prison administration among others, as a pioneering contribution to the nascent field of border criminology

in South Asia, it will further have a formative influence on new scholarship emerging in this discipline.

It arrives amidst the hardening of stances on cross-border migration in South Asia, a region characterised by the “everydayness of cross-border mobility,” owing to a shared history among states (p 6). Thus, taking cue from the Bangladeshi women’s resistance of “criminality,” there is thus an urgent need to resist the discursive criminalisation of these migrant populations by presenting nuanced, sensitive accounts of their lived realities.

At the end of the book, I invite the readers to ask themselves only one question: Are the Bangladeshi women prisoners “criminals?” Any response other than an unequivocal “yes” is testament

to the power of alternative narratives like Mehta’s in informing our understanding of borders, migration, illegality and criminality, and the vulnerable populations existing at their intersections.

Jemimah Gomes (gomesjemimah@gmail.com) is an independent researcher and editor based in Goa.

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Marking the Privileged, Researching the Elite

SAVITHA SURESH BABU

Sociological scholarship has sought to understand elite lifeworlds for several decades now. However, the emphasis in elite studies in the contemporary moment is on power and inequality from above (Khan 2012). Understanding the elite implies comprehending social power dynamics and the ways in which dominant groups shape institutions, be they schools and colleges, corporate offices or “aesthetic frames” that govern our everyday lives. In this trajectory, the book *Mapping the Elite: Power, Privilege, and Inequality* is a treasure trove of insights into the contemporary workings of the Indian elite.

In their introduction to the volume, the editors delineate two phases in scholarly engagement with the elite as a category of analysis. The first phase of scholarship emphasised the functional role of the elite in society and did not necessarily challenge power hierarchies that enabled the creation of an elite. A critical turn in Euro–American academia in the post-war period inaugurated the second phase of elite studies such that,

Mapping the Elite: Power, Privilege, and Inequality edited by Surinder S Jodhka and Jules Naudet, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019; pp xvi + 304, ₹1,495.

over time, the endeavour of researching elite groups became morally coded, tightly coupling “elites and illegitimacy,” as a detailed review of elite studies has recognised (Khan 2012). Even as the editors of the volume recognise this coupling, they point to several studies on the Indian elite, particularly its business practices, taking on a moralistic tone, which does not allow us to understand the elite social groups in all their complexity. This recognition enables the essays within this volume to be attentive to self-perceptions of the elite, alongside their disproportionate access to resources.

The collection of essays in this book brings to the fore the heterogeneity not only in who constitutes the elite in the contemporary moment but also distinct approaches to researching and writing about the elite. The essays cover a wide ground from critical insights into the discourse of “merit” leading to new

forms of “upper-caste consolidation” to the continuation and reproduction of social status by elite women. The essays employ both first-person reflexive narratives and critical sociological analyses. The recognition of a range of factors that co-constitute the elite, within the ground covered above, is particularly insightful. These include the continued resilience of caste networks and patriarchal constraints alongside economic opportunities made available through a globalised economy.

Theorising the Elite

As the authors acknowledge in the introduction, the challenge is to distinguish research on the elite from scholarship on the new middle classes (NMCs). Scholarship has accounted for the heterogeneity within the NMC and suggested that this group is best understood as a class-in-practice which reproduces its privileged position through everyday class practices. The NMCs are a class forged at the intersections of “liberalization and a political context marked by organized political challenges from below” (Fernandes and Heller 2006: 497). Are the NMCs, which embody the fusion of caste and class privileges, only one faction of the elite? How does one account specifically for traditional hierarchies, preceding liberalisation, that continue to determine social life-chances?

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Decentralisation, Development and 'Elite Capture'

ANIL KUMAR VADDIRAJU

The reforms in the panchayati raj and introduction of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution in 1993, and its subsequent implementation were done primarily on the premise that the rural governance system that existed prior to that was taken over by the local elites. In order to deepen the democracy and widen its scope, as well as to reduce the grip/influence of the local, upper caste, and landed power holders on the panchayati raj, many provisions of the constitutional amendment were introduced. It was hoped that with the new panchayat system in place, the rural governance would become more democratic by overruling the local power hierarchies. Ever since the implementation of the amendment in all the Indian states, the changes in the scenario of rural governance have been dramatic, if not radical. Also, since that time, there has been a steady efflorescence of literature on the different provisions of the act and the problems inherent in implementing them. These implementation problems, inter alia, largely were of three categories: the problems of reservation and its effectiveness in panchayats; the problems of the empowerment of women in panchayats; and the problems of finances and their devolution. This is broadly the problematique of the analysis for many studies that have come up since the promulgation of the amendment. This is broadly the case given the policy commitment of the Indian states to implement the new panchayat system.

The book under review resuscitates the argument of the influence of the local elites on the local governance and local development. Published in 2018, and dealing with one of the most progressive states in panchayati raj, that is, Karnataka, the book argues that panchayats and the local development schemes implemented by them, such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee

Decentralised Governance, Development Programmes and Elite Capture by D Rajasekhar, M Devendra Babu and R Manjula, *Singapore: Springer Nature, 2018; pp 169, Price not mentioned.*

Scheme (MGNREGS) and the housing schemes, are still prone to "elite capture." The book falls in the intersection of the local government/decentralisation and development studies.

The book has eight chapters and the first chapter of the book is the Introduction that deals with decentralisation as both leading to inclusive governance and effective service delivery (this aspect is overemphasised in the book). The chapter discusses the connection between decentralisation, millennium development goals and the sustainable development goals. The novelty of the chapter is that it deals with a unique framework called "HYOGO" framework, according to which the panchayats are supposed to take on disaster management works in an inclusive manner. The chapter also discusses the methodology of the book and the repeat qualitative and quantitative fieldwork done for the book. The Introduction makes it clear that the book essentially deals with the elite capture of two schemes in Karnataka: MGNREGS and housing.

Panchayats and 'Elite Capture'

Chapter 2 is an exclusive survey of literature on elite capture in decentralised institutions. The chapter argues that "Elites are those who are better educated, able to dedicate more time to community activities and are better connected with outsiders" and according to the chapter these elites are prone to use the public institutions and resources for private gains. The chapter goes on to say:

elites are those who have superior social, political and economic status. Studies reviewed above suggest that elites in India have large landholdings and are traditional

leaders, have dominant influence on village politics, obtain income from multiple sources, come from dominant caste groups and exercise control on social, political and economic structures at the local level, and decisions of these structures. (p 21)

With such a wide definition of the elites, the study proceeds to the next chapter "Overview of Decentralisation in Karnataka." The study confirms that "The notable feature of Karnataka's functional devolution is that almost all the subjects listed under Article 243(G) of the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution have been transferred to PRIs [Panchayats]." The funds and personnel too have been devolved in Karnataka. However, the authors think that the problems with panchayats in Karnataka are qualitative and not quantitative. The authors go on to say:

Though Panchayat bodies in Karnataka are ahead of other states in India in quantitative terms, they lag behind in qualitative aspects (governance and development). The ward and Grama Sabhas do not meet regularly and, when they do, the quality of business transacted is poor. As a result, decisions particularly relating to identification of projects/works and beneficiaries are taken at higher level, ie, in G P [Gram Panchayat] meetings, the department officials etc. Such practices have the potential to contribute to elite capture and corruption. A large number of elected members from vulnerable sections (depressed castes and women) are passive in their participation in various forums such as the GSS [Grama Sabhas], standing committees etc, and as a result, important decisions are taken by the influential leaders, male and knowledgeable members, and officials leading to exit of members belonging to disadvantaged groups and elite capture. (p 47-48)

Chapter 4 of the book basically deals with checks and balances that are already present in the MGNREGS and housing schemes to prevent the capture of these schemes by the local elite. These are mechanisms such as accountability in grama sabha; social audits, and the ombudsmen. The authors also place emphasis on the limitations that these accountability mechanisms have and how they fail in the process of implementation allowing for leakage of funds.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are empirical chapters that deal with cases studied in the book. Chapter 5 presents the profile of the gram panchayats studied and

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here we found that so far as the land-ownership of the so-called elite is negligible. The authors say:

The distribution of elected GP members by landownership in 2010 shows that most of them are landless, marginal and medium farmers. Only 4.2% of the members belonged to the large farmer category. This is because of effective implementation of land reforms in the state during 1970s. (p 80)

They say that, however, by 2015 the situation changed. And that increasingly middle-rung farmers and "substantial" farmers started taking over gram panchayats. And according to the authors, this is because of the increasing election expenditure. The argument seems to be circular. There is increasing devolution of money to development programmes; the substantial farmers are competing in elections, investing in the elections and trying to reap benefit of gram panchayat positions by cornering the funds meant for development programmes. Thus, they are investing in elections and taking back the returns. Politics, at the local level, has become, the authors seem to mean, a business. Thus, the elite capture phenomenon takes place: this is the guess.

Development Programmes

Chapters 6 and 7 deal with MGNREGS and housing schemes respectively. Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter. Usually, the MGNREGS has stringent stipulations avoiding corruption. However, the authors argue that embezzlement of MGNREGS funds happens and the elite capture of this scheme too happens in various ways. These are by way of showing "ghost workers" on the muster rolls, who never existed or worked, by the inflation of person days while actually working with machines, and by making only part-payments while showing in the records, full payments. The authors argue that these malpractices take place because of limited decentralisation, poor governance in the panchayats, a dormant civil society and also because of the silence of the intended beneficiaries who do not protest. Throughout the chapter the authors are at pains to demonstrate that "the elites" need not necessarily come from the upper castes, they are from marginalised sections too. These

non-upper-caste rural "elites" come from disadvantaged castes and owing to political, bureaucratic connections and panchayat positions, they become elites. The authors say, "Interestingly, these elites did not necessarily belong to upper caste categories. There were quite a few elites who belonged to disadvantaged caste groups and these people had political connections and money."

Chapter 7 of the book is on housing schemes in Karnataka. According to the authors, there are three rural housing schemes in the state, namely Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Rural Ashyra (Basava) Housing Programme and Dr Ambedkar Housing Scheme. The authors evaluate the implementation of these housing schemes and come to the same conclusions as above. Though the targeting of the marginalised sections is done appropriately, there is supposed to be much corruption in the sanction, disbursement and the overall procedure of reimbursement of the funds meant for housing. Because of which the poor suffer. Often the houses are left with incomplete construction and with much indebtedness of the poor who attempt to build them. The contention of the authors is that the rural elite have captured these programmes too. In the authors' words:

The poor suffer due to such elite capture. They have to depend on high-cost borrowing to start the construction of the houses, to become eligible to receive the installments and complete construction. A somewhat high incidence of incomplete houses is due to this problem. This suggests that the very purpose of the housing scheme is defeated at least in the case of about one-fourth of households. (p 168)

Chapter 8 summarises the arguments and concludes the book. This book,

according to the authors, is supposed to have a "broad scope," which is true indeed. If the status of panchayats in implementing the schemes meant for the poor is as bad in a state such as Karnataka, which is known for its panchayati raj, how bad the situation could be in other more backward states? On the other hand, while the scope of the book is wide, the focus of the book is too narrow to tell much about the overall rural condition. For instance, how could the "elite" come up from disadvantaged sections too and capture the development schemes? What are its political, economic and sociological explanations? While the book purports to explain the nature and processes of "elite capture," the book ends without providing any policy recommendations to overcome the same. And that comes as a surprise. What can policymakers do with an analysis of nuts and bolts, which does not tell them as to how to fit them right?

As an academic exercise, this book suffers from too much of empiricism. The book is cluttered with data, facts and tables without any theoretical framework. The lack of even a meso, that is, state-level, political economy framework, leave alone a macro political economy framework, makes the abundance of facts look shorn of any significant gravity. This mode of research disdains political and administrative solutions, disregards political economy and only worships minutiae of mundane facts.

Anil Kumar Vaddiraju (anilvaddiraju@gmail.com) teaches at the Centre for Political Institutions, Governance and Development, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru.

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Carbon Fantasies

Intimate Stories from a Resource Frontier

BENGT G KARLSSON

Foothills. Such a lovely word. It signals an elusive geography—neither high-altitude mountains, nor flatlands or plains. As we learned from post-colonial theorists like Homi K Bhabha and Edward Said, foothills have that quality of the creative in-between space where differences can flourish. In anthropologist Dolly Kikon's masterly crafted book *Living with Oil & Coal: Resource Politics & Militarization in Northeast India* (2020) we are taken to the foothills of Assam and Nagaland. North East India and the borders separating the states in the region are all post-independence creations. Yet, an older colonial logic is at work, based on the idea that hills and valleys should be separated and governed differently. The British had their reasons for this, not least to facilitate the establishment of the tea industry in the second-half of the 19th century. The tea planters were endowed generous land grants in the Brahmaputra Valley, but had to stay out of the hills to prevent upheavals in these "sensitive" frontier tracts.

The British eventually settled for indirect rule in the hills, governing through intermediary chiefs and village councils, based on the customary laws of the respective community. The legal and administrative exceptions given to the hill areas have survived through the post-colonial period in the form of district councils established under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution and, in the case of Nagaland, through the special provisions under Article 371(A) of the Constitution of India. The most critical aspects of these exceptions relate to community rights to land and natural resources. If the state holds the right over natural resources in Assam, such rights are vested with the indigenous or tribal communities in Nagaland. This difference is central to the stories Kikon tells about life and livelihoods in the foothills.

Living with Oil & Coal: Resource Politics & Militarization in Northeast India by Dolly Kikon, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019; pp xiii + 189, price not indicated.

Kikon is a prolific ethnographer and writer. She is attentive to the hardships and aspirations of the people she encounters in the field. The Assam–Nagaland foothills are a resource frontier where extraction of oil, coal, timber and other natural resources takes place in a violent and ruthless manner. Like other resource frontiers, differently empowered actors struggle to claim land and appropriate the bounties of nature. Kikon brings this troubled landscape to life through stories of individuals who seek to provide for their families and yearn for a better future. Most of the foothills' inhabitants come from elsewhere. Some ended up there by force—like the Adivasi tea plantation labourers whose grandparents were brought by the British in the 19th century—or have arrived on their own account to avail land, to escape hardship in the hills or elope with a lover who belonged to another ethnic community. While *Living with Oil & Coal: Resource Politics & Militarization in Northeast India* contains stories about "violence" and human suffering, perhaps the most striking aspect of the book is the importance of love and fantasy in the everyday lives of the foothills' dwellers.

Militarisation and Extraction

Love, or *morom*, as it is locally known, is not merely a matter of romantic love. As Kikon explains, "morom" "is distinct from the English word *love* in that it encompasses all kinds of attachments and affections" (p 45). "Morom" can thus involve various relationships and emotions, for example, relations of patronage between parents and children, master and servant or the state and people. As

Apeni, a Naga woman residing in the foothills, told Kikon:

State love stays up in the hills. It doesn't filter down to the foothills. That is why our lives are miserable. (p 63)

And several of Kikon's interlocutors in the foothills similarly point to the state's lack of love and care, visible through the missing telephone lines, broken water pipes and decaying and discarded government offices, schools and health clinics. "Look around this village. Do you think the state loves us?" (p 81), one villager told Kikon. Instead, the state's presence is firmly felt by the foothill residents when the militarised, Indian state with its security forces acts with impunity through the controversial Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958. Security camps, watchtowers, checkpoints and surveillance are the physical manifestations of the militarised, Indian state. Local people are constantly harassed and their mobility interrupted by the security forces. Yet, this very same surveillance infrastructure supports the smooth and uninterrupted flow of oil. The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), a public sector undertaking involved in exploration and extraction of oil, stands out as a securitised enclave in the foothills. Oil rigs, wells and pipelines and staff quarters are protected by the security forces. The tea industry, which to a large extent is in the hands of powerful, outsider corporations, is similarly safeguarded by the military state.

Carbon Dreamworlds

The carbon landscape is also a place of dreams and fantasies concerning sudden richness; a stroke of luck that brings a complete change of life. Kikon explains how oil and coal generate different fantasies:

Unlike coal, which was accessible to the villages and could be extracted using rudimentary technology, oil was hidden and speculative. This very hidden quality of oil stirred people's imagination. (p 121)

Yan, a woman who lived in the Nagaland foothills near abandoned oil wells, complains that her husband lived in an "oil dream world," conjuring business ventures centred around oil that never took off. Yan tells Kikon, it was not only her husband, but the entire village that was spellbound by such oil fantasies.

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ONGC had drilled for oil and natural gas in the Nagaland foothills between 1973 and 1993, but had to stop its exploration due to disagreements regarding royalties and land compensation. Unknown persons seen in the vicinity of the abandoned oil fields trigger rumours and speculations about resuming oil operations. Even the anthropologist herself was initially taken to be a representative of an oil company.

Coal had a more tangible existence in the lives of the foothills' residents, while also being an evasive and unpredictable resource, with one never sure if, where and when to strike a coal seam. As Toshi, landowner and coal trader in Nagaland, says, "Coal is a gamble. You need luck" (p 128). Many people have indeed been lucky and earned handsome amounts through the extraction and trade in coal. As in the other hill states of the North East, coal mining remains a disputed activity in Nagaland. The Nagaland government and other state and non-state actors seek to control the extraction and the profits it generates. Conflicts and disputes frequently emerge between villagers, kinship groups and family members concerning title and rights to coal-bearing lands. But ultimately, the coal business depends on trust and friendship across ethnic divides. In most cases, this involves Naga landowners and Assamese coal traders; bonds maintained through hospitality, gifts and other performative acts of social relatedness. As coal mining expands, Kikon writes, "new kinds of power relations and gendered inequalities emerged" (p 129). Even with women involved in the coal trade, it is a deeply gendered, hypermasculine space. Women are commonly assumed not to grasp talk about coal and profits but are instead called upon to serve men drinks and food and heat water for their baths. Moreover, mining raises a number of critical issues for Naga society, relating to landownership (individual or collective), political authority, customary laws, economic inequality and future livelihoods.

Interwoven Stories and Spaces

Besides carbon extraction, Kikon also looks into other aspects of local livelihoods. One chapter takes us to the weekly

markets, the *haats*, of the foothills. As she vividly narrates, the *haats* play a vital role as a zone for interaction. Various goods are bought and sold by people who freely switch between different languages. Some buyers from the plains preferred foodstuffs grown in the hills, like Saikia from Sibsagar who explained that his taste buds demanded paan leaves from the hills. Naga chillies were also in high demand and male Assam traders tried to squeeze the prices for the chillies sold by female Naga sellers. At times, such price negotiations might turn into conflicts with ethnic overtones. Nevertheless, long-standing interethnic bonds of friendship and affection were also a common feature of the *haats*. The pharmacist Romizuddin Ahmed from Golaghat town was particularly liked by Naga female traders who frequented his store to buy medicines and vitamins, and who "fondly addressed him as Dr Romeo" (p 98). Ahmed had a permanent medical shop in town but continued to frequent the weekly markets mainly to stay in touch with friends he had made over two decades of touring the foothills. At the Namsa haat, Kikon met the Adivasi bus driver Gorib Maji. He was a long-time employee of a Sikh businessperson, driving a run-down bus between different markets. The name Gorib was in fact a nickname, meaning "poor," but it had stuck and was also used by Maji himself. The Adivasi community is in a particularly vulnerable position in the foothills. Their repeated demand for the Scheduled Tribe (ST) status in Assam has still not gathered wider support in the state.

As Birsa Munda, another of Kikon's interlocutors, explained, "For the Adivasi people, there is no peace on the hill or the plains" (p 118). His main aspiration was to buy land and become a farmer instead of being a sharecropper tilling other people's land.

Living with Oil & Coal: Resource Politics & Militarization in Northeast India is based on stories and Kikon is a gifted storyteller. She has an eye for poignant details. Kikon is also a deeply committed scholar who as a lawyer and human rights activist is used to listening to people and share their distress and dreams. Such engagements build trust and people trust her with the stories of their lives. This is a fantastic read, a book that speaks to scholars as well as general public. Kikon combines grounded ethnography with theoretical elaboration, setting a new standard of excellence for the anthropology of the North East. I would like to congratulate Yoda Press for making this important book accessible to South Asian readers. *Living with Oil & Coal: Resource Politics & Militarization in Northeast India* was first published by the University of Washington Press and the anthropologist K Sivaramakrishnan, in his foreword to the book, aptly describes Kikon's book as a major contribution to the expanding field of borderland studies as it "establishes the importance of paying attention to affect and emotion in natural resource extraction and conflict" (p x).

Bengt G Karlsson (bengt.karlsson@socant.su.se) teaches Social Anthropology at the Stockholm University, Sweden.

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collector," but which also led to the heroic first intifada, a truly popular, non-violent revolt which again captured the world's imagination. The third is the systematic, brutal, and vastly disproportionate pounding of Gaza by heavy artillery, starting in 2008, which again has resulted in increasing revulsion for Israeli methods.

For us in India, Khalidi's book holds lessons for both those who have sympathy for the Palestinian national liberation struggle, and for those who believe we must align ourselves fully and unambiguously with Israel. It reaffirms that the Palestinian cause is moral and just, and

it reminds us that the Zionist project is racist, supremacist, and unjust. At a time when the most right-wing government in the history of India is taking lessons from the Israeli playbook vis-à-vis Kashmir and the North East, Khalidi's book is a grim warning of what might lie in store for us.

And yet, Khalidi is pragmatic enough to recognise that Israel is a reality that cannot simply be wished away; that, just like the Palestinians, "Israeli Jews today consider themselves a people with a sense of national belonging in Palestine, what they think of as the Land of Israel, no matter how this transmutation came

about." Denial of the other will never lead to peace and stability for either people. "Absolute equality of human, personal, civil, political, and national rights must be enshrined in whatever future scheme is accepted by the two societies" (p 245). One wishes for these words to resonate in the ears of the mandarins and their political bosses in Tel Aviv, Washington, and New Delhi.

Sudhanva Deshpande (sudhanva.leftword@gmail.com) is an actor, director, and organiser with Jana Natya Manch, and editor at *LeftWord Books*. He is the author of *Halla Bol: The Death and Life of Safdar Hashmi* (LeftWord 2020).

A Framework for the Analysis of State–Society Relations

GAURAV BANSAL

The book under review is a collection of essays evaluating the relevance and applicability of hypothesis presented by Pranab Bardhan in his slim masterwork the *Political Economy of Development in India* (PEDI), more than 30 years after its publication in 1984. Bardhan's original book, only 84 pages long with 24 pages of accompanying data, is still considered influential in understanding the broader political economy of India's development (and more importantly, its non-development) since its independence in 1947, and particularly the period of economic stagnation between 1965 and 1980. As many contributors to the 2020 volume show, the central theses in PEDI—with a few updates to its contours—provide a sound theoretical and empirical framework to understanding and explaining the contemporary pattern of growth and persistence of structural inequalities in India.

The most famous of Bardhan's theses to explain the stagnation of the post-1965 era was that there existed

a system of political gridlock in India, originating in the collective action problems of a large, heterogeneous coalition of dominant interest groups with multiple veto powers, and with no interest group powerful enough to hijack the state. (Bardhan 1998: 130)

Class and Conflict: Revisiting Pranab Bardhan's Political Economy of India edited by Elizabeth Chatterjee and Matthew McCartney, *New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2020; pp x + 299, £47.99 (hb).*

The jostling over public resources (subsidies and patronage) among the dominant proprietary classes (DPCs)—the big business, wealthy farmers and the urban professionals—retarded productive capital investment by the state and hence negatively affected growth rates in the 1960s and 1970s. Bardhan was also careful to suggest that the state is not always a passive actor and in certain times could act autonomously in the self-proclaimed "nation's interest" which might well antagonise all DPCs. The editors, however, remind us that Bardhan's thesis went beyond state–society relations and was, in fact, a rare synthesis of Marxian class analysis with rational choice theory and tenets of new political economy.

The contributors to this edited volume test Bardhan's theses and engage with the broader literature that has emerged in response to PEDI. Amongst the most influential of the latter were the arguments advanced by political economists, such as Atul Kohli and Christophe Jaffrelot, who argued that over the course of the three

decades since PEDI's publication, (new) big businesses have gradually strengthened their alliance with the Indian state (Kohli 2006, 2010; Jaffrelot et al 2019). The implication is that, the remaining two DPCs—the rich farmers and professionals/state elites—have been net losers in terms of their influence over the state and its resources.

This "narrowing of the class alliance" is widely contested in *Class and Conflict: Revisiting Pranab Bardhan's Political Economy of India* by some noted political economists working on India, including Bardhan himself, who provide a nuanced picture of the changing state–society relations and substantiate their claims through empirical data. The intellectual coherence among the authors, who often quote one another, provides a comprehensive and clear articulation, making it one of the biggest strengths of this volume. The book is divided into five parts. Part 1 provides the overview followed by the review of debates on Indian economy since PEDI's publication in Part 2. Part 3 includes three chapters, each focusing on the changes and continuities in the three dominant proprietary classes identified in PEDI. Part 4 discusses the newly emergent classes—the middle classes and the petty commodity producers—and Part 5 concludes the book.

Class Alliances and the State

The introduction by the editors Elizabeth Chatterjee and Matthew McCartney is a momentous work in itself, coalescing the important themes from the original 1984

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book and situating and summarising the arguments by the contributors in the contemporary context. In Chapter 2, Bardhan hints that the collective action problem may, in fact, have become more complex and problematic since the 1990s, with rising economic inequality and increasing number of politically assertive groups who are demanding a greater share of the public resources. In Chapter 5, James Manor goes on to argue the opposite: the current Indian state has failed to accelerate economic liberalisation, even under the much-hyped leadership of Narendra Modi, which is a telling sign of the limited influence of the industrial/big business class on the state. He points at the re-election of Congress-led United Progressive Alliance in 2009 despite implementing many pro-poor policies during its previous regime; the centralisation of the power in the hands of Modi–Amit Shah at the centre and the chief ministers at the state level as sufficient proof that the state elites have achieved substantial autonomy from the DPCs. He concludes, rather unconvincingly, by arguing that an accurate assessment would be to refer to Bardhan's DPCs as "three formerly dominant proprietary classes" (p 109).

In Chapter 6, Rob Jenkins lends support to Manor's argument and presents the case of contentious Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (LARRA) to show that the state continues to hold massive powers over policy agendas and often takes decisions that may be diametrically against the interests and preferences of the industrial capital. While it is true that pro-poor social policy finds far less support from the current Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance regime, it is not obvious that this trend is permanent or that it will be "allowed" to be pursued over a long period, thus cautioning against rushing to characterise the Indian state in "stark, all-or-nothing terms" (p 118).

In Chapter 7, John Hariss focuses on the second DPC—the wealthy farmers. He points at the still very high fertiliser and food subsidy and share of agriculture in electricity and water subsidy—which

are overwhelmingly cornered by the rich farmers—as an evidence that the influence of rich farmers has not atrophied. In addition, the non-taxation of their vast agricultural incomes, diversification into non-agricultural activities, their continuing influence in electoral processes and Modi government's urgent defence against being labelled "anti-farmer" in the context of the land acquisition bill partly counters the arguments about the ousting of the second DPCs from the class alliance with the state.

In Chapter 8, Chatterjee analyses the changes to the third DPCs—the professional elites and bureaucrats—and reaches a similar conclusion: although the elite bureaucrats are much more fragmented than when Bardhan wrote his thesis, claims to the severance of their links with the state are exaggerated. As the other classes continue with their game of conflict and cooperation, the elite bureaucrats have been fairly successful in maintaining their salience in this game.

Critical Revisions

The subsequent chapters draw our attention to classes that were not discussed in PEDI but have become even more visible and assertive in the last three decades. This includes the burgeoning Indian middle class as discussed in Chapter 9 by Leela Fernandes and the vast, ever-growing and arguably "permanent" informal sector, analysed in Chapter 10 by Barbara Harriss-White et al. Fernandes charges against the popular conception of the middle class as homogeneous in terms of their support for liberalisation and the private sector, their consumerist nature and their perceived declining dependence on the state. She uses PEDI's analytical framework to reveal the often overlooked but salient relationship between the state and middle classes in India, both in its formation as well as its reproduction.

Harriss-White, Muhammad Ali Jan and Asha Amirali challenge Bardhan's original thesis that there existed neatly demarcated DPCs whose collective action dilemma had enough purchase to influence growth and stagnation of the contemporary Indian economy, or perhaps even when Bardhan wrote PEDI. They

invert the focus on to the informal economy, what they call the "rest of India" (ROI)—the 80% of the economy contributing towards roughly two-thirds of the gross domestic product—and make a case for understanding growth (and stagnation) in the Indian economy by undertaking fine-grained analysis of the ROI's internal composition and accumulation strategies. They also confront Bardhan's suggestion for a state that is insulated from the class interests to instead argue for

interlinkages between the classes and India's states of a kind that can integrate the Rest of India with large capital in a manner that generates growth, upgrades skills, and shifts India from a low-skill to a high-skill, job creating trajectory. (p 219)

In Chapter 4, Maitreesh Ghatak and Ritwika Sen also challenge Bardhan's original subsidy hypothesis, that growth was stifled in the 1960s and 1970s due to the proliferation of unproductive subsidies in order to placate the plural and conflictual DPCs. They use data on central budgetary statistics to show that growth and subsidy reveal a concomitant relationship—growth rates have increased along with the subsidies in the 2000s. They add that investments and subsidies have moved together, except in the early 1990s. This suggests that other factors, along with the subsidies, might be responsible for the stagnation in the 1960s and 1970s. In Chapter 11, Michael Walton provides insights into the big business class and explores the heterogeneity within it, instead of treating it as a bloc as Bardhan did in PEDI. He distinguishes between the entrepreneurial business whose profits come from innovation and productivity gains and the traditional rent-extracting business which gains from its close proximity with the state elites. He argues that it is important to acknowledge this heterogeneity as it reveals interesting parallels with the gilded age of the United States.

Regional Variations Missed

While the editors acknowledge in the introduction that the state–society relations have immense regional variation (p 21), this theme has not been sufficiently explored in most of the chapters.

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The volume, by and large, focuses primarily at the national level and the readers could have benefited from a more granular understanding of the uneven nature of state-society relations and class dynamics across different states/regions in India. This would have countered both Kohli's and Manor's overarching arguments about the declining influence of the wealthy farmers on the state resources. For instance, various primary studies from rural India have meticulously observed how the elites tend to capture the village commons and the local government institutions and use their control to subvert, partially or completely, the poverty reduction programmes (such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and the public distribution system) (see Pattenden 2011, 2016). The pro-poor legislations, which Manor takes as an evidence of the insulation of the state elites from the influence of wealthy farmers, have, in many cases, contributed to the reproduction of the latter's sociopolitical position as they usurp the public resources that are entitlement of the rural poor.

The volume also could have done more by highlighting the not-so-massive but nonetheless significant counter-mobilisations from the increasingly assertive "lower classes" against the growing conviviality between the state and the

business classes as well as the mounting confrontation between the DPCs, particularly the rich farmers and big businesses. The ongoing protests by more than half a million farmers and farm labourers triggered by the undemocratic, and perhaps unconstitutional, enacting of the three agriculture-related laws have targeted not just the state but also its alliance with the corporates/big businesses whom the laws are most likely to benefit. While the protests are yet to rattle the state elites at the centre, its impact on regional politics is expected to be significant, as seen from the churning of political dynamics in Punjab and Haryana. This further underlines the salience of approaching the issue of state-society relations from a regional lens in a federal structure such as India's.

In all, the contributors to the volume deal with different interpretations of Bardhan's thesis and refute (Chapters 4, 5 and 10), refine (Chapters 3, 6, 7 and 8) and rework (Chapters 9 and 11) his analysis using newer data sources, enormous benefit of hindsight, and their knowledge of the massive developments in India's political economy since the publication of PEDI—most notably liberalisation, a period of economic growth in the 2000s, rise of identity politics, a prolonged agrarian crisis, bourgeoning of an increasingly visible urban middle class and increasing mobilisations from

below demanding their share of the improved state resources. The book indicates continuing relevance of the PEDI-style class analysis, which has been systematically marginalised in economics in the last few decades, while also underlining the modifications it requires to capture new economic and political realities, which makes it an essential read for any serious student of political economy of development in India.

Gaurav Bansal (G.bansal@uea.ac.uk) is with the School of International Development, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom.

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The One-state Solution

SUDHANVA DESHPANDE

It hardly felt like a prison. Located in the middle of a residential neighbourhood of Ramallah, it was a squat, square structure built around an open courtyard. A couple of security guards desultorily checked our backpacks as we entered. I could well have carried a lethal firearm and nobody would have objected. I was with Jonatan Stanczak, a Swedish-Israeli citizen who was one of the co-founders of "The Freedom Theatre," located in Jenin in north West Bank, and we were going to meet another co-founder of the theatre, Zakaria Zubeidi. This was in March 2015, four years after the assassination of the third co-founder, Juliano Mer-Khamis, outside the theatre by a masked gunman.

Zakaria was a child during the first intifada, when Juliano's mother Arna Mer had started working with traumatised children in the Jenin Refugee Camp. Her project was called "The Stone Theatre," as a tribute to the most ubiquitous image of the first intifada, that of young men, often no more than boys, confronting Israeli tanks and armoured vehicles with stones. Before the intifada was over, Arna was to die of cancer and "The Stone Theatre" destroyed and demolished by Israeli bulldozers. Many of the children that Arna worked with were to be killed in the second intifada. Astonishingly though, Zakaria, who had become a major military commander of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, the armed wing of Fatah, survived the ferocious battle of Jenin, as well as several Israeli attempts on his life. And even though he had become an armed fighter, he never forgot the impact theatre had on him. As the second intifada wound down, Juliano, Zakaria, and Jonatan came together, somewhat fortuitously, to found "The Freedom Theatre." Thus it was that I, a theatre actor and director with the Delhi-based Jana Natya Manch (Janam), found myself in Palestine, to explore a

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The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonial Conquest and Resistance
by Rashid Khalidi, *Hachette India*, 2020; pp 319, ₹599 (paperback).

collaboration between the two theatres. The fact that one of Janam's founders, Safdar Hashmi, had also been killed for his beliefs, created an emotional bond between the two theatres.

After Juliano, Jonatan, and Zakaria founded the theatre, the Israelis offered Zakaria amnesty. So he gave up arms, came overground, and joined the intelligence apparatus of the Palestinian Authority. He was one of the hundreds of Fatah (and other) militants who were integrated into the Palestinian Authority structure as a result of the dynamic of the Oslo process, whereby the entire leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) returned to Palestine. Many of them had spent three decades or more in exile and were eager to see their homeland again. But in this eagerness, they had bargained away any hope of securing sovereignty and statehood for their people.

So why was Zakaria in prison—a prison, moreover, that he could have literally walked out of anytime he wanted? One day the head of the Palestinian Authority's intelligence wing called him to say that an Israeli hit squad was coming to assassinate him, and he had less than four hours to save his life. So much for the "amnesty," which was basically an Israeli ruse to get him in the cross hairs. Going underground again at such short notice was hardly an option, since most of the former underground fighters had now come into the open and the older networks no longer existed. So Zakaria did the next best thing he could think of—checked himself into a low-security detention facility. So long as he did not

walk out, he was (relatively) safe. He has been in voluntary detention for two years when I met him. Anyone who visits Palestine for even a fortnight is sure to come away with dozens of stories, tragic and hopeful in equal measure. Zakaria's story, though, is almost farcical. One would laugh if it did not symbolise something else—the utter inability of the traditional Palestinian leadership to look after the interests of its own fighters, not to mention the Palestinian people as a whole.

Rashid Khalidi, in chronicling a century of settler-colonialist oppression by Israel and resistance by Palestinians, is scathing in his indictment of both the Oslo process—a deal brokered by the United States (us) that was fully advantageous to Israel with not only no gains for the Palestinians, but in fact a deal that foreclosed the possibilities of future gains as well—and of the PLO leadership, in particular Yasser Arafat, which, through its ineptitude, incompetence, arrogance, and desperation to get back, undid the gains of the first intifada.

Coming from India, I had grown up thinking that the "two-state" formula was the only just solution to a seemingly intractable problem. Whether one accepted the pre-1967 boundaries or the 1948 boundaries seemed to me a matter of detail that could surely be sorted out through negotiations, but the idea that Jews would have a land and a nation that they could feel secure in, and the Arabs could have an equally sovereign state, seemed the logical way out.

What about the two-state solution? I asked Zakaria. Will it work? "No," he said.

It can never work. Look at this land, from north to south, east to west, we are so tiny. We are as big as an Indian city. You think we can make two countries of this? No way.

Then what is the solution? I asked.

A single State. That is the only practical solution. A State where all citizens have equal rights. Arabs, Jews, Christians, and people without religion—everybody should have equal rights. If an Israeli wants to settle in Jenin, he should be allowed to. If I want to settle in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv, I should be allowed to. Equal rights, free movement and no role of religion in State matters. That's all I'm asking for. That's all that can work.

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But Israeli citizens, will they accept this? I asked.

You know, Israel thinks that it has imprisoned us and that they hold the key. But zoom out, high above, and look. You will see that Israel has imprisoned itself. They have to stop being afraid. That is all. We don't want to kill all Jews. Not at all. We should both live together, in peace.

Vision of a Single State

Zakaria is right, in two senses. One, in a practical sense. The reality is that there is only one state, the state of Israel. Palestine is a legal fiction. Not only is it fractured and broken up into dozens of parts—Gaza, which is a virtual prison, east Jerusalem, which is not accessible to West Bank residents, and the West Bank itself, divided into Areas A, B, C, and criss-crossed by walls, fences, checkpoints, special highways only for Israelis, and those hideous monstrosities, Israeli settlements—the Palestinian Authority itself exists only to ensure the safety of Israel and its citizens. As a stranger said to me at a checkpoint as we waited, seemingly endlessly, to cross over, “All nice neighbourhoods need an efficient garbage collector. The Palestinian Authority is that for Israel.” Zakaria is also right in a larger, moral sense. His vision of a single nation which treats all its citizens equally irrespective of religion, race, or belief, is a deeply humane one, and, one has to say, does not seem all that impractical if only one is willing to approach the question with understanding and wisdom, and with the interests of ordinary people being kept paramount.

I was in Palestine again the following year, and the brother of the author of the book under review, Raja Khalidi, offered to show us his family's personal library. Located in the heart of the old town in Jerusalem, the library has manuscripts and books going back hundreds of years. As we sat sipping coffee afterwards, I asked Raja about the two-state solution. “Not really a solution,” he said.

It is the surest way of ensuring that this problem is never solved, that it keeps festering like a wound. A single, secular, democratic republic was always the better solution, though inimical to the core premises of Zionism as an exclusivist ideology. We need a solution where all citizens are treated equally before the law, regardless of religion, nationality or ethnicity.

“What would this country be called?” I asked. “Israelis will not accept Palestine, and Palestinians will not accept Israel.”

It's not so important what such a secular democratic state is called, what counts is whether Israelis are willing to live in a state that gives equal rights to non-Jews. Palestinians long ago accepted, however grudgingly, the reality of Jews living in Palestine, but the opposite cannot be said. But ultimately, both sides have to understand that this land will have to be shared and nationalist ideologies cannot perpetually hold people's consciousness hostage to no less important social, economic and human rights.

Accepting the settler-colonialist and sharing land—Raja had uttered the idea which is almost sacrilege in Palestine, but over the years I have come to appreciate its level-headed pragmatism. And certainly, reading his brother's book, I found myself thinking again and again of Zakaria's and Raja's wisdom and humanity.

A Tale of Betrayal and Hope

Rashid Khalidi's account is marked by its sober tone, reflective analysis, depth of knowledge, wealth of detail, and hard-nosed realism. Born in the US, where his father, a Palestinian who held Saudi citizenship, worked for the United Nations, Khalidi is author of several well-known books. In the present book, he interweaves the history of colonialism in Palestine with the story of his own family. The personal narrative, though, does not overwhelm the historical narrative—the book remains focused on larger questions of national identity and struggle. As someone who was living in Beirut in 1982, the year of Israel's war on Lebanon and the infamous Sabra and Shatila massacres, he is able to infuse a sense of immediacy and feeling to what could have been a dry academic history. As someone who was subsequently a part of the team that held several rounds of negotiations with the Israelis, he has an acute eye for legal detail. Some of the most compelling parts of the book are when he explains in terms intelligible to the non-specialist the minutiae of disputes over wording and semantics. He is scathing in his criticism of the PLO leadership on this. Simply put, they just did not get it.

The Palestinian conundrum is well captured—the contradiction inherent

in having been colonised at the very moment when the world was witnessing the end of direct colonialism; a settler colonialism, moreover, where the colonising power had no “home” country; where the coloniser could neither get rid of the colonised population by conducting mass genocide, as happened in the US or Australia, nor does the coloniser even need the colonised to stay as a subclass, as in Algeria or South Africa. In Edward Said's memorable words, “they have no use for us. The best Palestinian for them is either dead or gone.”

On the one hand, Khalidi's book is profoundly depressing. It is a tale of one victory after another for the coloniser, both in the land of Palestine/Israel, and on the stage of international diplomacy and world opinion. It is a tale of increasing commitment by the US to Israel's interests and agenda, whereby the imperial hegemon has moved from being initially a supporter of the Zionist project to becoming its attorney, to becoming, under Trump, its sledgehammer. It is a tale of betrayal of the Palestinian people by the corrupt monarchies and other regimes of the Arab world. And it is a tale of a people who have been let down, again and again, for a century, by their own leaders, to a point where it is worth asking if there is anything like the Palestinian national movement any more.

And yet, it is also a tale of courage and hope. History never moves in a straight line, nor is there ever only one dynamic at work. At the very moments of Israel's greatest triumphs, one sees also a resurgence of the Palestinian struggle and cracks in the pro-Israeli narrative on the world stage. Khalidi identifies three such moments. The first is the war on Lebanon in 1982, which resulted in massacres of Palestinians as well as the expulsion of their leadership from that country, but which also resulted in the world press reporting, almost for the first time, Israeli brutality, leading to increasing sympathy for the Palestinian cause worldwide. The second is the comprehensive triumph of the Zionist agenda in the Oslo process, the abject surrender of the Palestinian cause by its leadership and the leadership becoming Israel's “garbage

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collector," but which also led to the heroic first intifada, a truly popular, non-violent revolt which again captured the world's imagination. The third is the systematic, brutal, and vastly disproportionate pounding of Gaza by heavy artillery, starting in 2008, which again has resulted in increasing revulsion for Israeli methods.

For us in India, Khalidi's book holds lessons for both those who have sympathy for the Palestinian national liberation struggle, and for those who believe we must align ourselves fully and unambiguously with Israel. It reaffirms that the Palestinian cause is moral and just, and

it reminds us that the Zionist project is racist, supremacist, and unjust. At a time when the most right-wing government in the history of India is taking lessons from the Israeli playbook vis-à-vis Kashmir and the North East, Khalidi's book is a grim warning of what might lie in store for us.

And yet, Khalidi is pragmatic enough to recognise that Israel is a reality that cannot simply be wished away; that, just like the Palestinians, "Israeli Jews today consider themselves a people with a sense of *national* belonging in Palestine, what they think of as the Land of Israel, no matter how this transmutation came

about." Denial of the other will never lead to peace and stability for either people. "Absolute equality of human, personal, civil, political, and national rights must be enshrined in whatever future scheme is accepted by the two societies" (p 245). One wishes for these words to resonate in the ears of the mandarins and their political bosses in Tel Aviv, Washington, and New Delhi.

Sudhanva Deshpande (sudhanva.leftword@gmail.com) is an actor, director, and organiser with Jana Natya Manch, and editor at *LeftWord Books*. He is the author of *Halla Bol: The Death and Life of Safdar Hashmi* (LeftWord 2020).

A Framework for the Analysis of State–Society Relations

GAURAV BANSAL

The book under review is a collection of essays evaluating the relevance and applicability of hypothesis presented by Pranab Bardhan in his slim masterwork the *Political Economy of Development in India* (PEDI), more than 30 years after its publication in 1984. Bardhan's original book, only 84 pages long with 24 pages of accompanying data, is still considered influential in understanding the broader political economy of India's development (and more importantly, its non-development) since its independence in 1947, and particularly the period of economic stagnation between 1965 and 1980. As many contributors to the 2020 volume show, the central theses in PEDI—with a few updates to its contours—provide a sound theoretical and empirical framework to understanding and explaining the contemporary pattern of growth and persistence of structural inequalities in India.

The most famous of Bardhan's theses to explain the stagnation of the post-1965 era was that there existed

a system of political gridlock in India, originating in the collective action problems of a large, heterogeneous coalition of dominant interest groups with multiple veto powers, and with no interest group powerful enough to hijack the state. (Bardhan 1998: 130)

Class and Conflict: Revisiting Pranab Bardhan's Political Economy of India edited by Elizabeth Chatterjee and Matthew McCartney, *New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2020; pp x + 299, £47.99 (hb)*.

The jostling over public resources (subsidies and patronage) among the dominant proprietary classes (DPCs)—the big business, wealthy farmers and the urban professionals—retarded productive capital investment by the state and hence negatively affected growth rates in the 1960s and 1970s. Bardhan was also careful to suggest that the state is not always a passive actor and in certain times could act autonomously in the self-proclaimed "nation's interest" which might well antagonise all DPCs. The editors, however, remind us that Bardhan's thesis went beyond state–society relations and was, in fact, a rare synthesis of Marxian class analysis with rational choice theory and tenets of new political economy.

The contributors to this edited volume test Bardhan's theses and engage with the broader literature that has emerged in response to PEDI. Amongst the most influential of the latter were the arguments advanced by political economists, such as Atul Kohli and Christophe Jaffrelot, who argued that over the course of the three

decades since PEDI's publication, (new) big businesses have gradually strengthened their alliance with the Indian state (Kohli 2006, 2010; Jaffrelot et al 2019). The implication is that, the remaining two DPCs—the rich farmers and professionals/state elites—have been net losers in terms of their influence over the state and its resources.

This "narrowing of the class alliance" is widely contested in *Class and Conflict: Revisiting Pranab Bardhan's Political Economy of India* by some noted political economists working on India, including Bardhan himself, who provide a nuanced picture of the changing state–society relations and substantiate their claims through empirical data. The intellectual coherence among the authors, who often quote one another, provides a comprehensive and clear articulation, making it one of the biggest strengths of this volume. The book is divided into five parts. Part 1 provides the overview followed by the review of debates on Indian economy since PEDI's publication in Part 2. Part 3 includes three chapters, each focusing on the changes and continuities in the three dominant proprietary classes identified in PEDI. Part 4 discusses the newly emergent classes—the middle classes and the petty commodity producers—and Part 5 concludes the book.

Class Alliances and the State

The introduction by the editors Elizabeth Chatterjee and Matthew McCartney is a momentous work in itself, coalescing the important themes from the original 1984

Setting Forth Stages in Gandhi's Journey

DENNIS G DALTON

Sanjeev Kumar continues to render an outstanding contribution to M K Gandhi scholarship. This volume constitutes his selection of 15 essays from 40 presented at an international conference on Gandhi in February 2016 at the University of Delhi. But he has not stopped here. Recently, he organised a series of lectures on Gandhi's thought by scholars around the world: Bhiku Parekh, Akeel Bilgrami, Faisal Devji and myself. His extraordinary industry is evident in the quality of the choices of this edition, starting with his own introductory chapter appropriately titled "Understanding Gandhi: Why Gandhi Matters Today."

Kumar's essay opens with an apt epigraph from Gandhi: "If my faith burns bright, as I hope it will even if I stand alone, I shall be alive in the grave, and what is more, speaking from it." This recalls the inimitable response of Sarojini Naidu, who quickly grew tired of eulogies for Gandhi that concluded "May his spirit rest in peace." She rejected such placidity by adamantly insisting on the opposite: "Let every ash from the funeral pyre be dynamic and create in us a power to fulfill his orders with vigor and follow his example" (Sengupta 1974: 328).

It seems that Naidu is getting her wish because, in addition to the above-named lectures and those included in this collection, eloquent voices have recently been raised by eminent Gandhi scholars, such as Ramachandra Guha, Karuna Mantena, Uday Mehta and Ashutosh Varshney. Then there are excellent commentaries or collections seeking to recreate Gandhi's power (Raghuramaraju 2006; Bhikhu Parekh 2015). Parekh has certainly contributed his share by writing the foreword to the volume under review, in addition to inaugurating the lecture series noted above.

The introduction by Kumar perfectly serves an editor's purpose. It succinctly

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Gandhi and the Contemporary World edited by Sanjeev Kumar, India: Routledge, 2020; pp 252, ₹995 (hardback).

sets forth stages in Gandhi's journey, making the crucial point that he viewed his life as a work in progress, marking an evolution of ideas that admitted contradictions, insisting only on the validity of his latest pronouncements. The subsequent sections, "Gandhi's Ethics," "Debating Gandhi," "Why Gandhi Matters" and "Reclaiming Gandhi in the Contemporary World" reveal an admirable mastery of these subjects by including incisive references to other Indian thinkers of the nationalist era while also referencing vehement critics like Arundhati Roy or sympathetic biographers such as B R Nanda. Subaltern scholars are represented by Partha Chatterjee, an obligatory nod to Joseph Lelyveld's controversial study, even a longer than usual quotation from George Orwell. The only update needed is Sita Kapadia's definitive life of Kasturba Gandhi (Kapadia 2020). Kumar completes his function as an editor by affording a cogent "plan of the book" that provides accurate and lucid synopses of the authors and how their essays fit into the overall conceptual organisation. Any reader of such collections would wish that editors could be as scrupulous and helpful as Kumar.

The first part on the Gandhian philosophy opens with an incisive analysis by Douglas Allen, an American professor of philosophy cum activist. The case for a synthesis of Gandhi's theory and practice closely resembles his superlative study, *Gandhi After 9/11: Creative Nonviolence and Sustainability* (2019). This essay is most usefully read in the fuller context of his book. A central point raised is that

Gandhi's spirit rises in protest at "the unprecedented concentration of so much economic wealth and power in the hands of the relatively few" (p 32). The subsequent examination of core concepts, such as ahimsa and truth, might have focused more on this point about economic disparity, especially in the context of relevant Karl Marx's writings he cited. In this respect, we may imagine Marx and Gandhi shouting from their respective tombs in a chorus of outrage.

A fruitful approach to appreciating an edition of this kind, especially in terms of Gandhian thought, is to present it as what Amartya Sen (2006) calls "the dialogic tradition" in India. Part II of the edition on "Gandhi and Swaraj" opens with Ramachandra Pradhan's succinct explanation of how Gandhi's theory of swaraj was fundamental to his thinking that carried part of a religious tradition that traces back to classical Indian scriptures. Then the idea is revived by the moderates and extremists. Pradhan correctly mentions the key figures in this development, giving Aurobindo his due by expressing the spiritual, not merely political, dimensions of the concept. B C Pal is mentioned but not given credit for his brilliant, extraordinary Madras speeches that clearly state as early as 1907: "The movement for Swaraj is not a mere economic movement [but] essentially a spiritual movement..." Pal thus articulated with greater eloquence the idea of swaraj than any of the other nationalist leaders (Pal 1907: 26-28, 72-73, 85-86).

Therefore, it is not the case, as Pradhan claims, that "of all the Extremist leaders, Aurobindo alone could visualise *swaraj* in the form of absolute political independence" (p 72). Yet, Pradhan is correct that Gandhi conceived this core concept within a rich intellectual context of thought that was rightly termed by Aurobindo the "Indian renaissance." Ghosh (1951: 39-40) and most recently, Nalini Bhushan and Jay Garfield (2017). The latter regrettably fails to mention B C Pal.

Kumar Rahul's complementary chapter, "Gandhian Swaraj: A Theory of Self-knowledge" makes the trenchant

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They conclude that "As Gandhi's faith in the benevolence of the British Empire evaporated, so did his trust in the knowledge paradigm of pseudo-scientific racism that partly sustained the imperial sys-

themselves as neighbours with others who share resources like water, air and landscape ... what we need is a kind of parallel 'Earth Swaraj' based on the power of non-violence and truth force"

Gandhi, M K (1927): *Young India: 1924-1926*, S Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras, p 839, https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.211139/2015.211139.Young-India_djvu.txt.
Ghosh, Aurobindo (1951): *The Renaissance in India*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.
Guha, Ramachandra (2011): "Reconciling Gandhi

observation that “without a doubt, Gandhi conceived of the concept of Swaraj in a way that goes beyond the binary of negative/positive, characteristic to the Western explanatory frameworks” (p 86). He effectively critiques Western liberal philosophy, citing Charles Taylor’s, *Sources of the Self*, a splendid source of wisdom in this respect. Rahul’s discussion might have been enhanced by examining further this thorny issue by probing the enduring controversy over Isaiah Berlin’s famed conceptualisation of negative and positive liberty, with its glaring binary thinking (Bruce and Robert 2013), especially the definitive opening chapter by James Tully (2013: 23–51).

Part III, entitled “Gandhi and Social Justice” gives ample attention to the Gandhi versus B R Ambedkar debate, with no less than three chapters on it by Vidhu Verma, Bindu Puri and Mustakim Ansary (pp 113–56). These present the controversy from different perspectives. The first thoroughly examines the extensive secondary source literature with

The main objective to trace the trajectory of these ideas as they moved from the ‘margins’ of Indian society to get incorporated in public discourse ... (concluding with) focus on selected themes in discourses on modernity, individual responsibility and historical injustice.
(italics by author)

This is an original comparative analysis that ends with a refreshing and fair assessment of Ambedkar as “forward-looking” by considering “the fate of all the people in civil society in the future.” Ambedkar’s recognition of “a crisis in modernity with its own trust in progress” does “challenge a liberal understanding that justifies ongoing injustices in the name of development and democracy” (pp 114, 127). Verma’s sympathetic grasp of Ambedkar’s purpose, combined with a critique of liberalism, accords with Rahul’s essay and enters into the spirit of balanced dialogue that is often missing from writings about this historic Ambedkar–Gandhi debate.

The next chapter on this topic by Puri, subtitled “Alternative Approaches to Memory and Identity” starts by noting how “recent commentators on this debate have focused on the possibilities of reconciliation” between Gandhi and

Ambedkar (citing Guha and D R Nagaraj). He then proceeds to refute such tendencies by highlighting “three main lines of divergence,” with the most “fundamental differences” directed at their perceptions of “identity and memory” or “their conceptions of the relationship between the past/cultural memory and self-identity” (pp 138–39). Puri concludes that these “underlay all the other differences” between them (p 142).

The main problem with this chapter, and the following by Ansary, is that neither considers Ambedkar’s magnum opus, *The Buddha and His Dhamma* (Rathore and Verma 2011). Ansary’s close analysis entitled “Beyond ‘The Doctor and the Saint’ Controversy” commendably tackles the notorious assault on Gandhi by Roy, persuasively assessing Roy’s bias. Yet, like Roy and Puri, and only to a slightly less extent by Verma, there is no inclusion of Ambedkar’s major treatise.

This is decidedly unfair to Ambedkar because his thought and contribution to the Indian intellectual tradition rests largely with this mature work. If Roy had considered this opus, instead of focusing solely on Ambedkar’s *Annihilation of Caste*, then it would have made her attack less credible but the efforts of reconcilers easier. All of the chapters about Ambedkar in this edition on Gandhi’s thinking should have not merely noted but concentrated on how ultimate convergences emerged between these two

brilliant minds on central theories of freedom, the relationship of means and ends, equality and justice, the search for self-transformation, models of non-violent change, and ethics in politics (Kumar et al 2021).

Viewing His Life as a Work in Progress

Chapter 11 provides a necessary comment on Gandhi and the “race” question, extremely relevant because of the distorted characterisation of him as a racist. Thus, a high court in Malawi recently stopped work on a building a statue of Gandhi because of his alleged prejudice against Africans, reinforced by an indictment of him by Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed (2015).

The three authors of this essay, Hari Nair, Swaha Das and Krishna A K Adavi, do not include this book but in a section on deconstructing the South African Gandhi, they record the relevant remarks by Claude Markovits (2006) and most consequentially, Lelyveld’s popular biography, *Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India* (Lelyveld 2011). They subsequently respond to these characterisations by reviewing Gandhi’s evolution of thought about race in his *Satyagraha in South Africa*, and then reinforce their narrative with an original analysis of Gandhi’s engagement with ideas about race in 1907–11 through an influential work by Jean Finot (1907) and the Universal Races Congress in London, 1911.

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They conclude that "As Gandhi's faith in the benevolence of the British Empire evaporated, so did his trust in the knowledge paradigm of pseudo-scientific racism that partly sustained the imperial system" (p 160). The subsequent explanation of this paradigm as related to Gandhi's early thought is as convincing as their concluding assessment about Gandhi's "transformative experience" in which he disconnected himself from both belief in the British Empire and racism.

The main problem with this chapter is that it is incomplete. The last part about Gandhi's transformation requires much more documentation about his embrace of the cause of Negro liberation. This is (This was how Gandhi termed it) evident in his exchange with Marcus Garvey (Gandhi 1927; CWMG a) and his momentous prophecy that "It may be through the Negroes that the unadulterated message of non-violence will be delivered to the world." This prediction followed a lengthy interview with the first of two delegations of Black leaders led by Howard Thurman in February 1936 (CWMG b). This extensive record of Gandhi's development is superbly, though succinctly, presented by Rajeev Kadambi, in "Gandhi's Legacy: Beyond Black or White" (Rajeev Kadambi 2021 and Nelson Mandela 1996: 8–17).

Part IV, "Post-Gandhian Legacy," comprises three concluding chapters, each of which has a singular virtue. Antony Copley's "What Can India Learn from Gandhi Today?" relates "the biggest challenge India faces, along with the rests of the world, is climate change," and then contends that "it is important to see the Indian struggle as part of a worldwide protest by threatened indigenous peoples..." (pp 173, 180). This edition is dedicated to the memory of Copley (1937–2016), so it is unfortunate that he could not continue today his active pursuit of these causes.

These twin issues of climate change and the indigenous peoples are discussed by J Gray Cox who perceptively concludes that "many indigenous communities" around the world offer "good news" of how revolutionary change is possible, because they have "a fundamentally different view of the world. They see

themselves as neighbours with others who share resources like water, air and landscape ... what we need is a kind of parallel 'Earth Swaraj' based on the power of non-violence and truth force" (pp 210–11).

Not only Cox's references to indigenous peoples but also the title of his Chapter 14, "Gandhi's Dialogical Truth Force," introduce us to James Tully, distinguished scholar of non-violence and political philosopher briefly noted above, whose ideas relate directly to subjects presented here and in other such editions about Gandhi. This is because he has demonstrated a command of the art of dialogue, as represented in the collection *On Global Citizenship: James Tully in Dialogue* (2014), where he states that his approach "begins with listening carefully to those suffering the lived experience of injustice in their own ways of knowing and articulating them" (p 282). His uniqueness lies in how he has connected a theory of non-violence to a long-standing study of the American Aboriginal peoples. This opens an undeveloped area of Gandhian studies that can be applied to a theory and practice of "Earth Swaraj" (Greg Bartlett Richard and Mark Tully 2018; Tully James 1995; 2019).

Dennis G Dalton (ddalton@barnard.edu) is Professor Emeritus at the Department of Political Science at Barnard College, Columbia University.

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which entities can enter the banking club and gain access to the source of outside money, central bank refinance, but this does not amount to the same thing as banks having a franchise to issue legal tender. Banks issue money that can be exchanged for central bank money at a price of 1 ("par"). This is both promethean and precarious power.

Exchange and Time

On exchange, there is indeed a sleight of hand involved when mainstream theories equivocate the "medium of exchange" with the "means of payment" functions, when the two encode entirely distinct theories of money (p 12). Leading with the medium of exchange function of money points to barter: money is just a special commodity that falls out of multilateral barter by means of social convention; as such, the monetary instrument would have to have intrinsic value. As we have seen, this is both a historical and logical dead end. Means of payment, on the other hand, lead us to payment of debts and the entire creditary architecture of the modern economy.

And yet, Ingham is somewhat hasty in downplaying exchange, leading one to wonder if this is to shut the door on the commodity-theorist Mengerians. Just so, Ingham does not follow through on John Hicks' insight that spot payments are by far the minority of transactions (p 41). Hicks is pointing out that most transactions are deferred and therefore generative of debt relations, basically pay me later. Exchange and debt are two sides of the same coin because exchange occurs in a finite time period during the pendency of which a buyer is simultaneously a debtor. The temporal/futural element of exchange requires (in)formal contracts to hold it all together and therefore immediately takes us beyond simple-minded barter stories. Exchange points more to debt and contract than to barter. As such, there is no need to abjure the medium of exchange dimension entirely.

The temporality of exchange is critical for two reasons. First, it gets us away from the notion that the monetary instrument must have intrinsic value, that is, it must refer to some pre-existing,

"dead-labour" value (p 26). Credit points to the future because economic life points that way—our production is oriented to future output just as exchange implies future settlement. As the future is constitutive of economic life, our materialism does not have to be sullenly past-oriented, so Ingham is right to point to "prospective value." But, more importantly, exchange qua the social division of labour is the salient socio-material fact about economies, modern and ancient alike. Rooted in different spheres of production and occurring across time and space, exchange is a key element of our sociality. While capitalism weaponises exchange, other more democratic modes are conceivable. Ingham continues to teach us how and why money is social in its ontology, and opens up ways for us to explore such modes.

Anush Kapadia (akapadia@iitb.ac.in) is at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay.

NOTES

- 1 https://www.federalreserve.gov/monetary-policy/bst_recenttrends.htm.
- 2 See Ingham, G (2004), *The Nature of Money*, Cambridge: Polity.

A Political Assessment of the Parties and Mechanisms Involved in the South China Sea Dispute

ULUPI BORAH

The South China Sea dispute has attained immense recognition in the international community and remains a major concern in the current times. An in-depth research on the dispute has already been done in the last few years by the scholars across the globe. Nehginpao Kipgen has very comprehensively given a detailed account of the dispute in his book *The Politics of South China Sea Disputes*. In the introductory part, Kipgen explores the dominant international relation theories: realism, liberalism and constructivism through the lens of which the dispute has been analysed. In addition, he explores the ASEAN

The Politics of South China Sea Disputes by Nehginpao Kipgen, London and New York: Taylor and Francis Group, Routledge, 2020; pp 148, ₹695.

Way, an approach adopted by the ASEAN members to deal with the issue. These aspects make the book stand apart from other scholarly works. Kipgen has lucidly focused on the factors involved in escalating the conflict among the claimants and the non-claimants and its implications witnessed both at a regional and international level. The book can mostly be divided in three parts. Part I gives an introductory overview of the South China Sea dispute with appropriate historical

framework to better understand the developments in the South China Sea. Part II comprises China's interests, activities and its newly commenced policies towards the South China Sea. It also includes the claims and policies initiated towards the South China Sea by other claimants. Part III describes the involvement of other powers which are not directly a part of the dispute and the different mechanisms used by them to counter Chinese assertiveness in the waterbody.

Historical Framework

The shift from West to East will definitely have an impact on the global and regional geopolitical order. The maritime trade has gained salience and the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) became the busiest routes through which the maritime trade traverses. To describe the significance of the South China Sea, Kipgen goes back to the 8th century and the influence of the Chinese and other South East Asian rulers in the major trade routes of the South China Sea. The arrival of

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the Western powers commenced their exploration activities in the waterbody.

Thus, it is evident how important the South China Sea was even centuries ago. The rulers of most of the states, such as Funan, Angkor, Sri Vijaya, Ayutthaya, Champa and the Melaka Sultanate collected taxes from the ships that passed through the South China Sea. Eventually, the question of sovereignty arose and the concept of national sovereignty was introduced. However, the colonial rule of the British and the French brought basic changes to the political geography of Asia. The latter half of the 19th century saw the influence of Japan and the United States (us) through establishment of new colonies around the South China Sea.

Although the Chinese showed interest in the South China Sea towards the beginning of the 20th century, the Qing dynasty failed to retain its interests due to the Chinese Revolution of 1911. Very soon, Japan held control over the waterbody, which came to be known as the "Japanese Lake." With the end of World War II, Japan signed the San Francisco Treaty in 1951 and renounced all its rights in the waterbody. Immediately, the us emerged as a maritime power and played an active role to commence institutions, such as the ASEAN that would be non-communist in nature.

Chinese Claims and Policies

Part II of the book gives a clearer picture of China's involvement in the South China Sea. Although China formed bodies, such as the Review Committee for Land and Water Maps in 1933 and eminent geographers, such as Bai Meich came up with their own map that extended the Chinese borders in the South China Sea, it could not bring significant shifts in Chinese claims. Such initiatives were curtailed by the Japanese invasion of China in 1937.

However, the post-World War II era witnessed a different world order scenario with the emergence of the us as a maritime power and Japan's renouncement of war after adopting a pacifist constitution. China realised the geo-economic and geo-strategic significance of the South China Sea and by the 1950s made its sovereignty claims over the Spratlys and Paracels public. By 1974,

China got involved in conflict with then South Vietnam and retained its control over the Paracels. In 1988, China was eventually successful in establishing control over six islands in the Spratly islands once again by coming in conflict with Vietnam. The Chinese claims are mostly on the basis of the Nine-Dash line which is largely ambiguous in nature. The line has been considered as a source of more confusion to the South China Sea dispute.

Thus, Kipgen exclusively explains the three mechanisms that China adopted to achieve its claims in the waterbody. First, is the China's delaying strategy which gives the leverage to consolidate its maritime claims by deterring the other claimants from consolidating their claims. Since the Communist Party of China can wait uncontested by other parties, the delaying tactics of China enable the diplomatic, administrative and military activities to function with efficiency by preventing the escalation of conflict in the waterbody. Economic modernisation has remained a core concern of China's national interest. To achieve its economic interests, China cannot afford to antagonise its neighbours. Kipgen has explained how the diplomacy and negotiations played a significant role in enabling these mechanisms to function efficiently. Second, China's setting up of territorial markers strategy enables China to commandeer the unoccupied reefs or build structures on them. Later, these markers act as a foundation for their claims. This is a serious concern among the smaller nations of the region. Third, China prefers to commence bilateral discussions with the concerned countries and objects to multilateral discussions. China believes that involvement of more countries would mean more confusions and lack of trust and transparency.

Based on such mechanisms, China's recent developments in the South China Sea have increased. Kipgen, in his book, has illustrated several incidents which are notable in describing China's assertive behaviour in the waterbody. These include reclamation and dredging activities, and creation of artificial islands along with massive military exercise in the disputed areas. Kipgen has very lucidly

explained the reasons behind China not using force to occupy the South China Sea. China cannot afford to do so as the international community could object and this might not bode well for China's new economic megaprojects such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Another interesting part of the book is Kipgen's effort to explain how the geographical proximity and history have been the core factors in asserting sovereignty in the South China Sea. The Philippines and Vietnam remained the most active claimants to the Spratly and the Paracel islands. Kipgen gives a critical assessment of Vietnam's strategies to deal with the issue by equally maintaining good relations with China and commencing multilateral settings rather than bilateral ones. On the other hand, the Philippines under Benigno Aquino III instituted arbitral proceedings against China. Although the tribunal ruled in favour of the Philippines, China completely rejected it. However, after the Rodrigo Duterte government came into power, the Philippines had a warmer approach towards China.

Involvement of Non-claimants

Part III of the book includes the us involvement along with Japan, India and Australia who are non-claimants to the dispute. China is greatly agitated considering the fact that the us itself has not ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and expects China to abide by international laws. The us is a bigger concern for China and the dispute has deepened the competition between both the powers. Kipgen elaborates how economic dynamism and military power are the core reasons behind the us wanting an unhindered access to the waterbody. India, Japan and Australia also have maritime interests and have commenced various policies towards the South China Sea. With the interface between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean coming closer, the South China Sea region is of great significance for India. India is establishing a stronger strategic relationship with the South East Asian countries through its "Act East Policy" and supports the us's freedom of navigation operations (FONOP).

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Japan, whose economy is mostly dependent on the maritime trade, shows serious concern regarding the South China Sea dispute. The book explains the various mechanisms Japan has initiated, including establishing strategic relationship with other claimant countries like Vietnam and the Philippines. Australia has come up with public statements and defence white papers which emphasise on stabilisation of the dispute. These countries have collectively commenced informal forums, such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue to deal with the upcoming challenges. However, they do not directly point Chinese activities as the core concern behind the formation of such a security forum.

Critical Assessment

In addition, Kipgen also offers the debates involved on whether the us should play an active role in the region or not. He has mentioned a few scholars who do not encourage a proactive military engagement while there are others who aspire for the us engagement in the region to counter an expanding China. There are countries such as the Philippines who under Duterte want to solve the dispute bilaterally without the us involvement. On the other hand, there is Indonesia which prefers the us to play an active role to resolve the dispute. However, there is a doubt as to what extent the us can be successful in playing the role of a mediator.

Against this backdrop, Kipgen concludes by analysing that in international politics the influence of a political leader matters. The international relation theories which conceptualise the state as a primary state do not seem to matter much in the current context. The unprecedented military and economic powers of a particular state have the ability to set aside the interests of the other states. In this context, a code of conduct (COC) which has been adopted successfully will not be a permanent solution to the dispute.

Limitations

There are a few limitations in the book which can be derived from the following points. First, Kipgen does not elaborately explain how the “soft diplomacy” has

been a part of China’s South China Sea policy. China does not want to antagonise other countries by using hard power alone in relation to the South China Sea dispute since hard power alone may not suffice in achieving its national interests. Although he mentions BRI in the book he fails to describe how China commences multilateralism as a mechanism of soft power through economic integrity. This involves mega economic projects and agreements, such as Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement.

Second, the book quite clearly describes China’s expansionist behaviour but lacks an explanation on how Vietnam acted as a precedent in drawing straight baselines in the South China Sea. In 1982, Vietnam became the first country even before China to challenge the right of innocent passage for the ships of other countries. However, this assertive aspect of Vietnam has been overlooked. Third, although Kipgen mentions Japan establishing strategic relationship with other South East Asian countries, he failed to explain how the South China Sea dispute has been a core element behind Japan’s changing security policies. Japan has reinterpreted Article 9 of its constitution which renounces war and passed the security legislation in 2015. According to this legislation, the role of the Japanese self-defence forces has been expanded and increased its offensive capabilities by acquiring Aegis destroyers, helicopter carriers, etc.

Fourth, the book lacks the mention of those countries that bandwagon to establish good relations with China without coercion and command. The South

China Sea dispute is not a factor to deteriorate their relationship with China. A system of hierarchy has been explained by David Kang which would commence the involvement of a dominant power. This power would not let any state to balance against it, which would definitely reduce the risk of any conflict from escalating. The countries which are militarily weak also realised that it was futile to challenge China and increase their defence budgets. Thus, economic enmeshment of China through a system of hierarchy or bandwagoning could lead to economic benefits and could be termed as “peaceful rise.”

In Conclusion

Despite the limitations, the book focuses on the various approaches to deal with the dispute. It emphasises on how stability can be achieved by looking beyond the potential benefits for the individual states. To reach a solution, the claimants would have to divert their focus from their claims to greater economic cooperation with each other. The international laws should be respected and allowed the freedom of navigation and overflight. Such an approach is not only expected from the claimants but the navies of the region who are not directly involved in the dispute and still share some interests in the waterbody.

Ulupi Borah (ulupiborah6@gmail.com) is a PhD scholar at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University whose area of research includes Japan’s security policies, China’s maritime developments in the South China Sea and India’s growing naval capabilities and its influences in the Indo-Pacific region.

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Mam and Life, Vol. 47, No. 1-2,
JAN-JUNE-2021

BOOK REVIEW

SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE OF RURAL INDIA SERIES III VOL. ONE

Author: Ashok Wardhan C and
Vikram Singh. V. (Eds.)

Publisher: Concept Publishing
Company (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 2017,
xxix + 456 pp. # (HB)

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(Series - iii), 978-93-5125-250-4
(Vol.I)

Price: 1600

Agriculture and rural development together constitute the backbone of India's economy. Not only that it offers cheap manpower to industries and markets for their products, but it also provides livelihood to the bulging population and the rural poor masses in absence of employment in the organized sector of the economy. Rightly so, this has always been the prime concern of the government ever since India her freedom from the British control. Accordingly, the government of India in collaboration with state governments initiated a number of projects to address the concern of the rural poor, in general, and the marginalized, vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of the society, in particular. This book, in this backdrop, assumes special significance, for being based on the

first hand experiences of the trainee officers likely to be entrusted with the task of the socio-economic uplift of the neglected populace after completion of their training. This book presented into six chapters is compilation of the state papers authored by state specific specialists on the basis of surveys of select villages. Each chapter being exclusively devoted to the specific state. Included in the study are the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. The growth profiles of the states are comprehended broadly under Agriculture and Horticulture, Livestock, Employment and Skill Development, Rural Development, Education and Health with varying programmes undertaken in respect to specific sectors in the states.

Inclusive growth must address the basic concerns of groups such as the Scheduled Castes, scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Minorities, the differently abled and other marginalized groups with their participation and empowerment, the editors rightly argue. People are no more contented with the doled out benefits offered by the government, but have become equally vocal and alert about the nature of governance and accountability with social justice.

Carries encyclopedic information with regard to the

prevailing socio-economic scenario in the states after almost seven decades of development efforts. As a result, dichotomies outnumber the commonness in outcomes with varying arguments advanced to explain the scenario. The common scenario emerging across the states is that though significant improvement has taken place in absolute sense in all the sectors of the economies, in general, the benefits have not reached all the sections of the society, in particular especially the marginal and downtrodden in the same proportion because of the weak implementation of the projects and indifferent attitudes of the government functionaries and political leadership. While infrastructure development is visible significant development in respect to education, health, drinking water, poverty, alleviation and inclusive growth is still elusive and far ery. In Haryana, while significant improvement in the physical infrastructure (road connectivity and electrification) including remote villages has taken place, quality of school education, health and drinking water, public health etc., need considerable improvement. The non-academic atmosphere of the study needs serious examination. Villages continue to suffer from the lack of basic medical facilities as many of them exist on paper only or in a skelton form. Similar is the fate of the self employment and wage employment schemes where state's effort is found to be half-hearted. In

order to improve the effective functioning of village Panchayats being the grass root democratic institution, development of more finances, and capacity building of the elected representatives must be given serious consideration without further delay.

This book is based on the premise that agricultural growth and rural development are a must for economic take-off of the states. According to terrain and topography of the states and availability of natural resources. It details out state wise government initiatives in vogue. While there is no death of developmental projects concerning all sectors of the economy, and all sections of the societies, the experience with regard to their success and failure and effective implementation are not similar may be for the reason of differing socio-economic and political systems and administrative set up of the states.

Institutional capabilities without appropriate training and motivation of the manpower, and emphasis on process rather than outcomes affecting the delivery of public services seriously are the major bottlenecks that appear on the way to achieving the stated objectives of development. Involvement of the affected populace and measurement of public satisfaction need to be developed and made mandatory in order to ensure sustainability of inclusive growth. The plethora of

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regulatory bodies comprising former bureaucrats may be replaced by handed and committed functionaries. Agricultural growth is possible to be achieved by providing basic support services such as technology and irrigation infrastructure, access to credit, good and reliable seeds and improved post harvest technology. Land productivity may further be improved by ensuring water security, seed supply, promotion of soil health and securing institutional investment. In such rain fed areas inhabited mostly by small and marginal poor farmers, wage earners under MGNREGA are found to be back to farming and allied livelihoods with crop diversification and quality assets creation creating a positive synergy with agricultural growth.

In spite of devolution of power to PRIs, and 50 percent reservation for women and several emerging new opportunities for their development, women's development and empowerment remains as challenging as ever before. In order to break the gender stereotypes, skill development of women is essential, and home and community based self-employment need to be promoted through formation of self-help-groups and by providing all necessary support with encouragement to them. The condition of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes continues to remain a matter of serious even among the most vulnerable disadvantaged sections of

people in spite all legislative and developmental policy measures.

The state of Punjab presents a unique case of rural transformation with fast rate of structural change in terms of income generation as well as in the employment pattern from agriculture to non-agricultural activities. This has led to quality improvement in people's well being with their enhanced productive capabilities and expanded life choices irrespective of class differentiation. There is increasing emphasis on planned integrated development with backward and forward linkages with the mainstream economy. Acknowledged for green revolution, economic prosperity of rich farmers and making the country self-sufficient in food grains are the positive outcomes of the rural development in the state. But in the process, depletion of the ground water resources and its pollution, damage to soil, productivity, non-sustainable cropping pattern and social polarization in the rural areas reflected in separate schools and health care facilities, dysfunctional education system and Panchayats functionaries under the control and influence of rich farmers creating problems in the implementation of the government sponsored poverty alleviation programmes are the serious concern which calls for urgent redressal. Promotion of co-operatives can be extremely useful in correction of distortions taking place in the

process of rural development in the state, in the opinion of the authors.

Agriculture and Horticulture is the main occupation of the people (89.96%) who live in the rural areas. In the state of Himachal Pradesh, in order to improve land productivity, the emphasis is laid on diversification towards high value crops by providing high yielding variety of seeds to farmers. Farmers are issued soil health lands during each cropping season after testing the soil quality in the laboratory. Credit flow for purchase of inputs is made available by banks. Incentive is offered to farmers for organic farming in view of increasing demand for organic food products. Regulated and modernized market complexes are established to offer useful services. Seed village programme has been initiated in order to meet local seed requirements at lower cost and in shorter time. Production of cash crops by adoption of precision in farming practices through Poly House Cultivation is being encouraged. In view of the suitable climate condition, a shift to production of fruit crops is in progress, Litchi along with incentives for fewer cultivation and vegetable production, weather based crops insurance for apple is provided to farmers and farmers are encouraged for livestock is integral part of the Himachal economy production of milk, wool, meat and adequate infrastructure and facilities are made for further development. Development of fisheries and

promotion of tourism because of friendly weather and flora and fauna, are given equal weightage. Integrated development of Buddhist Circuit in the state is proposed to be undertaken on priority basis to attract tourists. The level of education in the state is very elaborate with 82.80 percent literacy rate (89.53% males, and 75.93% females). In order to promote education in general, and quality education in particular, a number of schemes is in vogue in the state with fairly developed infrastructure.

Rajasthan – the largest state in the country with extremely difficult terrain and topography, deficient water resources and erratic rainfall, low density and scattered settlements around people's farms holdings and isolated hills coupled with dominant feudal system yet poses a challenge of its own kind from the rural development point of view. Its disadvantaged and hostile geographic location raises the unit cost of delivery of services enormously almost for all the services deliver, like education, drinking water, medical and health care services, power supply, revenue and general administration. One of BIMARU states in the country, Rajasthan lags for behind in under development indicators in comparison to all India status as well as several other states. Animal husbandry is the major economic activity besides agriculture in providing employment and much needed support against frequently occurring scarcity conditions to the

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poor farmers especially in the arid and semi arid areas. Problems of drinking water, water for irrigation presence of desert and drought are the recurring problems that people of the state always struggle with.

The state government of Rajasthan has taken a number of policy measures under its very popular 15 Flagship Programmes along with national Flagship programmes for improving the socio-economic status of the last man of the society. A wide spread disparity across the state and district in terms of Human Development Index is found in the state because of adverse geophysical conditions coupled with low infrastructure development. The government has not been able to improve education, health care services and other facilities in spite of several specific programmes being in vogue to address such issues on account of population explosion and faulty implementation of the government initiatives, in the opinion of the authors.

Agricultural growth and rural development in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) spread over three distinct regions is more challenging in view of its difficult topography and climatic conditions beside people and their cultural system being differently specific to each region. The political and social interest emanating from inside as well as outside adds another dimension to the developmental efforts of the state. Therefore, any

common policy for development of the state as who may not be very relevant and effective. Accordingly, various regions specific measures are under way with very generous assistance from the central government because of its disturbed status and socio-political and religious sensitivity. However, experiences and outcomes of development are not much different from the other states. The economy of the state being primarily agrarian, agriculture and allied activities provides basic source of livelihood to people. J&K is well known for earning its major revenue form the export of horticulture products apples, pears, peaches, plum, apricot, almond, cherry and tropical fruits such as Saffron and Jeera to other places besides tourism. Floriculture is another activity which brings reasonable revenue to the state. The Tulip garden of the state is world famous and stands next to Canada. Livestock and poultry booming eco-friendly sub-sector of agriculture play significant role in providing gainful employment to marginal, small and landless farmers. The significance of forests with four national parks providing timbers for export and wood for domestic consumption can in no way be underrated. Though under depletion, the Central government has provided sufficient fund for forest regeneration. The State with plethora of streams, lakes, hilly torrents and reservoirs is making all round efforts to make fishery

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economically viable. Handicrafts and Handlooms, Sericulture and development of tourism as a major employment and income generating activity are promoted in a big way in order to boost the economy. The experience with regard to education, health care services is similar to that of other states. The Panchayati Raj System with power to establish Halqua, Panchyats, Block Development Councils, District Planning and Development Boards and Panchayat Adalat has not been effectively functioning because of sporadic and intermittent disturbances. The book written in a lucid manner is encyclopedic in nature and carries, plethora of information's with regard to the prevailing socio- economic scenario in the states under reference after their almost seven decades of development experience. Though devoid of conceptual and theoretical perspective, the book is valuable to the policy makers' academicians, researchers and development organizations.

Dr. Vivek Kant

Banaras Hindu University
And Dr. Mahua Ghosal

Haldia Law College, ICARE Haldia

GLOBALIZATION: IT'S IMPACT ON SOCIETY (EDS)

Author: Mantu Hazarika and Brojen Borah

Publisher: Kasturi Printers and Publishers, 2015, 248 pp. (HB),

ISBN: 978-93-5104-185-6.

Price: 300

This book entitled "Globalization: Its Impact on Society, is an edited volume by Mantu Hazarika and Brojen Borah, and contains twenty six short essays authored by different persons on different aspects of globalization which has come to stay as a impact of socio-economic and political reality in modern day societies. Various themes related to globalization have been attempted by a number of authors presenting their own perspectives subtending them with examples in most of the cases. The emergence of globalization in its historical context with its ancient, nascent and modern phases of development. Similarly, its impact on education which considered to significantly contributing to the nation's growth, prosperity, social equity and equality as well as in creating talent hub in each and every productive sector is discussed by four authors. Besides Dr. Jalani Das's discussion on the value component of education in the context of present day globalization, others have looked into its impact in terms of opportunities of knowledge creation, domination and hegemony of western language and literature are the other

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areas with the advent of globalization, western perspective is slowly losing its grip, and in its place, new themes of gender and sexuality, a new kind of narratives are coming up in literary writings. The concepts and corpuses of English literature has drastically changed, and writers of various regions and ethnic groups are writing in English expressing the cultural manners, feelings, aspirations, history myths, desire for identity etc. of the groups to which they belong. The new paradigm of the literary studies is articulated along the trajectories of postmodernism, poststructuralist critique and multiculturalism, though it is argued that cultural assimilation, interdependence of economies and deliberation on global issues may not be possible by excluding English (Rigumoni Gagos).

The impact of globalization in the socio-economic and cultural lives of people is path breakup, which is examined by four authors by dwelling on its different aspects. Globalization primarily being an economic phenomenon has given nations greater access to global technology and market, financial resources and quality services, skilled human resources which were inaccessible to the developing world which was hits to restricted because of protective measures of the industrially advanced countries. At the same time, it is also feared that globalization may bring in large scale commoditification of native cultures and would erase their unique identities because of free flow of information and goods and services.

Agricultural sector with its dominant positioning in the economies of the most of the developing countries has come into challenge with globalization in view of global market requirements, knowledge and availability of modern means of cultivations, proper utilization of area specific natural recourses, development of agro based industries and information about new crops and cropping pattern. There are perceived to bring propriety and revolutionary quality. Changes in the lives of the who live in rural areas and continue to follow their age-old methods of cultivation and cropping pattern among the positive outcomes of the globalization are the widening of peoples' horizons, access to knowledge and the products of science and technology, multiculturalism and intercultural view, an increase in opportunities, personal and social development and possibilities of sharing ideas and joint action towards solutions of common problems. At the same time, authors also share that worries about survival of domestic industries, overuse and abuse of natural resources, increasing poverty, a growing gap between developed and developing countries, and between privileged and excluded people, low standard of living, forced migration, and human rights violations, exploitation of weak social groups, racism, conflicts, insecurity and growing individualism besides green house effects, climate change pollution and exhaustion of natural resources. Besides, globalization is also questioned from the other ideological perspectives, inequities of

global trade, environmental problems, loss of natural sovereignty and cultural imperialism. In discussing the changing nature of state under globalization, Bidyut Bora highlights the integration of world economies and societies through cross country flow of information, ideas, technologies, goods and services, capital, finance and more importantly, people resulting in negotiated policy decisions of the sovereign states. There are also some essays which do not exactly fit into the core theme of the book like domestic labour and women status of in Assam etc. The book on the whole, is informative, though, without much empirical evidences. These are the collection of short essays authored by different persons according their perspectives.

Dr. Mahua Ghosal

Haldia Law College, ICARE, Haldia
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The volume makes a valuable contribution towards advancing our understanding of the intersections between technology, politics and ethics, drawing together ideas and examples from various fields and combining them in an engaging exploration of the notion of citizenship. Each author has sought an exhaustive coverage of the knowledge debates in his/her area of interest, and extensive bibliographic references lead the reader to further resources. The contents of this volume will resonate not only with scholars of STS but also with ethicists and political theorists who foray into technology's interaction with their respective disciplines.

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Nishtha Bharti

PhD Scholar

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

IIT Delhi, Hauz Khas

New Delhi 110016

E-mail: nishtha447@gmail.com

LILLY IRANI (2019), *Chasing Innovation: Making Entrepreneurial Citizens in Modern India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 304 pp., 10 b/w illustrations, \$29.95 (Paperback), ISBN: 9780691175140; \$99.95 (Hardcover), ISBN: 9780691175133.

DOI: 10.1177/0971721820960016

Chasing Innovation is a multi-level ethnographic study on the shifts that have occurred within the discourses of entrepreneurialism, citizenship and innovation. It scrutinises the varied wavelengths of poverty through the prism of nation-building in order to argue for an observation of the diffused value that lies dormant within it. Crucial to this approach towards understanding poverty as a dormant source

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of value is the politico-economic framework of entrepreneurial citizenship (p. 2), where capital is infused with an entrepreneurial ethos, and the promises articulated by its advocates are largely engaged with by its middle-class stakeholders. Through the discursive modifications that it makes, entrepreneurial citizenship offers speculative citizens an avenue to utilise their agency and capital, albeit at the cost of subsuming enduring social movements. The matter of social welfare is shifted away from the gaze of the nation state and into the hands of unelected entrepreneurs, who are presented with little-to-no accountability towards the citizens that they intend to serve.

As a result, the tensions between the numerous perspectives on the development of India become negotiable through a process of social construction; entrepreneurship is laid bare and heralded as accessible, and the mantle of innovation casts a shadow upon the intricacies of caste, class and gender-based relations (p. 4). To better elucidate upon the changing nature of the social inequalities created by these forms of stratification, Lilly Irani draws upon varied bodies of literature. Economic sociology, economic anthropology, and science and technology studies (STS) provide a vantage point for observing networks of enterprises and their respective agents, while studies on design lend a critical view to the material nature of those networks and the inter-subjective spaces that exist between the interactions that occur on them (p. 4). Concurrently, the book yields to the domains of feminist studies, postcolonial studies and South Asian studies through a historical analysis of the nation state's ability to organise and assemble social hierarchies, where a corresponding series of negotiations emerges from the juxtaposition of citizens' imaginaries against the embellished ideals of nationhood. The book is about far more than merely questioning a set of rigid philosophical beliefs, as it presents an array of disjunctions both within and between the different forms of governance, while focusing upon the necessity of decolonising the ethnographic method. Furthermore, it calls into question the prerequisites for the very ability to innovate and the epistemological formations that make those prerequisites known.

Chasing Innovation also offers a crash course in India's economic history, with the purpose of showing why development must be further democratised, and how it could be achieved by dismantling the divisive standpoints that emerge at the intersection where political sensationalism, corporate apathy, institutional rigidity and academic exceptionalism meet each other. The (seemingly) immutable nature of the views that are borne by these paradigms is positioned as the reason for which the entrepreneurial ethos is an absolute necessity. Its Foucauldian characteristics enable it to move past ideological differences that stand to eviscerate the promises of inclusivity and innovation, which are never fully conveyed by the ideology of 'moving up the value chain' (p. 85). Irani makes a deep dive into the delivery of this ethos through a discussion on education, where entrepreneurial narratives are criticised for prioritising the acts of 'heroic' individuals over the strength of collective alliances (p. 78), and entrepreneurial citizenship is represented as a model that is limited despite being Gandhian and cosmopolitan at the same time. Notions

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of selfhood are intentionally aligned with patterns of interpersonal communication (p. 100) in order to measure an individual's capacity to exercise free will and, by extension, to make it possible to examine the price of doing so. Here, Irani's experiences at the studio DevDesign and the case study of a hackathon provide compelling insights into how professionals work towards fostering connections with their respective ecosystems, and how they hope that their efforts would integrate them into a larger narrative of social change. The limitations of entrepreneurial citizenship become obvious here, as the narratives reveal as to how these efforts capitalise upon invisible forms of labour that were not intended to be compatible with models of inclusive growth (p. 140).

As Irani pivots the discourse towards human-centred design, the micro-political nature of the entrepreneurial ethos (p. 169) would come across as essential to the method of utilising empathy to push past socio-economic barriers and create a sense of accountability. Here, the very definition of innovation comes into question, as do the institutional linkages that exist on account of it. The culturally and economically mediated history of technology is then examined for the constraints that numerous forms of exploitation have imposed upon acts of creativity; Irani steers the reader through its myriad layers using a range of postcolonial arguments, the ideology of *jugaad* innovation and the materiality of the humble *lota* (a curved metallic vessel that is typically used to hold water), aside from other cultural artefacts, and the questions of authenticity that remain tied to them.

The methodological notes entrenched within the manuscript are dispersed and spread out across its chapters, perhaps as an allusion to what Irani had meant about the embedded nature of value within the structures of poverty. Beyond the initial fieldwork that Irani had engaged in as a participant-observer at DevDesign for fourteen months (p. 18), an additional eight years went into the production of this longitudinal study. It traces the contours of knowledge production in postcolonial India, alongside the evolution of the aforementioned discourses. Nuanced analyses of historical documents and policy recommendations (from institutions such as the World Bank) appear alongside critiques of popular films within its chapters—the result of commitments and efforts made in the direction of employing mixed methods to speak to a wide audience of both generalists and specialists alike. The modality of Irani's approach subjugates a problematic binary that is inherent within many ethnographies—that of being a 'native' versus being an 'outsider'—neither of which are claimed in this study (p. 20). This fluid, decolonial approach engenders a true sense of 'openness', one which largely dismantles the difficulties posed by the problem of exclusion, and the perimeter beyond which the lived realities of marginality are all too real. Keeping that in mind, Irani does, of course, admit to certain limitations that appear in the guise of ethnographic refusals that were put forth by lower-level office staff at DevDesign (p. 21). The restrictions imposed by these boundaries are addressed through a broader look at the implications that design research and design thinking have for the idea of inclusive growth (p. 39), in a way that would seem akin to some form of imputation. This is further bolstered

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by an articulation of certain processes through which the pedagogy of innovation (p. 50) might effectively bridge the gaps between what the nation offers as visions of entrepreneurial success, and the veracities that are known to the civil society.

Aside from the profound implications that it bears for the ethnographic method, and the contributions that it makes to STS, feminist studies, postcolonial studies and research on labour, *Chasing Innovation* fulfils the promise of instilling an awareness of a sociopolitical zeitgeist. It subtly instrumentalises hope and cautions its readers against reductionist stances on development, while staying clear of anthropological interventions that might inaccurately interpret the essence of socially conscious entrepreneurial practices. In looking beyond its own temporal margins, the book seeds achievable visions of decolonised futures that can be deconstructed into actions that would serve the civil society in the present—a roadmap, if you will, of what inclusive development might mean to Indians in the years to come. My humble opinion on the way by which it was written stands in opposition to what was expressed by Roy (2019): *Chasing Innovation* is likely to be perceived as readable by anyone who makes an acquaintance with the vocabulary of interdisciplinary work; it is far from being jargon-heavy. The riveting ethnographic accounts and socio-historical analyses presented by the text sift through complex life experiences and symbolic interactionist structures by elaborating upon what might not seem too obvious, and impressionistically conveying what need not be made all too obvious. It is, in short, radical, reflexive and revelatory.

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Shiv Issar

Doctoral Student

Department of Sociology

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Milwaukee, WI 53211, USA

E-mail: sissar@uwm.edu

The experiment was carried out in Burdwan showing fever incidence in the experimental area reduced to 50 per cent of the outside area. Bentley had proved that a frontal attack on mosquitoes and a flank attack was necessary. He had advised irrigation schemes to reduce mosquitoes and to improve the condition of the people. The other recommendations were small fish to kill larvae, the use of mosquito nets, repellents, protective clothing, and the application of gauze to windows and doors.

Das and Dutta have identified areas for further research, in the study of health and medicine in colonial Bengal. They are: the social history of cholera in colonial Bengal; how famine and flood influenced its spread; a comparative analysis of cholera outbreaks in different parts of Bengal and its impact on regional demography, economy and public health; the socio-economic background of the persons affected by malaria; and the nature, extent and impact of medical intervention to control smallpox and the indigenous response to vaccination. For these historical investigations and analyses, the documents in this volume would be invaluable primary source material, complemented and supplemented by non-official sources including newspaper reports, pamphlets and contemporary writings in Bengali.

Mridula Ramanna is former Head, Department of History, SIES College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Mumbai.

✓ Rohan Deb Roy and Guy N.A. Attewell, *Locating the Medical: Explorations in South Asian History*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018, vi+307 pages, Rs 950

In one of his lectures delivered at the Institute of Social Medicine (Biomedical Centre, State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) in October 1974, Michel Foucault argued that since the eighteenth century, medicine had continually involved itself in what was 'not its business', that is, in matters other than patients and diseases. Medicine during this period became a 'social practice instead of an individual one' and was endowed with 'an authoritarian power with normalising functions that went beyond the existence of diseases and the wishes of the patient'. The present volume by Rohan Deb Roy and Guy Attewell explores this connection of medicine with social practices and networks of power thereby challenging the 'out there-ness' of medicine as a category. For this purpose, it covers a wide spatio-temporal scope ranging from colonial Bengal to contemporary Ladakh, from the Andaman Islands and British Burma to contemporary Maharashtra (p. 2).

A common question that has been explored extensively by historians

of medicine over the past few decades is: 'How did medicine and medical knowledge shape the socio-political narrative of the time particularly in colonial South Asia?' A related enduring question that went on to become an ever-resonating catchphrase in South Asian context is, 'What is colonial about colonial medicine?' Incidentally, the editors of the present volume reformulate the aforesaid question to ask, 'How did the socio-political context shape our understanding of the category of medicine and medical knowledge?' In a similar vein, 'What is medical about colonial medicine?' catches the attention of the editors. Thus, this volume is about the historical ontology of medicine in South Asia wherein it seeks to answer the following interrelated questions (p. 9). How do contingent political histories engender the medical? How does the medical, in turn, coalesce with, or reshape and sustain, political categories? Is the medical necessarily a stable, coherent and continuous category? In what ways are the rigid boundaries between the medical and the non-medical blurred?

While attempting to find answers to the above questions, the editors categorically argue that the medical is not a preordained designation. Rather the characterisation of an event or object as 'medical' emerges in specific historical conjunctures of time and space (p. 9). The chapters in this volume reveal how the medical was often defined and reconfigured by 'non-medical' actors such as courts, the police, village headmen and census workers who took on roles that variously dealt with the collection and assessment of medical evidence, the propagation of sanitation and the documentation of disease incidence. In this regard, the very first chapter by Durba Mitra shows how sociological typologies went into the making of manuals of medical jurisprudence. She argues that claims of scientific objectivity, legal veracity and social-scientific authority silently converged in forensic medical writings concerned with rape, abortion and infanticide (p. 25). Consequently, medical knowledge was constitutive of and constituted by a range of 'non-medical' factors, viz. changing ideas of sexuality, networks of social power and surveillance, and forms of gendered difference. Mitra, through numerous illustrations, shows how seemingly 'scientific' and 'objective' forensic investigations were often loaded with moral judgments and sociological concerns regarding female sexuality. A coroner's inquest of the death of Kally Bewah in colonial Bengal can be taken as a reference in this context wherein the coroner, in his medical report, besides investigating the cause of Kally's death, narrated her social world and sexual transgression (pp. 23-24).

Similarly, Chandak Sengoopta in his chapter explores the non-medical origin of fingerprinting techniques which later became a crucial part of medical jurisprudence. Incidentally, fingerprinting techniques were developed in late nineteenth-century plantation economies in Bengal, first among indigo planters who used fingerprints as exteriorized material evidence in the making of contracts with their workers. Later, it was used as an administrative weapon to combat the 'innate' dishonesty of 'natives'.

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It soon became a 'scientific' 'medical' tool to combat Indian mendacity and was used extensively while executing deeds and contracts, in sale of property, identification of genuine pensioners, and so on. In other words, it was the cultural conviction of the colonial state regarding the allegedly 'deceitful' colonised subject that brought fingerprinting within the ambit of the medical.

Sudipta Sen's chapter also explores the location of medical within the *exercise of law in the construction of 'spleen theory' (or the theory of the presence of abnormally enlarged spleens among Indians)* to absolve the colonial masters in cases of death of their 'native' servants due to physical abuse. The construction of 'spleen theory' and its application in colonial jurisprudence, argues Sen, was a clear manifestation of 'certain deep-seated notions of physical, biological and racial differences between Europeans and natives' (p. 72).

Jonathan Saha in his chapter looks into the co-constitutive history of evolution of the colonial state and medical ideas in nineteenth-century Burma. According to him, neither the colonial state nor colonial medicine was a prior, preordained category. Rather, they developed interacting with each other. Saha interestingly argues that in the colonial context, non-medical state officials and institutions progressively played more medical roles than institutions with explicit medical purposes (p. 118). Courts increasingly had to handle medical evidence. Correspondingly, policemen had to be taught to collect such evidence. Village headmen were instructed to ensure that their villages were sanitary. Census workers had to enumerate the numbers of lepers, lunatics and others suffering from a number of medical afflictions. Thus, the state actors had to behave according to medical rules and ideas, and they in turn shaped such rules/ideas as well.

Calum Blaikie, through his analysis of changes in Sowa Rigpa (a collectivisation of forms of medical practice and tradition dispersed through the Indo-Tibetan highlands), explores yet another non-medical factor – which is, changing material and economic conditions – that goes into the making of the medical. He emphatically shows how once road transport was regularised in Ladakh from the 1960s onwards connecting it with the outside world, the consequent sudden abundance of formerly limited raw materials led to the emergence of larger scales of drug production and to the proliferation, complexification and commodification of Sowa Rigpa medicines (p. 170). Thus, the transformation of Ladakh from an independent trans-Himalayan trading state to an Indian backwater led to corresponding changes, along with continuities, in the medical system. In a way Blaikie explores the material basis of medical activities.

Yet another interesting chapter in this volume is by James Mills who looks into the heterogeneous and multiple careers of an object usually considered as exclusively medical. Here Mills specifically focuses on the multiple lives of cannabis and its products during the nineteenth century: as a therapeutic substance (as stimulant, painkiller and anti-convulsive for

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a range of conditions including hydrophobia, cholera and neuralgia), cause of ill health, as intoxicant, and as a significant excise article for the British government in India. According to Mills, the multiple configurations of cannabis existed in parallel depending on the actors involved with it in specific circumstances. Thus he resists essentialist conceptions of the medical.

Similarly, the chapter by David Arnold treads into a largely doctor-less domain of health such as the street, the factory and the home. Here Arnold explores the impact of a set of 'everyday technologies' that in themselves had no direct and functional relationship with bodily health, but which in the period from the 1890s to the 1940s began to impinge directly and indirectly on the physical well-being and health of the people at large and of the poorer classes in particular (p. 265). Arnold also poses serious questions about class- and occupation-specific conceptions of illness. Like Saha, Arnold argues that the responsibility of maintaining the health of the colonised subject was often extended far beyond the medical professions and associated institutions (such as hospitals and dispensaries) to apparently non-medical professions such as the police, magistrates and factory inspectors who in turn brought their own prejudices and predilections to the domain of the medical.

The volume also contains chapters by Vishvajit Pandya and Madhumita Mazumdar (on the state's presence in post-Independence Andaman Islands as manifested through the narrative of a state medical practitioner, Dr Ratan Chandra Kar), Clare Anderson (on the making of an eclectic archive with reference to the papers of J.P. Walker, a retired surgeon-general of the Indian Medical Service), Shubha Ranganathan (on the fuzziness of boundaries between the medical and the religious, shrines and bureaucratic medical institutions, and 'biomedical' and 'indigenous' healing systems), and Projit Bihari Mukharji (on comparative reading of contemporary government reports, an essay, and a novel focused on the 'Burdwan Fever' of 1870s), and an 'Afterword' by Mark Harrison.

In short, this volume emphatically establishes that besides scientific discoveries, socio-political and economic conditions play crucial roles in production, enactment and transformation of the category of medical ideas and knowledge. Thus, as Mark Harrison aptly remarks in the 'Afterword', the chapters in this volume make the category of 'the medical' more porous and less distinct (p. 285). The most fascinating feature of this volume is that it seeks to locate 'the medical' not only in hospitals, dispensaries and other professionalised spaces, but also in penal establishments, infrastructure, the workplace and the home wherein several non-medical actors become decisive in the making of the category of 'the medical'.

Saurav Kumar Rai is Senior Research Assistant, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

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affording dowry? If representation does not mean redistribution of power in decision-making, then what solution will the author offer? The changing pattern in the caste panchayat should have been highlighted more as it is important to see the processes of hierarchy and dominance being broken. In the end, Chowdhry could have shed light on why certain dominant castes could attain the social

status of "honourable castes" while many within the lower castes were excluded.

Sonam Goyal (sonamgoyal0786@gmail.com) teaches at the Institute for Excellence in Higher Education, Bhopal.

NOTE

- 1 Karewa or levirate marriages in Haryanvi rural society was/is a common feature where a widow is married to the immediate younger brother or elder brother, or even in few cases to the father

of the deceased. This was done to embolden the common blood line theory among all the agnatic males of the family.

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A History of the Socially Excluded in Odisha

SANCHITA BAKSHI

The unique contribution of Biswamoy Pati's posthumous volume is its intimate rendering of Dalit and Adivasi lives. Pati moves away from the method of "everyday" or "spectacular protest," to explore, rather modestly, survival strategies. What does this complex survival life entail? What are the ways in which the Dalits and Adivasis live and push back against dominant orders? Drawing on rich archival and ethnographic material, spanning an extensive range of themes, the book places Odisha's "marginal people" at the centre of its analysis, providing a nuanced view of their interactions with the dominant sections.

Colonial Agrarian Interventions

Chapter 1 of the book situates the political economy context in which survival strategies are embedded. Pati argues that foremost amongst the changes introduced by the British were land revenue settlement policies. Hitherto unsurveyed tracts were marked, classified and land was accorded a new legal status as "property" that could be owned and controlled and from which more rent could be extracted. Plough cultivation was expanded in areas which were accustomed to shifting cultivation practices. Forested reserves, too, witnessed unprecedented entrenchment of British administrative system, undermining the influence of local tribal chiefs and village-level institutions.

Tribals and Dalits in Orissa: Towards a Social History of Exclusion, c 1800-1950 by Biswamoy Pati, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019; pp 248, ₹945.

In parts of the coastal tracts (Puri, Cuttack and Balasore), which were directly administered by the British, summary land settlements were undertaken. However, in several princely states, land settlements had more permanent basis. Tribal chiefs were incorporated through settlement policies and Brahminical caste system as "tributary chiefs" (princes) along with sections of "outsiders" who were settled as zamindars (p 5). Contrary to popular belief, this was not merely a matter of "formalising" traditional structures of power but one where a colonial support base was carefully nurtured and patronised. Backed by colonial overlords, several of these feudal chiefs exacted large revenue from the tribals and agriculturalists, earning these areas the epithet of *andharua mulak* or dark zones (p 5).

Diversity in Integration

Chapter 2 weaves an excellent account of the divergent strategies adopted by colonial capitalism for its growth and sustenance. Starting with Puri, Pati argues that in the early years, British search for legitimacy led them to Jagannath who was created the "presiding deity" of Odisha. Obtaining sanction from "Him" and negotiating with his

representatives, namely the Brahmins and the Raja of Puri, formed the basis of British entry. Celebrations like the annual *rathajatra* ritualised power structures, while playing a crucial role in urbanising the pilgrim town. Puri was an important source of revenue which came in the form of pilgrim tax. "Pilgrim hunters" made a living travelling all over the country, lending money to pilgrims (at 4 annas for every rupee), and securing promissory notes that pilgrims would pay upon their return. The "pilgrim invasion" in Puri translated not only in the transformation of demographics during the period of the *rathajatra*, but also the transformation of the religious town into a town of lodging houses where every resident was a "lodging house keeper." In these makeshift arrangements people slept in rooms with "perfect strangers." "We are told about forced recruitment of prostitutes by the dalals of central India and the sexual exploitation of women by the pandas (priests) of Puri" (p 44). In the process, Pati explains the condition of the town as it lived through massive famines and cholera epidemic compelling the British to inaugurate the Badadanda drainage scheme in 1891. Resonant with present-day concerns of "sanitising" cities, several laws came up to forcibly remove poor from public spaces for the "safety" of society (Bengal Leper Act, 1895). These social transformations bore spatial manifestation with the emergence of "two Puris" racially partitioned between the "good" and sanitary inner "sanatorium" of the white, and the remaining belonging to the natives.

In contrast, the entry of British in the princely state of Kalahandi owed much to the early discourse of the civilising

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mission. It justified military forays in the hilly tracts inhabited by the “beastly” Kandha tribes practising *meriah* (human) sacrifices. While the prevalence of the actual practice has been subsequently contested (Pfeffer 2006), British stereotyped the community into “wild savages” in need of improvement. Pati writes,

It appears, therefore, that the anti-meriah crusade may have given the tribals their first major push into the hilly, forested interior of Kalahandi. (p 51)

The process of enclavement was part of a longer precolonial drive which encroached upon agricultural land cleared by the Adivasis. In precolonial times, while on the one hand, ruling elites sought legitimacy from the tribals, they were simultaneously chastised for being “unproductive and lazy.” Adivasis played a vital role in clearing forests and producing surplus in the region. However, land once cleared proved to be attractive to Kultas (an agriculture caste) that moved from Raipur Sambalpur region to the plains of Kalahandi. Kultas were contrasted for being “industrious” in comparison, and received land grants in their favour (p 50). While prejudice against tribals had precolonial origins, it took on a material basis with the colonial process that legitimised and polarised social stratification. The summary land settlements instituted by the British reinforced pre-existing inequalities in the region and led to further marginalisation of the Kandhas.

On the east, Mayurbhanj became an island of “colonial modernity” owing to its rich iron ore deposits, which were extracted by the indigenous capitalist class (Tatas) in support from the local Mayurbhanj Darbar under colonial rule. The development of indigenous capitalism happened on the back of the labouring bodies of Santhal and other Adivasis who were forcibly recruited to work in the iron ore mines (p 63). This was possible as most princely states had pre-existing systems of *bethi* (forced labour) which were seen as a “custom” by the British. The Tatas feigned ignorance and pretended to be “clean,” claiming to have “nothing to do with the tribals” (p 64), while clearing large forested areas

inhabited by Adivasis under the guise of “extensive reclamation.”

Survival as Resistance

Chapter 3 broadens the definition of resistance by including in its ambit several unexamined strategies of survival by the poor. Pati argues that adoption of agriculture practices such as *podu*, *dongar*, *kumri* and *jhum* (types of shifting cultivation) ought to be seen as a sign of resistance by the tribals. Contrary to colonial interpretation which framed shifting cultivation as a traditional method of farming practised by the “ancient people” as it was “dear to their heart,” Pati contends that the more intensive use of shifting cultivation needs be seen in the context of twin pressures of growing encroachment of forests and the loss of land brought by “*zamindar-sahukar-sarkar* nexus” (p 12). First displaced, and subsequently pushed to forested interiors, for many communities “there was no alternative” (p 71).

Related to this were the shifts in food habits. As Kandhas moved away from rice-based cultivation to dry land crops cultivated on hilltops with water constraints, they reoriented to food crops like *mandia*, *ragee*, *kotkee*, and *mohwa*.

Another survival strategy during famines was the practice of petty thefts “forcing” many tribals into jails. In practice, this was another way of subverting the system to satisfy hunger for a few days at least (p 74). Other “very petty crimes” by outcastes such as *Kandaras* and *Panas* included placing human skulls or rubbish in front of shops and houses to extract money. Such practices did not just target the upper castes in order to humiliate them but were an attempt by the outcastes to assert their excluded identities.

Another dimension to their survival hinged on the way in which several outcastes incorporated themselves into the Brahminical order. At the time of land settlement many tribals “converted” to Orias or in other words many Orias emerged from amongst the Adivasis. Many tribals “disappeared” from the census while the Khandayat population increased manifold. The incorporation of Adivasis in the Brahminical Hindu order continued through processes of Oriyaisation and Kshatriyaisation, while more confrontational attempts to challenge the hierarchical structure of Brahminical Hinduism too were made in the same period.

Significant amongst this was the “Mahima movement” in the late 19th century. Initiated with the singular emphasis on the “creator of universe” viewed as *Alekha* or *Mahima*, meaning “unwritten” and “glorious”—the movement strategically delegitimised textual and scriptural reliance of Brahminical Hinduism. The movement invented its own sophisticated discourse on equality and humanism drawing on a serious (and at times poetic) interrogation of real-life exploitation, faced by the Dalits and Adivasis.

Bhima Bhoi, a blind Kandha tribal who had the distinction of popularising the movement wrote a *boli* in which he articulates:

boundless is the anguish and misery of the living,
who can see and tolerate it
let my soul be condemned to hell,
but let the universe be redeemed.

Drawing on “plebeian” experiences, the movement invented its own rituals (“feasting together,” “simplified marriage,” etc), including some from Islam and

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Christianity ("sin" and "confession"), in strong defiance of the dominant social norms of the time.

Alternative Visions

In the last chapter, Pati provides an intricate picture of "nationalism" involving Dalit and Adivasi unity against feudal and imperial indignities. It is important to note that despite the establishment of the All India States Peoples' Conference in 1927 and an Odisha chapter in 1931, princely states remained relatively isolated from the national movement. The Indian National Congress maintained a policy of non-interference with the hope that princes would become "trustees" of the people. As Pati notes, realistically, there was also the fear that its own organisation was very weak in Odisha, and that given the intensity of oppression people faced, the policy of non-violence may not be possible. However, some slow shifts were becoming visible with the socialists, Communist Party of India as well Kisan Sangha getting seriously involved. "The question was how long the PCC (Pradesh

Congress Committee) and Congress supporters in the princely states would remain mute spectators" (p 177).

Nilgiri Prajamandal emerged in this context, and was the first such movement to end this long isolation. Prajamandal, in support with the communists, developed a strong organisational base uniting Adivasis, Dalits and poor non-Adivasis of the region, to demand an end to all forms of unpaid labour and exploitation (bethi, *rasad*, and *salami*) (p 179). If the movement demanded greater access and control of forest resources, it also incorporated Gandhian inspired "communal dinners" with equal ease. Pati cites several examples of Adivasi gathering for peaceful protests in the face of *darbar's* repression (p 180). Despite these successes, the expansion of the movement was curtailed due to the ideological differences between Congress sections of the Prajamandal and the communists. During this tussle, Banamali Das, the leader of the movement, was expelled on Congress's prodding. Pati views this not as an isolated instance of leadership clash but

one that seriously undermined the growing strength of the Adivasis and Dalits.

In Conclusion

There is much in the book that has not been included in this brief review. Pati's seminal work on health and healing practices of the Adivasis and Dalits, as also his contribution to our understanding of colonialism's "medical gaze" deserves a special mention (pp 121–29). Many of the themes introduced in the book are a subject of Pati's scholarship spanning four decades. Pati's political convictions and identification with those disenfranchised in history shine throughout this volume and deserve wide readership.

Sanchita Bakshi (sanchita.bakshi@gmail.com) is a PhD researcher at the International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands.

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well known Praja Mandal movement in the princely state of Nilgiri in northern Orissa. In the final decade before Independence, the Congress, the communists (Communist Party of India) and the *darbar* were forced to respond to the pressures generated by tribals and peasants, even as the excluded groups found their own issues sidelined in the dominant 'national' dynamics against colonialism and imperialism.

Biswamoy Pati's book is an important intervention in the debate between the nationalist historians, whose focus on the freedom movement and Oriya nationalism denied space or agency to tribals and outcastes, and the subaltern historians who argue for an autochthonous realm of peasant consciousness and agency manifested in the form of tribal rebels and rebellions. Pati shows how caste identities were fluid in 19th century Orissa, and social relations within and between communities were molded by the economic impacts of feudal and colonial rule. The book challenges the popular perception of tribals as forest-dwelling communities who practiced 'primitive' livelihoods since ancient times and remained outside the fold of caste society and Hinduism. Instead, it shows that elite sections within tribal society often claimed caste status and ritual position within Brahminical Hinduism, even as tribal peasants dispossessed by land revenue/settlement policies and anti-*meriah* military campaigns were forced to migrate to the hills and take up forest-based livelihoods and diets.

Rather than eschewing 'modern' forms of politics and religion, the Gonds, Mundas, Oraons and the Khonds negotiated a complex social space and engaged with Christianity, Gandhian and communist politics, royal courts and new religious movements. This holds valuable lessons for contemporary civil society and social movements that seek to mobilize *Adivasi* communities on the lines of primordial identities and timeless associations with forest landscapes.

Tribals and Dalits in Orissa also builds exclusion as a rich social and empirical category, a refreshing departure from much of the policy literature that sees exclusion as a result of (past) state interventions and liable to be remedied by inclusive state policies in the future. Pati demonstrates that exclusion is a process that plays out in everyday lives and popular politics, and coalesces in the form of 'marginal' identities by experiences of dispossession, indignity and ritualization of cultural life. The story of the Bhramaramari plant and the folk treatment for leprosy in Chapter 4 is one of the many examples of identities formed at the intersections of religion, sovereignty and ecology.

Social identities are complex outcomes of long-term processes of economic transformation, adverse incorporation into land and labour markets, and (re)configurations within the realm of ideas and popular culture. Over time, socially excluded individuals and groups negotiate a shifting terrain of power and hegemony as they make claims upon culture, resources and political authority. Therefore, despite the debilitating outcomes with regard to economic, social and political status, exclusion is neither complete nor untested in any society. It takes a historian of the caliber of Biswamoy Pati to articulate this idea; and the field of social history in India will be poorer without his intellectual presence in the future.

Budhaditya Das
School of Human Ecology
Ambedkar University, Delhi

AGAINST STATE, AGAINST HISTORY: Freedom, Resistance and Statelessness in Upland Northeast India by Jangkhomang Guite. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2019.

THIS volume on the Northeast of India, in the words of its author, aims to 'defocus and decentre the history of this upland region from the dominant civilizational discourse on the hill tribe.' This he seeks to do through a 'co-inter-perspective' that he explains in the introduction to the book, also revisiting its several aspects in the nine chapters that follow. This is a history not simply from or at the margins but also one spanning the time between the immemorial and the coming of the colonial state. This is also a history guided by the ethnographic principle of self-understanding and in that sense a history 'by' rather than 'of' the people as objects in focus. Although highly rewarding as more pages get turned, the book begins by violating and unhinging our usual sense of history through a bracketing of the customary shibboleths—the state, civilizational frameworks, documentary or written evidences and very often the archaeological chassis around which we flesh out our barest historical narratives.

Readers familiar with the works of Ajay Skaria, Willem van Schendel and James Scott are likely to land somewhat gently over the basic propositions argued by the book. But others will have to face a historical narrative of people neither left behind by history or bypassed by it in a passive sense but ones actively recoiling from the known civilizational pathways and resisting their overt dominance as well as pernicious

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influences. Incredibly, the reader may find that these communities offer very good reasons for such withdrawal; and a willingness to listen to all such reasons may go a long way in understanding the people of our Northeast. Of course, the insights offered by the book are rather directly applicable to a large population in the country we call 'tribes' for lack of a better word, including most of the hill-forest dwellers who often continue to guard their lands with a zeal that the modern state finds objectionable and unfathomable. It is thus advisable to start reading the book with a sense of overall fluidity rather than stability and solidity that we often seek of historical narratives anchored in grand civilizational strides.

Most of all perhaps, the reader may find it disquieting that these relatively isolated communities were aware of the ways of the civilization around them, showing for them a definite disdain. This blatant disregard for the 'unequal' state-led societies will greatly interest students of political theory and philosophy. It may even reinvigorate our thinking on our modern democratic institutions once we appreciate their way of life with its alternate notions of civility and the self. The reviewer hopes that such histories end up modifying our mainstream narratives, cleansing them of avoidable normative biases tied to the core idea of the state and shaped largely in the era of the nation-state.

The introductory chapter of the book anticipates the many themes discussed through separate chapters in the book – the fluidity of the populations, the uncertainties over their origins despite the autochthone myth, their resilient productive methods, their social organization including relations with proximal and distant neighbours as well as the plainsmen, the geography-ecology that shaped their lives, and the overlapping folklores that carry the condensed gist of their varied pasts. The hill-valley duality in the Northeast came with a fine-grained array of conceptions defining forest margins and various degrees of inaccessibility. A curious and counter-intuitive feature with these communities was a preference for the more inaccessible terrains rather than the more fertile ones. The forest margins were often left alone as buffers used by Kacharis, Khasis, Kachins, and dozens of others, to maintain their distance from the plains. The author pays great attention to the inchoate state-formation processes.

To give just an example, the settlement patterns often reflected the migratory waves away from the valleys where the states kept busy 'acquiring' compliant populations willing to pay taxes. The geography of the Northeast made repeated and insistent retreats into the

forests and hills possible even though these people's independence was never a given, and had to be guarded constantly. This state of untiring vigilance and independence defined some of their attitudes towards the rank outsider as well as the neighbour, shaping their conduct in ways that outsiders find enigmatic.

The thin density of populations, smaller settlements, jhum agriculture, and a decided antipathy towards surplus, created communities whom the British colonizers found lazy and complacent. This would have been ironic for the locals who avoided famines, were relatively well-fed, worked hard when necessary and saw no reason to collect surplus that an invader may find inviting. In the manner of Scott, Guite is able to put a gigantic question mark in front of the presumed well-being of the agricultural communities; and their insistence on surplus accumulation may even begin to appear as the trap that enslaved humanity for all times to come. This is not a parody, or a topsy-turvy view of civilization, but an empirical account of how people lived for aeons before the British arrived with their sense of frigid permanence and well defined classifications, including a handy laundry list of tribes that soon turned procrustean. It was not uncommon for a tribe to have a name for itself that simply meant a human being or hillmen. This however does not mean that you get a flat or uniform human-landscape of people spread across the hilltops in the sizeable Northeast. Instead, you get a bewildering variety of languages, folklores and broad-ranging affiliations that often lead to unending conflicts due to pressures mostly originating in the plains.

The author deals with some of the distinct groups and sub-groups such as Bodos, Garos, Khasis, Karbis, Kuki-Chins and Nagas, in their ecological niches. While Chapter 3 deals with their internal divisions, Chapter 4 deals with the highly regulated channels of contact or trade among these tribes and the distant outsiders. Those who have puzzled over the avoidable inclemency of mountain paths leading rather senselessly to a motely settlement on the top may find an answer once they begin to see the constant trade-off between contact and isolation by the people up there. It would suit us to imagine them to be a miserable lot which, surprisingly, suited the fellows on top equally well since they had no desire to pay taxes or join our unwanted embrace of tutelage.

Of course, all this changed when the British arrived with a view to manufacture 'permanence' on a scale that proved to be inescapable. The fiercest attempts at retreat came to an end once and for all and the churning, moving set of images froze into a

Developmental Projects in Odisha

MEENA MENON

As Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru spoke of India's tryst with destiny on the night of 14 August 1947, those opposing the Hirakud dam in Odisha (formerly Orissa) already had a taste of the future—they were in Sambalpur jail for their anti-dam protests (p 56). This little-known fact in the book highlights in a way how the new country would deal with opposition to its attempts at nation-building. The notices for land acquisition for the Hirakud dam on the Mahanadi river, which would displace 1,00,000 people, were issued in 1946 and the groundswell of protest was met with force. A year later, on 12 April 1948, Nehru while laying the foundation for the Hirakud dam, on the Mahanadi river, the country's first largest multipurpose river valley project after independence, told the villagers, "If you are to suffer, you should suffer in the interest of the country" (Viegas 1992: 53). Thirty years later, when a study was done on the displaced people, they were continuing to suffer (Viegas 1992: 47).

Nehru's famous quote on suffering and his allusion to the Bhakra Nangal dam as a temple reflected India's development paradigm, even if he regretted gigantism in projects, some years later. The stories of resistance to these temples by the people of Odisha, starting with the Hirakud dam, is the main theme of *Resisting Dispossession: The Odisha Story*. Activists and writers Ranjana Padhi and Nigamananda Sadangi have written a history of Odisha from below which gives a face and voice to the dispossessed communities who fought for their lands. And in this highly engaging collection of stories, the daily lives and struggles of people are intertwined with their timeless relationship with nature and their culture, threatened by various public and private projects. In 11 chapters, the authors portray the postcolonial history of Odisha in narratives of movements against

BOOK REVIEWS

Resisting Dispossession: The Odisha Story by Ranjana Padhi and Nigamananda Sadangi, Delhi: Aakar Books, 2020; pp x + 311, ₹695.

development projects from the gigantic Hirakud dam to the more recent Pohang Iron and Steel Company (POSCO) project.

Pre- and Post-colonial Development

The book briefly historicises the pre- and post-colonial development scenario in Odisha and relies on detailed interviews of movement participants, newspaper articles or old records, old newspapers, for example, the *Hirakud Samachar*, and songs of resistance or poetry and literature to tell powerful stories. It critically examines the Nehruvian vision of development through the eyes of the displaced people and resurrects peoples' struggles. The movement against the Hirakud dam continues to this day, and the successes of people in fighting off Bharat Aluminium Company (BALCO) in the Gandhamardhan hills, and later Vedanta, in Niyamgiri hills and the stopping of the national missile testing range at Baliapal resonate with other struggles at Gopalpur, Chilika, Kalinga Nagar and Rayagada.

Odisha emerges as a classic example of how India's postcolonial development paradigm did not percolate to the poorest or deliver the intended benefits. As the authors of the book say,

despite decades of development, horrendous stories of hunger, starvation death, child selling and seasonal migration, especially from undivided Koraput, Kalahandi and Balangir districts, hit the national headlines in the 1980s. (p 15)

It is also in the news for all the wrong reasons. "Starvation deaths and super-cyclones; poverty and backwardness; or the killing of a missionary" (p 4). Ideally, the history of a state so rich in natural resources—with 60% of the country's

bauxite, 98.4% chromite, 24.8% coal and other minerals and industrious people should have been different, perhaps.

State Repression

Odisha's rich mineral resources and rivers are a magnet for planned development and there is little of the state that is unaffected by this "development." However, people have not meekly accepted this path of progress chosen for them as is evident in the multitude of protests, some of which stopped major projects. This has only entrenched the repressive nature of the state and instead of pausing to reflect on the human devastation and dispossession, the might of the state continues unbridled and, often for peoples' movements, success has turned into defeat as in the case of the anti-POSCO struggle and elsewhere. The worst examples of state repression were witnessed in the Kalinga Nagar protests, in Rayagada and in the anti-POSCO agitation, where agitators were killed in firing and in bomb blasts. Numerous cases have been filed against protesters as well. The state is now resorting to dubbing peoples' movements as Maoist, a ruse to apply excessive force and draconian laws. The Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti was declared as a Maoist outfit by the union home ministry in 2017 and even now the Dongria Kondhs, who opposed the Vedanta mining project, are harassed by the police and security forces (p 236).

The Image of a Backward State

Odisha was created as a separate province in 1936 and was active in the non-cooperation movement since the 1930s. Even then, it was always viewed as a backward state, deficit in revenue generation by the colonial powers (p 7). This view was also shared by Odiya nationalists as the book explains and that is why the Tatas have a long history in this state, starting with sourcing iron ore from Mayurbhanj in 1910–11 for its Jamshedpur plant. After independence, when the same elite Odiya leaders came to power, there was an urgency to industrialise Odisha by developing its mineral wealth (p 8). This gathered momentum

since the 1990s when India embraced globalisation and eyed foreign investment to monetise its minerals.

However, the nexus of politicians and industry backed by the government was evident even in the 1920s in colonial India when Tatas wanted to build the Mulshi dam for generating power for Mumbai's textile mills and local trains. The Mulshi satyagraha led by Senapati Bapat and others questioned the project which would displace 52 villages, and people who were relocated had to wait for a century to get basic needs like water or even transport connectivity as Vora (2009) points out in his book.

Ill-effects on People

The book offers glimpses into the lack of information on projects to the affected people, the disease of gigantism, and the precarious leadership of the movements against projects, and how the leadership is divided by project proponents and the government. The practice of not informing people or taking them into confidence over projects continues to this day. The question of sacrifice that some have to make for development—that it would be for the public good and the good of some distant community—is also rejected early on by the displaced people. For instance, in the case of the Hirakud dam, the people were told that the dam would save the people of Cuttack and Puri from flooding; a spirited movement opposed the dam and questioned its public good—one section of the media argued that one lakh people would be reduced to daily wages to create millionaires in another part of the world (p 55).

Starting with Hirakud dam, many of the resettlement promises were broken and the anti-dam movement was crushed. On paper, the Khosla Committee had recommended an elaborate land for land resettlement package but few got land and some Adivasi families were forcibly evicted (pp 57–58). The state's recurring flood problem was to be addressed by another dam on the Brahmani river—the Rengali dam. By 1961, the Odisha Flood Conference demanded more dams in the state. The authors discuss how the imposition of the Emergency in 1975 made it easier to push this dam project, despite

local resistance. They also attempt to redress the fact that little is known about this protest by compiling news reports and earlier efforts by scholars and supplementing it with interviews from protesters.

Anti-dam Protests

The Congress (which was ruling the state then) and the Swatantra Party formed an anti-dam group, supported by the large landowners. It was only when the dam construction began that the state finance minister announced that a big dam would be built at Rengali. Protests were rife and even the former king of Kalahandi, P K Deo, and others mobilised 15,000 people to protest the dam in February 1972. When Prime Minister Indira Gandhi came to lay the foundation stone in December 1973, there were preventive arrests to deter proposed black flag demonstrations and Deo and other leaders were taken into custody.

In the Rengali dam, the relocation was haphazard and in one village—Gurusulei—people were dispersed in 63 locations. However, the peoples' struggle has not ended. The government is proposing a fishery project in the area of the submergence, provoking protests and letters from people. The authors met Kishore Patra, a displaced person, as he was writing a letter to the chief minister, asking among other things why the government was not returning the land and instead proposing to hand it over to industries. Patra's letter ends with this plea:

Why are we poor peasants, Dalits and Adivasis always asked, cajoled or forced to make sacrifices for the country and companies owned by big capitalists? Are we not people of this country? Are we not entitled to live with dignity and in peace as human beings? Is here any justice in this country for us? (pp 90–91)

The Question of Equality

The central question in this letter is that of equality, which development has denied many of those who were called on to sacrifice for it. The pioneering movements in Odisha against mining in the Gandhamardhan hills by BALCO and the national missile testing range at Baliapal firmly called into question this need to sacrifice and vehemently opposed

the projects. The Gandhamardhan hills still reverberate with the struggle against BALCO in the 1980s, which had proposed to mine its bauxite reserves, and had to retreat in the face of strong opposition. Similarly, the bauxite-rich Niyamgiri hills retained their sanctity after the Supreme Court ordered a referendum in 2013 to decide Vedanta's project, which was rejected by most villages. The decentralisation of power under the panchayati raj system and the right of gram sabhas to approve projects and change of land use in forests, granted under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act has been wantonly disregarded in Odisha and elsewhere. Even in the case of POSCO in Jagatsinghpur, people had rejected the project, acclaimed as India's largest foreign direct investment, but it was cleared by the union environment ministry as the state government claimed that the people had no rights over the land they cultivated.

Through extensive interviews of people who participated in these movements, especially many women, who took part in their youth, the book evokes memories of the frenetic pace of events in the 1980s or earlier, when some of these projects were proposed. There are anecdotes which add value to the book's textured narration of events, drawing on the memory of those who resisted. For instance, when Odisha chief minister J B Patnaik visited Baliapal and told people that they would not be displaced and all they had to do was stay indoors when a siren went off, till it came on again—a quick thinking man asked him what if his daughter-in-law went into labour when the first siren went off? Patnaik could not respond. Ironically, the missile testing range at Baliapal was announced as a "gift to the people of Odisha" by Patnaik in 1984 (p 125).

Resistance by the People

The conch became a symbol of the movement and many women were mobilised to oppose lathi-wielding police and stood in the forefront of protests as a formidable barrier. Similar to the POSCO project area, the Bhogra Baliapal area cultivated the lucrative betel leaves for

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markets in Benares. The people were not about to let that go without a fight—and put up barricades against outsiders, namely government officials from entering. The Baliapal agitation set many trends—preventing officials from entering their villages, forming human chains, mobilising women in the forefront and above all protecting their *bheetamati* or habitat and resources. While a testing range did come up further away at Chandipur, Baliapal is a perennial symbol of resistance. The movement assumes importance especially since 14 ports are proposed in the coastal districts of Odisha and people are gearing up to protest.

The book is a timely reminder of the wages of development, with large sections of people left on the margins, craving their lost homelands and lives. While celebrating the movements, the book touches on problems of organisation and leadership, in the course of some interviews. For instance, in the Rengali project, the anti-dam lobby was split between those opposing the dam in its entirety and a section demanding better rehabilitation. The Congress preferred the latter option and the organisation was divided, with the Congress clearly eyeing electoral gains. The leadership of

other movements has also been susceptible to being lured by companies as in the case of the Tata Steel project at Kalinga Nagar and posco. Women activists like Sini Soi, who was jailed, rued the tendency of male leaders to betray the movement. She says that people like her despite being tagged as Maoist, were firm on their resolve to oppose the project (pp 256–57).

Account of Struggle

Leaders, with few exceptions, have been selfish and there are issues of class and caste, and of movements being divided by political pressures or parties. In this respect, perhaps the people of the Gandhamardhan struggle remained united as the book points out. However, the women who took part in large numbers lament the fact that after the exit of BALCO, male leaders of the movement entered electoral politics, and did little to take up the cause of women, especially issues of violence against women or improving their social conditions. The area witnesses a lot of seasonal migration due to poverty but mining is one development that people will oppose even today.

Some of these movements, for instance, against the missile testing range in

Baliapal have changed the discourse on development, and pioneered tactics like barricading, suicide squads and participation of women but sometimes, the movements did not draw popular support as in the Chilika Andolan. The stories represent a lifetime in a state and even in a nation which has witnessed a dramatic conflict between development and sustainability. The book shows how the natural relationship between land and people has been trampled upon, with little recognition of culture or livelihoods. It is an important contribution to the voices of people in social movements and an excellent resource. It also has several pointers for future research in areas of movement dynamics, tactics and leadership.

Meena Menon (meenamenon@gmail.com) is an independent journalist, author and postgraduate researcher at the University of Leeds, United Kingdom.

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Listening to Muslim Women

SHIREEN AZAM

Two discourses about Muslims loom large in India's imagination, points out Ghazala Jamil. One stream of literature is consumed by the image of "Islamic" fundamentalism and terrorism, while the other is intrigued by Muslims' poor record on socio-developmental indices. "The centering of the Muslim men is common to both kinds of discourses," she notes. What about Muslim women? Why do we only hear of them in relation to their victimisation at the hands of Muslim men?

Muslim Women Speak: Of Dreams and Shackles is as much on the apparent silence of Muslim women as it is on the research practices that further this silence. Jamil's book has been published at a time when discourses on the Muslim women are in a state of flux. In 2018, Parliament criminalised *Triple Talaq* despite the Supreme Court having struck it down as unconstitutional the year before. Importantly, the Prime Minister and the larger right-wing ecosystem in India spoke of it in a language that implied them to be heroic rescuers of miserable Muslim women from the clutches of the beastly Muslim men. While reports of several Muslim women benefiting from the new law have emerged,¹ one only needs to look at the government's response to the recent women-led anti-national register of citizens and Constitutional (Amendment) Act protests to understand that Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) concern for the Muslim woman stops when there is no chance to demonise Muslim men.

The problem is that in the public sphere the Indian Muslim women's voice is merged, dissolved, and thus, lost in the Muslim male voice, while the Muslim male voice is effectively silenced except when it is raised to curtail Muslim women's rights and freedom. (p 98)

However, it is not just the state. "Muslim women hushed quiet by communal violence, poverty, domestic violence, illiteracy, lack of economically viable

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Muslim Women Speak: Of Dreams and Shackles
by Ghazala Jamil, New Delhi, California, London and Singapore: Sage Publications and New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2018; pp xxiv + 190, ₹595.

skills are rendered further 'voiceless' by those who study them" Jamil notes. She says that while the interest in research undertaken on Muslim societies has grown manifold in the last few years, "the narratives they produce are not always edifying, an examination of Muslim women and their conditions is conspicuous by its near complete absence from these narratives" (p 5). Unlike several works on Muslim women, Jamil's work is conscious of the researcher's gaze on a marginalised group. By doing this, it makes reflexivity about the process a fundamental part of the research. Muslim women are often talked about in academic work, but rarely do they speak themselves. Why is the Muslim woman silent? Jamil's work puts a microscope to the enterprise of social research, especially the manner in which fieldwork is conceived and conducted, and nudges us to pay attention to the various steps of research, and how it shapes discourses about the communities that are studied: from the collection and (re)creation of data in research, to how silence and inarticulation of disempowered women can be perceived. Jamil uses unconventional and hybrid methodologies.

The book was initially conceived as a quantifiable study of Muslim girls' aspirations. Commissioned by the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan and supported by ActionAid, it planned to "capture and document the aspirations of the girls" as well as to "compile and analyse the socio-economic and educational status of these girls." Jamil was given a detailed questionnaire for the massive data collection, the responses of which would later be statistically analysed.

What percentage of girls aspired to be teachers, doctors, and engineers? Something felt amiss in this approach. Arguing that they rethink the methods with which a group of marginalised people are studied, Jamil focused on creating a space where Muslim women could articulate their desires. This has made the resultant book unlike other books on Muslim women.

Documenting Aspirations

The book uses a lot of rich autobiographical notes to help us wade through different topics that concern Muslim women: the everyday of inhabiting margins, of dreaming in shackles, of structural violence, etc. Each chapter contains a multitude of short quotes by several women across the country. The book records young Muslim women in 23 urban and semi-urban clusters in 12 states, including Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. In one of the workshops, participants were asked to articulate their life story using the metaphor of a river. Participants were asked to imagine their own life in the flow of a river touched and shaped by and affecting the banks of a private family life and social events. "While positive research uses people as guinea pigs to generate an 'objective understanding' of a social phenomenon," Jamil argues, "narratives heal as they explore and bring to the fore feelings and emotions that the narrator may not have articulated to herself prior to the research experience" (p 27).

Through approaches like these, Jamil makes the case for research being transformative. Are the poor and marginalised researched because they are "easily researchable" or because the research has the potential of being a liberatory moment for them? "There is no reason," Jamil asserts "why *conscientização*, a process that brings to the oppressed the conviction to struggle for her own liberation, cannot be one of the objectives of research." In the words of a respondent:

When we came for this meeting, so many questions were asked of us. How was our life earlier, if anything has changed, what

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do we want from the future and other such questions. I got an opportunity to voice my desires. We got to know about each other. My heart got some solace in the meeting. I would like to come again.

Patriarchy and Communalism

Jamil offers new insights into how patriarchy and communalism intersect in Muslim women's lives. Many of the girls experienced restricted mobility after their families suffered through communal violence. Several of them had to drop out of school. But most pertinently, Jamil reiterates how the shared Muslim experience of communal hatred restricts Muslim women from questioning patriarchy in their families. The author challenges notions of universal "sisterhood" when she asserts that

the common experience of communal discrimination along with violence (or the anticipation of violence) binds Muslim women and Muslim men together more strongly than the common experience of patriarchy binds Hindu women and Muslim women.

Quoting bell hooks, Jamil brings out an intriguing point about how feminism looks at men: "Women with class privilege have been the only group who have perpetuated the notion that men are all-powerful, because often the men in their families were powerful." In contrast, marginalised women are aware of the emotional pain and the work dissatisfactions of their men.

The media attention post the assault of Jyoti Singh led to a new era of feminism in the country where core demands of mainstream feminist movement were acknowledged and heard. But the effect of this, for Jamil, has been the strengthening of the "hegemonic tendencies in what is essentially a movement of upper class, upper caste Hindu women, posturing as 'secular feminism.'" Thus, the structural violence faced by Dalit and Muslim women are not addressed. A girl in the book says:

If I choose to not see it I won't see it but when I look carefully, I see that all around me are the after-effects of violence. Of course, people lose work, property, things, but the loss of education, mental health are no less important. Poverty makes people weak. Boys, men are under so much mental stress. Without any reason the police would drag them out of their homes and beat them. I know in Jogeshwari women used to wear many clothes one over the another in their attempt to

deter rapists. With my own eyes I have seen the local leader assure us in the day but attack us later at night. From Dharavi children were sent to stay with relatives who lived in Muslim areas. Young men were picked up by the police so they were told to go away to the native villages, run away anywhere. (p 97)

Irfan Ahmad and Md Zakaria Siddiqui analysed data from Prison Statistics India from 1998 to 2014 in their paper, "Democracy in Jail: Over-representation of Minorities in Indian Prisons" published in the *Economic & Political Weekly*. In comparison to their percentage in the total population, Scheduled Tribes (STs), Scheduled Castes (SCs), and amidst minorities, Christians, Muslims, and Sikhs are all well over-represented in Indian prisons. Muslims are even more disproportionately represented than SCs and STs. Notably, three-fourths of Muslim inmates are non-convicts—undertrial or detainee. In Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, more than 80% of Muslim prisoners are non-convicts.

By raising the state's treatment of Muslim men as an issue that directly concerns the agency of Muslim women, Jamil questions how mainstream feminism has framed its problems. The tragedy of the situation, however, as Jamil rightly notes, is that while Muslim women have extended their "care" to empathise with their men, Muslim men have "failed to return the courtesy."

Poverty

Widespread poverty and the lack of opportunities are apparent. Many narratives hold limited finances at the disposal of the family as a major impediment to realising the young girls' aspirations.

I want to stand on my own feet but I think would not be able to fulfil my dream as I belong to a Muslim family. I want to become a software engineer but due to financial problems I would not be able to fulfil my dream. (p 76)

Earlier I used to study ... after we moved to Mumbra my parents could not arrange for me to go to school. I had to drop out. Here water and electricity are always in short supply. Most people are unemployed. There is garbage everywhere. The stink awful and bothers people living around here, but no one has the guts to take any action. (p 63)

While the book deeply explores the Muslim experience of backwardness, and constantly hints at caste, it misses

out on a fuller discussion on intergenerational mobility and caste. Thus, even as the subjects of the book clearly come across as women who belong to the lower castes, the author's reluctance on directly addressing caste among Muslims affects insights one could have drawn from the book. Caste is the ultimate organising principle of South Asia and one that affects Muslim lives as well (around 70%–85% of Muslims are lower caste by different estimates). Jamil mentions the presence of caste in Muslims in her literature review, but does not return to it to use it as an analytic to place the lives of these women. It is pertinent that none of the women's narratives mentions caste either. But one wonders whether a more perceptive framework (including the questions asked to the women) could have changed this. One also feels that an Ambedkarite lens could have given a better perspective to understand the lives of these women—particularly to contextualise structural violence in India—than that provided by scholars like Henri Lefebvre, Jürgen Habermans, John Galtung, etc.

The book makes a stylistic choice of clubbing several narratives in a chapter, one after the other, without identifying each quote with a name or the place it comes from. While the withholding of names might have been an ethical choice, the absence of any other sort of marker in the narratives deters any insights based on age and region.

Jamil's book is a unique repository of narratives of many Muslim women. Apart from taking on some of the most spoken about subjects like patriarchy, violence, and lack of education, the book also manages to touch upon some gentle topics, such as the idea of leisure and the relationship of mothers and daughters. The book is an interesting read for a peek into thoughts, desires, and worries of young Muslim women of India.

Shireen Azam (shireen.azam@gmail.com) is a DPhil researcher at the University of Oxford.

NOTE

- 1 Details can be accessed at <https://scroll.in/article/935235/i-just-want-to-see-him-in-jail-muslim-women-are-using-the-new-triple-talq-law-to-get-justice>.

Development and Accountability in Urban India

Party Workers, Citizens and Public Services

ANINDITA ADHIKARI

After years of looking the other way, the COVID-19 pandemic and the national lockdown forced middle-class urban Indians to directly confront the realities of their working-class fellow residents. Their gaze (even if temporarily) turned to the extreme precarity of the urban workforce and to the densely populated, informal urban settlements—the “COVID-19 hotspots.” The persistent threat of eviction, precarious livelihoods, poor health and sanitation facilities, absence of piped water and reliable electricity supply in informal settlements are well documented. However, the pandemic and the lockdown raised new questions around the quality of life in these urban settlements, who its temporary and settled residents turn to in times of distress and how they demand and secure access to basic public services from the government in the absence of formal rights. Adam Michael Auerbach’s book, *Demanding Development: The Politics of Public Goods Provision in India’s Urban Slums*, is a timely and compelling account of life in these urban informal settlements, that sets out to understand the conditions under which residents in these settlements organise and demand public services, and why some are more successful than others.

Party Workers as Agents

The book focuses on “slum leaders” with official positions as party workers who offer crucial “upward” linkages between residents of informal settlements, political parties and local government. The book’s key argument is that informal settlements that have denser networks of party workers—larger numbers of party workers per person living and operating in the settlement—are in a better position

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Demanding Development: The Politics of Public Goods Provision in India’s Urban Slums by Adam Michael Auerbach, Cambridge University Press, 2019; pp 304, ₹649.

to demand public services, such as paved roads, garbage removal, streetlights, and medical camps, as compared to places where the networks of party workers are thinner or absent. On average, informal settlements have close to two party workers per 200 households and where these networks are denser, there are six party workers per 200 households. The argument is grounded in qualitative fieldwork conducted in eight settlements. This is described in fascinating detail in Chapter 5, ranging from devastating fires, floods, riots, an industrial gas leak with global repercussions that shaped the trajectories of these settlements, to accounts of the rise and fall of local leaders and how they earn their mettle.

The argument is empirically tested with rigour and insightfulness, through an original survey of over 2,500 residents across 111 settlements in Bhopal and Jaipur. Better access to one or more public services is associated with settlements that have legal standing, demonstrate higher levels of cooperation and trust, and the number of years a party (Bharatiya Janata Party or Congress) has been in power there. Party worker density emerges as the most powerful indicator of increased access to four out of six public services.¹ Auerbach outlines three pathways through which the link between density of party workers and better development outcomes can be explained. First, the presence of party workers triggers collective action by

residents. The organisational strength which party workers can tap into helps facilitate mobilisation by residents to amplify their demands. Second, a denser network of party workers also means multiple points of connection to political actors. And third, the competition between these party workers who must demonstrate some effectiveness in resolving local grievances, responding to residents’ requests and connecting to elected political leaders to elbow out the competition and expand their social base.

The book makes refreshing departures from the existing scholarship on India, mostly written in institutions outside India, that categorise India as a prime example of a patronage democracy with identity-based voting, organisationally weak parties and public services delivered primarily in exchange for electoral support (Auerbach et al 2020). The book distances itself from election-centric development narratives by looking at what happens between elections and draws our attention to competition among local party workers which is “informal, locally rooted and waged between votes” (p 232). It offers a ring-side view of bottom-up organising by parties through these party workers who are embedded in elaborate, multi-tiered party structures and engaged in a range of activities that shape the daily lives of residents in informal settlements across cities.

The book also provocatively challenges the view that ethnic fragmentation or caste, religious and regional cleavages undermine development. On the contrary, Auerbach finds that urban informal settlements with greater diversity have more local leaders, denser networks of party workers and demands for development that cut across caste and religious groups. Even while Auerbach finds that party workers need to go beyond social divisions when petitioning for public services, he is careful not to mischaracterise these informal settlements as cosmopolitan ethnic melting pots. Against the backdrop of the migrant exodus witnessed in 2020, I found myself looking for explanations for why the government as well as informal safety nets in urban

settlements, perhaps even those that are flush with party workers, failed migrants so badly? While settled and semi-permanent residents in informal settlements are embedded in social networks and can mobilise and demand public services, circular migrants are unable to claim any citizenship right to the settlement, let alone the city. In addition to ethnic diversity, the book could have benefited from a discussion on whether permanent residents and circular migrants have differentiated access to party workers.

The book unsettles the long-standing dichotomous view of predatory brokers and the hapless urban poor. Auerbach finds that residents of urban settlements are not entirely locked into extractive, dependent relationships with local power brokers and that their voting behaviour does not always align with the affiliation of the local leaders. Instead, local associations (*vikas samitis*) and collective action by residents in these informal settlements play an important role in creating these local leaders. Although Auerbach stresses the "competitive multifocal brokerage" (p 229) environment in several places as an antidote to the thugish, criminal behaviour usually associated with "slum leaders," the account in the book still does not free these residents from neighbourhood "regimes of political mediation" (Heller and Mukhopadhyay 2015). Access to public services, especially sewage and piped water connections, continues to be actively negotiated at the community level given the ambiguous legal status of these settlements.

Modes of Accountability

My main concern, which is not limited to this book alone, but extends to much of the scholarship on welfare provisioning in India and South Asia, is the persistent focus on informal accountability. While plenty of accountability mechanisms with legal mandates have been introduced over the years, such as citizen service centres, grievance redress systems, public service delivery guarantees and decentralised forums for citizen participation (albeit weak), such as ward and area/*mohalla sabhas*, how these formal channels of demanding accountability

work, remains a black box. The chain, when describing strategies through which slum leaders convey the demands of residents to build drains or fix streetlights, extends from the ward councillor to the local member of legislative assembly and in fewer instances involves directly approaching the bureaucrat in-charge. With the primary focus on political intervention, the functioning of the bureaucracy is taken somewhat for granted.

Auerbach and Kruks-Wisner's (2020) paper deserves a brief mention here because it partly responds to my concern and is a good companion piece to the book. The paper inverts the long-held assumption that residents of cities, including the urban poor, are more likely to "demand development" compared to their rural counterparts and are also more likely to approach formal institutions like the local bureaucracy or local government representatives. The authors argue that informal channels of accessing local government flourish in urban settlements because of how distant local government really is from its residents. Decentralised governance in rural India seems to have done better on this count, not by necessarily eliminating local intermediaries and brokers, but by bringing government closer to people.

The focus on informal accountability restricts the scope of public service delivery outcomes in urban informal settlements to what can be secured through demands and petitioning rather than entitlements, even if these are tenuous. There is some acknowledgement of the limitation of turning to politics and the need for less discretion in the delivery of public services, but this needs further exploration. At the very end of the book, Auerbach discusses policy implications and is dismayed that government guidelines that seek to expand public participation in the development process, insist

on driving out local political actors. While Auerbach does not make a full case for officially bringing these slum leaders into the ambit of public service delivery either, he does suggest it. This raises the tricky question of how such political actors can be constructively engaged in the delivery of public services while preventing capture.

The book makes an important contribution to understanding the vibrancy and forms of citizen claim-making; how political parties embed themselves in the social life of citizens; and how these processes combine to produce differentiated access to public services in urban India. But the larger question for readers is not how residents and party workers can better negotiate access to this public service, but how coalitions can be built to demand the right to much more widely distributed basic public services and a more universal right to the city.

Anindita Adhikari (aninditaadhikari@gmail.com) is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology, Brown University, United States.

NOTE

- 1 The six public services include paved roads, streetlights, municipal garbage removal and government medical camps, piped water, and sewer lines. All except the last two are positively associated with increased party worker density.

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EPW Index

An author-title index for *EPW* has been prepared for the years from 1968 to 2012. The PDFs of the Index have been uploaded, year-wise, on the *EPW* website. Visitors can download the Index for all the years from the site. (The Index for a few years is yet to be prepared and will be uploaded when ready.)

EPW would like to acknowledge the help of the staff of the library of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai, in preparing the index under a project supported by the RD Tata Trust.

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for themselves a “new” identity, within the prison. Mehta skilfully identifies this aspect of resistance and makes room for these new, unanticipated narratives, successfully framing them within the categories of resistance.

Conclusions

Mehta’s immersive account is an exemplar of engaging academic writing. She writes lucidly and evocatively, invoking her compelling fieldwork narratives and stories into theoretical discussions. While this book will be useful to those involved in fields of criminology, sociology, migration studies, immigration law, gender studies and prison administration among others, as a pioneering contribution to the nascent field of border criminology

in South Asia, it will further have a formative influence on new scholarship emerging in this discipline.

It arrives amidst the hardening of stances on cross-border migration in South Asia, a region characterised by the “everydayness of cross-border mobility,” owing to a shared history among states (p 6). Thus, taking cue from the Bangladeshi women’s resistance of “criminality,” there is thus an urgent need to resist the discursive criminalisation of these migrant populations by presenting nuanced, sensitive accounts of their lived realities.

At the end of the book, I invite the readers to ask themselves only one question: Are the Bangladeshi women prisoners “criminals?” Any response other than an unequivocal “yes” is testament

to the power of alternative narratives like Mehta’s in informing our understanding of borders, migration, illegality and criminality, and the vulnerable populations existing at their intersections.

Jemimah Gomes (gomesjemimah@gmail.com) is an independent researcher and editor based in Goa.

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Marking the Privileged, Researching the Elite

SAVITHA SURESH BABU

Sociological scholarship has sought to understand elite lifeworlds for several decades now. However, the emphasis in elite studies in the contemporary moment is on power and inequality from above (Khan 2012). Understanding the elite implies comprehending social power dynamics and the ways in which dominant groups shape institutions, be they schools and colleges, corporate offices or “aesthetic frames” that govern our everyday lives. In this trajectory, the book *Mapping the Elite: Power, Privilege, and Inequality* is a treasure trove of insights into the contemporary workings of the Indian elite.

In their introduction to the volume, the editors delineate two phases in scholarly engagement with the elite as a category of analysis. The first phase of scholarship emphasised the functional role of the elite in society and did not necessarily challenge power hierarchies that enabled the creation of an elite. A critical turn in Euro–American academia in the post-war period inaugurated the second phase of elite studies such that,

Mapping the Elite: Power, Privilege, and Inequality
edited by Surinder S Jodhka and Jules Naudet, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019; pp xvi + 304, ₹1,495.

over time, the endeavour of researching elite groups became morally coded, tightly coupling “elites and illegitimacy,” as a detailed review of elite studies has recognised (Khan 2012). Even as the editors of the volume recognise this coupling, they point to several studies on the Indian elite, particularly its business practices, taking on a moralistic tone, which does not allow us to understand the elite social groups in all their complexity. This recognition enables the essays within this volume to be attentive to self-perceptions of the elite, alongside their disproportionate access to resources.

The collection of essays in this book brings to the fore the heterogeneity not only in who constitutes the elite in the contemporary moment but also distinct approaches to researching and writing about the elite. The essays cover a wide ground from critical insights into the discourse of “merit” leading to new

forms of “upper-caste consolidation” to the continuation and reproduction of social status by elite women. The essays employ both first-person reflexive narratives and critical sociological analyses. The recognition of a range of factors that co-constitute the elite, within the ground covered above, is particularly insightful. These include the continued resilience of caste networks and patriarchal constraints alongside economic opportunities made available through a globalised economy.

Theorising the Elite

As the authors acknowledge in the introduction, the challenge is to distinguish research on the elite from scholarship on the new middle classes (NMCs). Scholarship has accounted for the heterogeneity within the NMC and suggested that this group is best understood as a class-in-practice which reproduces its privileged position through everyday class practices. The NMCs are a class forged at the intersections of “liberalization and a political context marked by organized political challenges from below” (Fernandes and Heller 2006: 497). Are the NMCs, which embody the fusion of caste and class privileges, only one faction of the elite? How does one account specifically for traditional hierarchies, preceding liberalisation, that continue to determine social life-chances?

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This points to the second challenge that the editors identify, that is, accounting for India-focused scholarship on caste- elites, be it on landowning dominant castes (Srinivas 1994) or on privileged "upper-caste" groups who have converted their traditional capital into modern forms of social and cultural capital, thereby enabling claims to a casteless modernity (Baird 2013). How could insights on these traditional caste-elites of India be understood in relation to elite formations in the contemporary moment? Offering some answers to this question is the main strength of this book, as it seeks to fuse theoretical insights from different bodies of scholarship.

These challenges are a consequence, I suggest, of the ways in which theorisations on the elite continue to be based on an understanding of Euro-American social worlds, despite acknowledgement of "globalised" social hierarchies. Within this context, it is important to locate this book not only as an important contribution to scholarship on the Indian elite but as a significant contribution to the rising contemporary social worlds of the elite. Acknowledging that the global elite today is more heterogeneous than ever before, and that attention needs to be paid to local hierarchies (Khan 2012), the volume demonstrates the ways in which elite formations in contemporary India (and perhaps, several other countries) work at the interface between the global and local. While this might seem like an obvious observation, the actual working of power at this interface of caste and capital is an important contribution of the book. The focus of the essays is on the "how" of this interface, rather than "what," thereby enriching our understanding of elite social formations.

Merit and Entitlement

Essays in the first section "Merit, Privilege and Entitlements" pay attention to the ways in which caste and class advantages are obfuscated within claims to "merit." Ajantha Subramanian's essay on the "meritocrats" of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras and the "social life of caste" shows how merit comes to be conflated with "Brahmin-ness," when general category Tamilian students are presumed to be Brahmin. She shows how merit, over time, leads to the consolidation of new forms of "upper caste-ness." Through claims that certain students possess "raw intelligence" and "giftedness" as against "coached" students, new forms of distinction are created within the non-upper-caste entrants, particularly from the coaching centres of Andhra Pradesh, who are seen as lacking despite their entry into the hallowed halls of the IIT. Her analysis lays bare how the course of merit, devoid of social and historical understandings, becomes explicitly bound to caste. Through the articulations of her interlocutors who denigrate reservations as "vote bank politics" and "dilution of merit," and assume that general category students are invariably upper caste, she shows how being meritocratic becomes part of upper-caste identitarian claims. Subramanian's analysis affirms studies at the same IIT that have demonstrated the workings of structural exclusion that scheduled category students face in their everyday lives (Rao 2013), and offers the much-needed critical gaze towards the "meritocrats" of IITs.

Saurabh Dube's essay titled "Issues of Entitlement" is based on an insider account of his class cohort from Modern School, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi, and the ways in which a reunion offers him a moment to think about the connections between the past and present. He takes on an affective tone not always found in academic writing, given his interest in researching his own class cohort. He sees the bearers of elite-ness "as subjects of/with distinct reasons, with their particular logics and techniques, and palpable predilections and persuasions" (p 124). His critique is not that of "distant enemies," but of individuals and affective lifeworlds, within which he places himself, albeit as an "insider" with a critical gaze. Dube's work is important to understand the ethical predilections of those researching "up." While elite interlocutors are indeed structurally a group with social power, what are the ethical challenges in writing a critique of the group, particularly when researchers with access to the elite are likely to occupy a degree of social privilege

themselves? It is this terrain of the ethicality of elite studies that Dube's essay offers critical insights into.

Workings of a Globalised Elite

The second section of essays, "Indian Elites and the Global Scene," covers a wide spectrum of actors and contexts ranging from star architects brought from the United States (US) to design the global architecture of Delhi to the ways in which a dominant caste from coastal Andhra reconfigures its identity through trans-national mobility. The concluding essay in this section offers a historical account of the ways in which the Karnataka Golf Association (KGA) obtained land. This analysis shows how even when there are competing interests among different factions of the elite, they manage to come together at strategic points in the pursuit of appropriating resources.

Sanam Roohi's analysis of the ways in which Kamma identities are reconfigured through migration trajectories is insightful in accounting for class-based differences within the caste group. She shows that being Kamma meant an aspiration for a life that was globally mobile as well as the likelihood of careers in the US. Such a perception of an upper-caste identity is resourceful for lower-middle-class families, giving them greater confidence in strategically planning globally mobile futures for their children.

If Roohi's analysis unravels the complex ways in which caste and class overlap in pursuits of familial mobility, Patrick Inglis shows the ways in which the elite obtain unequal resources, such as land, which is not simply through domination. In his critical history of the KGA, Inglis delineates elite groups along distinct forms of social power. While founding members of the club negotiated with the government for vast plots of land at cheap rates, water and other infrastructural facilities, bureaucrats saw these negotiations as an avenue to secure club memberships for themselves, thereby allowing them access to elite spaces of leisure which they could not otherwise have afforded. Through detailed archival research on the ways in which the KGA obtained land and subsidies for day-to-day functioning, Inglis shows how even though the elite do indeed

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secure unequal shares of resources, competing claims and negotiations are at work in obtaining them.

Women on Top: A Gendered Elite

The last section of the book "Women at the Top: Gender Intersections" comprises three essays. While two essays attend to strategic roles played by women as elite housewives in class reproduction, the third describes the lifeworlds of elite professional women. Swethaa S Ballakrishnen's essay distinguishes elite professional women from their middle-class counterparts. Interacting with women who have highly-prized corporate jobs, be they in law firms or management consultancies, she shows how women from middle-class families, educated in India, become "first-generation" elites through their interactions with a highly globalised world. Self-perceptions of these women elide the relative caste and class privileges they held before their new status; they see their positions as exclusively a consequence of effort and hard work. Yet, through access to globally valued cultural resources they seem to have relatively more autonomy with respect to familial choices.

Parul Bhandari in her work on elite housewives of Delhi helps us understand "the affective dimensions of inequality and class" (p 276). She tracks the ways in which money becomes a "conduit of expression of their skills as well as of their anxieties" (p 276). Even when they desire highly priced objects such as branded handbags costing more than ₹4 lakh, Bhandari's interlocutors emphasise the sentiment of prudence and self-sufficiency, as reflected in not relying on husbands for money, or using their own "secret" money saved up through kitties or other investments. Bhandari's analysis brings to the fore non-material aspects of class, emphasising the "affective dimensions of class—one which includes vulnerabilities, desires, anxieties and ambitions" (p 284). Money and materialistic possession is integrally connected to non-materialistic forms of subject formation as good wives, charitable daughters and self-reliant women.

Ujithra Ponniah in her chapter on "Reproducing Elite Lives: Women in Agarwal Family Businesses" ethnographically

demonstrates how women in family businesses help increase the cohesion and reproduction of caste in modern contexts. They do so through a variety of strategies, including that of managing the "individuating desires" of their children. Even as status-appropriate endogamous marriages were ensured, mothers as confidants of their children made it a point to account for their children's choices. Similarly, mothers-in-law encouraged educated daughters-in-law to manage small projects, creating the impression of a modern family where the daughter-in-law was encouraged to work although she was not required to. The strategies show how desires of the younger generation for an independent identity are negotiated within status-appropriate life choices. If we understand Brahminical patriarchy as the continued resilience of endogamy and control of women's sexuality across caste groups, Ponniah's analysis sheds light on its contemporary workings within a business caste. For Ponniah's informants their morally permissible sphere of socialisation is confined to caste and kinship networks; they have a central role in the sustenance and reproduction of these networks. The section on elite women leads one to think, how does a category such as elite become gendered? What would it look like to label and mark the normative male elite, and look at male scientists, businessmen, stock-market analysts, ministers, bureaucrats and others with unequal access to and control over resources? What might it mean to track affective engagements with money amongst those who control it, as against housewives who need to prove their prudence?

Being and Becoming Elite

These set of questions lead us to ask how and when the elite comes to be marked out in specific ways. The elites have traditionally been marked as upper-caste, upper-class men and hence the attention to elite women is of sociological interest. Similarly, the elite amongst traditionally disadvantaged caste groups have been of interest, as reflected in the research on Dalit middle classes (Naudet 2008). But how do we think of the unremarkable elite? Essays by Subramanian and by Jules Naudet, Adrien Allorant and Mathieu

Ferry offer rich insights in this regard. In the latter essay, the authors argue that theorisation around the structuration of business elites from Euro-American contexts does not hold for India. Unlike Western countries where credentials have increasingly become important determiners to occupying elite positions within business, "the inheritance of economic capital" does not require further legitimation in India. Credentials remain important as symbolic capital but they are not necessary for the "corporate aristocrats" or business heirs who come largely from business castes. Interestingly, the authors argue that the clear domination of Brahmins among the public sector units' directors and managers suggests inherited capital too, which had been translated into economic wealth through the positions they occupied. In this analysis of chief executive officers (CEOs) of top companies, the continued resilience of caste and family networks within corporate India and the domination of men among corporate heirs are two remarkable features. What would it mean to think of them as a gendered elite, that is, to think of them as sons who had to prove themselves, or fathers of a certain kind? What forms of masculinity did they need to enact as businessmen? Studying such unremarkable or normalised groups among the elite could provide us further insights into this study of power and inequality from above (Khan 2012).

Savitha Suresh Babu (savithasureshbabu@gmail.com) is a PhD scholar at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru and Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal.

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BOOK REVIEW

Being a teacher educator: Research-Informed Methods for Improving Practice, edited by Anja Swennen and Elizabeth White, 2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, OXON, OX14 4RN, Routledge, 2021, 200 pp., £120 (hardback); £34.99 (paperback); £34.99 (ebook), ISBN: 9780367518592; ISBN: 9780367518585; ISBN: 9781003055457

I was intrigued by the invitation to write a review of this edited collection as I do not live in Europe but on the southernmost tip of Africa. How, one might ask, could someone who lives so far away have relevant insights into the issues raised in this book? Yet, on reflection, I believe that the invitation to review is an example of the interesting concept of brave research, as outlined in Swennen and Powell's chapter on *Brave research as a means to transform teacher education*. In this chapter, they invite us on a journey to meet new ideas and concepts by listening to our fellow teacher educators from the large and diverse community to which we belong. It is, therefore, both brave and consistent with the purpose of the book, to invite someone from another continent and from another social context, to review the book. And, perhaps not surprisingly, despite distances of time and space, many of the issues raised to resonate with those with which I and my colleagues are familiar.

The 12 chapters in this book present research-based illustrations of teacher educators within the Association of Teacher Educators in Europe (ATEE). Against a background of ongoing policy changes and threats of standardisation, it offers insider perspectives from the voices of those who live and work the daily challenges of teaching others to be teachers. For this alone, the book is to be valued, for its message is not only about documenting research findings but also about advocacy in recognising and supporting practitioner-engaged research and professional development.

The chapters traverse a terrain that covers pedagogical, institutional, professional, research and political concerns, all of which are endemic to how the work of teacher educators is constituted.

From a teaching point of view, one sees the emphasis on values and identity, genuine concerns with building positive experiences for student teachers and pupils in schools, and a deep interest in exploring pedagogy. Russell and Flores, for example, in their chapter *Developing as teacher educators: Lessons learned from student voices during practice and research* argue the importance of making visible the rationale for particular teacher education pedagogies, so that student teachers understand why teaching happens in particular ways. Similarly, Leijgraaf asks *Are we doing the right thing?* as she outlines the tensions of opening up pedagogical controls and inviting students to follow their own learning pathways.

Several chapters illustrate how teacher educators are grappling with the implications of their own practice. Reflection is a key concept in the teacher education vocabulary and this concept is at the core of many of the deliberations in these chapters. There is a potential rich debate here, as we read in Holdsworth's chapter on *Being a reflective teacher educator: Professionalism or pipe dream?* about a lack of consensus of how reflection is conceptualised or operationalised amongst his interviewees (see Robinson and Rousseau 2018, for a similar finding).

The methodology of self-study is prominent in the book, a likely consequence of the pressing interest among many teacher educators of exploring the links between research, reflection, inquiry and the improvement of professional practice. A further edited book within ATEE might be to build on these self-studies as we work towards deepening and extending the knowledge base in teacher education (see Zeichner 2007 for more on this point).

Several chapters note the benefits of various forms of research and practice collaborations, networks and partnerships, whether this be with schools, international researchers, and in face-to-face or online communities. Such examples of collaboration could perhaps be the starting point for the stronger voice that teacher education research desires of itself, within the academy and in politics and policy. As an example, the chapter by White, Timmermans and Dickerson on *Learning from stories* offers an illustration of how stories can surface understandings of different perspectives, thus expanding dialogue and action across conventional boundaries.

Swennen and White point out that doing research is not self-evident for all teacher educators in all contexts. In line with this, Beaton reminds us in her chapter *Old learning, new learning: teacher educators as enquiring professionals*, that the demands of teaching, assessment and mentoring often hinder research participation by teacher educators. A division of labour in universities that constrains teacher educators to participate fully in academic work has been documented in other parts of the globe (Ellis and McNicholl 2015); this book adds strongly to the call that this challenge be addressed at the institutional level.

Teacher educators carry the oft-unrecognised responsibility of preparing new educators for an unknown future, and the reader senses throughout the chapters a strong commitment to improving the lives of all those who make up our world. As an example, McPhail's chapter on *Teacher educator as researcher: striving towards a greater visibility for teacher education*, argues for teacher education research to be part of multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary communities that can inform both current and future policy reforms and contribute to research discourses on what is meaningful in society.

It is perhaps on this last more political point where my university's location on the southernmost tip of Africa reveals one difference with the book. Notions of transformation and agency feature prominently in our context, as we grapple with how teacher education does or does not address social conditions pertaining to democracy, racism, sexism, and the like. In a global context of political, environmental and technological upheaval, I had hoped for more attention to be paid in these chapters to issues of language, poverty, alienation, migrancy, climate change, etc. Swennen and Powell's notion of brave research is a strong call for activism in teacher education research, with their emphasis on how research in teacher education might address issues of equity, diversity, social justice, and sustainability. I would agree and support them and suggest that this call offers an excellent next step for an edited collection within ATEE.

As a final point, it is instructive to note that the epilogue by Swennen and White (*Lessons from this book and next steps in developing the profession of teacher educators*) includes the imperative to consider how modern technology is re-shaping our engagement with teaching and learning. The COVID-19 pandemic has hurtled us into such a scenario, far beyond what the authors in this book might have imagined at the time of writing. How knowledge for teaching will be mediated through these different tools of teaching and learning remains an interesting consideration for the future.

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Teaching History in Unjust Times

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Universities and the academic world have always been part of a game of status mobility. We may not articulate it in that way to ourselves, but the reason why people study something is at least partially to increase their status, be it in their own eyes or in the more broadly accepted prestige system of their immediate community. There may or may not be something of deeper meaning in higher education, but there is always a cultural framework that gives higher and lower ranks to different codes embedded in it. The frameworks may vary; some may consider learning the language and cognitive styles of elite Euro-American scholars the way to rise to giddy heights, while some may consider debunking those styles to be the path to higher self-esteem.

The moral and emotional appeal of the classroom, too, is based on status differences. Classroom life, when it is effective, draws students to admiring and wanting to become like the teachers performing next to the blackboard. Their language, style, knowledge and sense of humour, all symbolise higher social rank and students tend to learn to aspire towards that. Max Weber, M K Gandhi, Pierre Bourdieu and many others have described and commented on this status politics.

Unfortunately, this game necessarily needs losers so as to have winners. The prestige of a relatively higher-ranking social group has lustre and glamour only so long as it is able to show its distinction and social distance from the rest. Symbols of rank and exclusivity are of great importance in this field, particularly since political and economic gains are pitifully small in higher education compared to in several other fields. It is through the symbolism of knowledge, narrative and style that the greatest exercise of power takes place here.

Kumkum Roy's book is about young people who are relatively newer entrants

BOOK REVIEWS

The Challenge of Democratization: Learning and Teaching History in the 21st Century edited by Kumkum Roy, 2020; New Delhi, pp 230, free e-book, <https://www.academia.edu/44456294/Phoenixkrjune>.

into the status politics of school and university education. She focuses on the teaching of history, though many of her insights could be generalised to several other disciplines too. A book like this makes us see afresh the relations of power which underlie common norms and practices of school and university life. The way the book is published itself breaks one of our sacred myths, that a good book is one which comes out from a prestigious publisher and therefore one should bring out one's book from the most prestigious publisher possible. In this field where the usurpation of academic status is all and snoring of those who get excluded is a necessary gambit, Roy has chosen to publish her book with no publishers' labels attached. Distributed as a free e-book during the peak of the COVID-19 lockdown, Roy, in the e-book, writes about the experiences of those who start with little social and cultural capital in the fields constituted by schools and universities. At a time when academic institutions are commonly resentful of the entry of people from lower ranking classes, castes, genders, regions and so on, it swims against the tide by examining their experiences with empathy. The book presents a riveting bottom-up look at the teaching and learning of history in India.

Roy does other unusual things too. One of India's foremost scholars of the early historic period, she jumps ahead from her usual period by more than a thousand years to bring the ancient historian's ways to bear upon contemporary times. She uses the approaches by which manuscripts and epigraphs were examined to study the practice of teaching

history and particularly ancient Indian history today. She pores over newspapers, textbooks and even guide books for exams to inquire into how History is being conveyed and understood. She supplements this with questionnaires circulated to school and college teachers and her own long experience of teaching students at an elite Indian university to give us a peep into how men and women students coming from different social backgrounds experience and learn history and what sense they make of it. As the title indicates, the book is an extended reflection upon the place of history in higher education in this day and age when many social groups hitherto kept out of it are beginning to enter and contest those who previously occupied this space. This leads the book to inquire into several kinds of transgressions.

Perspectives and Methods

At the heart of the book is a deep restlessness over the place and meaning of history in Indian schools and higher education. To write about history in Indian education is to write about a meeting place of many of contemporary India's conflicts, rebellions and challenges. History and higher education, to be sure, have always been struggled and fought over. Different social locations—including being in a position of power or of subjugation—influence our precognitive intuitions in different ways. These can lead to quite different kinds of concept formation and to the building of a variety of narratives when coming to grips with the same objective reality. Struggles within societies, communities, institutions and fields can also lead to the formulations of discourses that protect and enhance the power of actors' respective social locations. It will be difficult to claim that any group writing history or indeed sociology, economics or physics is or ever was completely free of the compulsions within particular situations to gain respect, recognition, power or even wealth.

Research methods within each discipline have usually aimed at eliminating biases and gaps in their practitioners'

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understanding. However, the confidence of scholars in what they know has periodically been shaken up by the emergence of a powerful new set of perspectives which has made them aware of certain influences that coloured research agendas and empirical investigations. It has taken, for instance, the emergence of vigorous anti-colonial, feminist and Dalit movements for mainstream academics to acknowledge that it had been missing out certain important issues and ways of seeing things. These voices got heard only after they gathered enough social momentum to ensure that they could no longer be ignored. Social and natural sciences indeed try to grasp truths that are not just figments of our imagination, but they are always constrained in that by the social relations and cultures through which they themselves operate.

Roy does not take the stance made popular by extreme versions of post-modernism and post-structuralism that because knowledge is interwoven with power, all we can do is to deconstruct and critique it. Building relatively more valid knowledge is certainly part of her project. But this must be done more cautiously than ever before, through an interrogation of the discourses and fields within which we construct our understanding and by listening carefully to the

voices of those hitherto silenced or heard only from afar. It cannot be blandly assumed that the erstwhile silenced voices have the truth of innocence either. They too must be carefully scrutinised to see if they may be speaking things that are important to pay attention to.

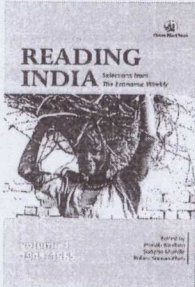
Roy believes that history can be empowering and can help people to better understand the narratives of the powerful as well as their own narratives. This book is her way of exploring both how history is actually being taught at different sites in India and the kind of possibilities that may exist within the study of history to create greater justice and freedom in the world.

How History Is Being Taught

The first part of the book is about the context within which history is being taught. In a fascinating account of post-graduate students of history at an elite Indian university, she brings out the struggles that many of them face. An increasing number of students are coming into the university from families that do not share the English-speaking academic cultures of their professors. They encounter barriers in the university of class, patriarchy, caste and region. Experiences of humiliation and even violence are commonplace at the hands

of teachers, co-students and the administration. There is little effort by those in relatively powerful positions to reach out to other languages and to create dialogues with the cultures and world views present there. The fear of the loss of status by legitimising new entrants is palpable. But is this inevitable? Roy cites the example of the non-governmental organisation Eklavya's approach to social studies education to say that an empowering history is indeed possible. The challenge is how to visualise and implement it.

The problems in teaching history are manifold. To begin with, it is nowadays among the least preferred of all university subjects. The number of universities with strong departments of history, and among those departments, especially of ancient Indian history, is dwindling. Within the existing departments, there is a sharp diversity in academic orientations and interests when you go from the large central universities of our big metropolises to smaller cities and universities and colleges there. Whether among the schoolteachers or among college faculty, the predominant version of what history is supposed to do is to teach "great achievements." The purpose of history is conflated with the purpose of mythologies and there is little recognition of the possibilities that history offers when it



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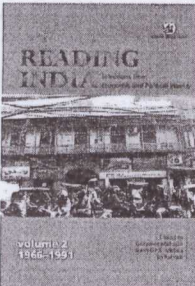
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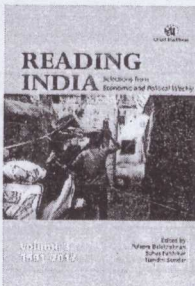
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is done in the scientific rather than the mythological mode. Instead, it is expected that history mainly teaches about great heroes and the buildings they made, the wars they fought and so on.

A similar pattern is to be seen in most kinds of texts that purport to teach history, ranging from school textbooks to the coaching handbooks used by competitive exam aspirants. There is little space for a history that permits one to question or interrogate. The teaching of history is not seen as an act of building knowledge, where one tries to examine different events and representations and constructs a more general and deeper understanding of them. Instead in most of these texts, history is a place where we learn "facts" of what happened in the past and through them absorb uncritically a narrative that more often than not mirrors the prejudices and orientations of powerful social groups towards caste, gender and nationalism.

There are many kinds of knowledges and they have different characteristics, social backgrounds and effects. Mythological thinking, too, is an important and valuable part of our lives. It articulates the deep contradictions of our lives, desires and relationships and gives symbolic resolutions of them. When we think of Akbar's Din-i Ilahi, it gives us a glow of happiness that we had Muslim kings who sought to bring people together and sponsored religious thinking that united rather than tore asunder. This is of special importance in today's time of inter-religious strife. In contrast, the scientific mode of thought asks us to consciously look at all aspects of Akbar and to note that he had an earlier phase, too, when he was not averse to using slogans of Islamic victory over infidels to justify his expansionary military activities. When we practise a history that says it will let our theories and our evidences speak to each other and seek deeper truths and not bind itself to political interests alone, then maybe we will arrive at another way of seeing things. Perhaps we will arrive at an understanding of why rulers sometimes want to promote an identity politics of hatred and sometimes promote an identity politics of reconciliation. If we reduce history to being a handmaiden of

our popular narratives of today, then we miss out on its potential for giving new insights into our lives and our struggles.

Possibilities in Studying History

Roy identifies a few bright spots, too, in school and college texts which promote history as a site for reflection and systematic inquiry. These include the post-National Curriculum Framework, 2005 NCERT school textbooks and an occasional undergraduate textbook like that by Upendra Singh. But these are vastly outnumbered by the kind of textbooks and coaching materials which most of our students read, assuming, of course, that they are encouraged to show any interest in history at all.

When students from the less powerful sections of our country arrive in elite universities, they are carrying mostly an exposure to history as "great achievements." Here, they may get exposed to a different kind of history. This history may have its own problems, and may not have yet fully emerged from the shadow of the classes, castes, regions, genders and so on of the people who wrote it. And yet, it offers a new paradigm which can be made use of by these new entrants to understand their own situations better and to fashion tools for rethinking their own place in the world. Roy is charged with the pathos of the situation where the languages, cultural styles and interactions of these universities, far from being inviting, actually make these students feel like unwelcome outsiders.

In two astonishing chapters, Roy gives examples of how ancient Indian history can speak to the new entrants and empower as well as inspire them. She analyses five different narratives from over a millenium ago and sees in them struggles against domination that exemplify several different models of emancipation. The narratives are complex and call for careful thought and analysis. Satyakama from the Chandogya Upanishad, for instance, appears to show that it is possible for non-Brahmins to also get special knowledge, but he still remains liminal and peripheral to the system. Meanwhile, Shikhandin or Amba the charioteer of Arjuna in the *Mahabharata* personifies a breaking down of gender

stereotypes, but eventually is still co-opted within the power structure of that time. It is in *Manimekalai* from the Tamil Sangam literature that one sees a breaking away that is consummate and not just token in character. The protagonist in this narrative achieves great compassion rather than the ability to destroy others. The answer it seems is to accumulate the power that comes from feeling for others and communicating with them, and not the power that rests on their submission. It is dialogue, she argues, at the end that we must turn to. Along with the marginalised, academics too must learn to dialogue with the vast numbers that had earlier been left out of education and are now surging in.

Roy has produced a remarkable and unusual book. In a world where those who aspire to become great scholars learn to disparage teaching, she not only writes about teaching but about teaching the disparaged majority. The book speaks to many who worry about the nature of scholarship in these contested times. There are other existing debates, too, on education and inequality, which the book could have also taken up. The structural perspective on education, for instance, would ask where students go after studying history. What is the role allocation which studying this contributes to? How does studying history change people? Another interesting thing to examine could have been to look at what kind of status politics the new entrants themselves engage in. What do they challenge, where are they co-opted, what moves do they make? How do Hindutva and other such interpretations of the past fit into a project of self-respect? It could also have been asked what the place of history is in the neo-liberal and managerialist vision of education unfolding nowadays in India and around the world. But all this would have meant writing a very different kind of book. This is an ancient Indian historian looking at how history is taught in the very unequal India of today and that is the special strength of the book.

Amman Madan (amman.madan@apu.edu.in) is at Azim Premji University and works on questions of dialogue and oppression in education.

costs and bring about speed and rigour in implementation. Some of the opportunities include, but not limit to, enrolling children from financially deprived families in private schools by making use of the 25 per cent quota under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) Act, 2010; improving the learning levels in the government schools by making the government system the principal stakeholder in the intervention; or empowering women federations in rural India to make them self-sustaining. This book seeks to critically analyse and explain these unique opportunities for the Indian corporations through high impact, high return innovative models that can successfully unleash the true potential of India. These same models can be replicated in other sectors like health, nutrition and so on.

Aruna Das Gupta

Independent Researcher on CSR and Values in Business,

Bengaluru, India

E-mail: arunadg26@gmail.com

✓ **Rasmus Hougaard and Jacqueline Carter**, *The Mind of the Leader: How to Lead Yourself, Your People, and Your Organization for Extraordinary Results*. Harvard Business Review Press, 2018, p. 238, USD 30 (Hardback). ISBN: 9781633693425.

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Leadership has been one of the most deliberated and discussed concepts in the field of management. Daniel Goleman, in 'What makes a Leader', indicates that emotional intelligence (EI), is what differentiates the best from the rest. A critical mass of EI capabilities results in increased yearly earning goals by 20 per cent apart from other benefits. EI included self-awareness, self-regulation and empathy as three out of five skill sets of EI. The focus in understanding leadership has shifted away from personal characteristics like cognitive ability to traits (e.g., extroversion), motives like McClelland's (1975) need for power or charisma or transformational leadership style (Bass, 1985, 1990), towards contributing to organizational effectiveness. This is best explained by the contingency theory of leadership (Bass 1990; Boyatzis, 1982; Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Other recent approaches include relational aspects, for example, leader-member exchange (LMX) and seek to understand the leader's ability to interact with others (Dansereau et al., 1975; Kelly, 1992; Kram & Cherniss, 2001). The integration of findings in affective neuroscience and stress research has expanded the leadership discussion to psychological and physiological effects of chronic power stress associated with the performance of the leadership role (Boyatzis et al., 2006). Within such work, leadership sustainability was found to be adversely affected due to stress and other related issues and needed due research attention. The book titled 'The Mind of the Leader' authored by Rasmus Hougaard and Jacqueline Carter, of the potential project, is a desired step in this direction.

The multi-year study is based on research and practice, including surveys of more than 35,000 leaders, interviews of more than 200 C-suite executives and an extensive study of evidence-based research in leadership. It concludes that organizations and leaders are not meeting their employees' basic human needs of finding meaning, purpose, connection and genuine happiness in their work. The study conclusively found that three qualities stand out as being foundational for leaders today: mindfulness, selflessness and compassion (MSC)—indicating the ideal mind of the leader. Mindfulness minimizes distractions and results in a more focused attention to work, creating higher productivity and multitasking. Selflessness addresses the general lack of fulfilment in work life and helps the leader to lead themselves and others towards more meaningful work and happiness. Compassion helps in deeper bonding and thus higher people engagement.

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The motivation of the book came from various sources. A 2016 Gallup engagement survey found that 82 per cent of employees find their leaders to be fundamentally uninspiring. The same survey found that only 13 per cent of the global workforce is engaged, while 24 per cent are actively disengaged. Organizations across the globe have invested millions in leadership development in the past decade, and this survey finding indicates poor returns on investment (ROI). A sharing of experiences by global CEOs from the organizations like Accenture, Marriott International, Starbucks and LinkedIn reinforced the same.

The book is primarily shaped by a decade-long training under the potential project, undertaken by authors and their team for training thousands of leaders in many prominent companies like Microsoft, the LEGO group, Danone and Accenture. It is based on contextual factors like an understanding and attention to disruptions in the global business environment, and critical challenges faced by the organizations in the twenty-first century, including the 'Attention Deficit Trait' propelled by many factors including technology. Other motivations include uncertainty, resulting in decreased performance, innovation and resilience.

The book offers a training framework using MSC leadership as a set of foundational skills for the better engagement of people in the organization. It is structured at three levels of leadership, (a) self-leadership through self-awareness (a skill from the set of five for EI), (b) organizational awareness for organizing and leading people and (c) organizational leadership for understanding and leading the organization.

MSC leadership proposes that leaders need to develop these three mental qualities, which the Potential Project found as critical for increasing engagement, happiness and productivity. All three mental qualities are closely linked and are mutually enhancing. Mindfulness (M) makes a person selfless and selflessness (S) makes one more compassionate (C).

Within the above-mentioned triad, the anatomy of mindfulness (M), as discussed in the book, is backed by neuroscience research and has positive impact on psychology, physiology and work performance. It constructively alters the perception of reality, which helps an individual to make decisions from a conscious mind, while overcoming unconscious biases. Both focus and attention make one mindful. The anatomy of selflessness (S) is the wisdom to unleash the natural flow of energy that people bring to work. It is about self-confidence, humility and service, while minimizing self-seeking and becoming receptive to other's views. In management literature, mindfulness is a heavily researched area. The concept of mindfulness is rooted in Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist psychology. Neuroscience researches have been conducted on mindfulness-based practices, validating mindfulness as an efficacious psychological intervention. Mindfulness is more than meditation. It is 'inherently a state of consciousness', which involves consciously attending to one's moment-to-moment experience. In 'Mechanism of Mindfulness', Shapiro et al. (2006) proposed three axioms for mindfulness—Intention, attention and attitude.

Most prominent organizations across the globe from business to government are using mindfulness to increase personal focus and the well-being of their employees. As the individual experience is phenomenological and varies with time, a consistency of practice is required. A universal application of the MSC model is a concern to be addressed here. The subjective aspect of the MSC theory needs more empirical testing by the researchers to validate this leadership model and add to the theory of leadership. MSC theory is rooted in Eastern contemplative traditions. The root text on MSC is extremely rich in content and practice in these traditions. Buddhist philosophy, one of the schools of Eastern world view postulates lack of selflessness to be the root cause of 'Bodhichitta', a mind state based on wisdom-based compassion.

The book, 'The Mind of the Leader', is divided into three parts; the first part of the book deals with self-leadership, an ability to manage one's own thoughts and actions. It sharpens mental skills and strengthens the mind of the leader. You are what you think, is an old adage ascribed to Buddha. A mindful path to self-awareness helps in minimizing the subconscious in considering the factors and situations for more objective decision-making. The mental strength and freedom developed by awareness training

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enables one to mindfully lead others, while training for a mindful focus leads to selfless leadership. Well-being, an outcome of Bodhichitta, arises due to an intrinsically happy mind state. Here, self-confident selflessness is a leadership journey, which begins first in the mind of the leader.

As mentioned in the book, another important aspect is self-compassion and is embedded in purpose. A construction of reality based on such purpose is meaningful and engages people as they get intrinsically motivated to follow the leaders, a matter addressed in the second part of the book.

The beginner's mind, a mind in its first moment is a most mindful and compassionate mind with minimized subconscious bias. It observes and understands the people as they are and therefore manages varied emotions devoid of judgements. In addition to skilful actions to manage people, radical acceptance of mistakes for in-time improvement leads to follower-ship and sustainable leadership.

The dangers of empathy in the second part of the book is not wholly aligned with the eastern philosophy and specially Buddhist philosophy. Empathy is a prerequisite for compassion, a higher-order emotion leading to Bodhichitta. Visualizing the self to be the other and exchanging self with others during meditation is one of the crucial practices for attaining Bodhichitta—wisdom-based compassion. Whereas the book mentions the steps for Tonglen practice of meditation for leading others compassionately, this meditation needs a setting and context, which is not described in the book.

Part Three of the book explains how to understand and lead your organization. Mental training for compassionate leadership behaviour shapes our own behaviors and that of others in the organization. Thus, a culture gets created as a shared mindset for people-centric management. Such a culture encourages collective compassionate behaviour and affects improvement in performance. A good case mentioned in Part Three of the book is the case of Barry Wehmiller, a leading global supplier of manufacturing technology and services, where leaders measure success based on 'the way we touch the lives of the people' instead of traditional notions of revenue measurement.

Four consistent challenges for enabling organizational focus are identified as constant pressure, continuous action, information overload and working in distracted environment where goal-centric, multitasking work is a norm. Interesting tips are provided to counter the same based on the insights accrued during the potential project. Road maps for countering such challenges are also identified and resilience, trust and social cohesion have been reported to be the key outcomes of the compassionate organization culture.

Some of the findings reported in this book are debatable like the role of mindfulness for focused and attentive work. Is attention deficit trait innate or can it be worked on? As mentioned in 'Mind of the Leader', 'at work people are distracted 47% of the time'. Distractedness decreases performance, innovation and resilience. Mindfulness mechanisms, as outlined by Shapiro et al. (2006), includes intention, attention and action. The findings of this study state that intentions will get sharpened through mindfulness interventions. Though creating common intentions for focused and attentive efforts to achieve organizational goals in a diverse workforce seems to be a herculean task. Varying self-concepts and social roles may result in different intentions for motivation and action, and their alignment for collective work requires consistent MSC-based interventions.

Selflessness as understood in the Eastern world view is a state achieved after due rigour, based on the noble motive of helping others, both human and non-human. An organization with the sole motive for profits may not provide a similar context for an individual for selfless leadership in the current hyper-competitive and disruptive global environment. Next, though equality has been mentioned in the book, ethics has not been given due emphasis. Right mindfulness—the practices of mindfulness based on the code of conduct known as six perfections are the essence of mindful meditation in the Buddhist philosophy-based practice. The six perfections in Mahayana sutras in Buddhist teachings are (a) generosity (*dāna*), (b) morality (*śīla*), (c) patience (*kṣānti*), (d) vigor (*vīrya*), (e) concentration (*dhyāna*) and

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(f) wisdom (*prajñā*). Mindfulness practised without such ethics may also be detrimental to a purposeful and compassionate leadership.

An extensive study of evidence-based research in leadership, filled with inspiring experience-sharing stories and practical step-by-step ideas for adopting new practices, the book, 'The Mind of the Leader', questions the conventional leadership paradigm and adds to the shifts in leadership towards relational and social aspects. It has the potential to change how you lead yourself and to transform your organization. The book is an outcome of leadership development interventions on MSC leadership in prominent business organizations across the globe. It is a remarkable achievement of Hougaard and Carter, and hundreds of their associates working with multiple leaders around the world. It reinforces the shift towards relational aspects. The mechanism developed post the study and interventions recommended for MSC leadership and implemented in many prominent business organizations across the globe strengthens the finding of the book. Moreover, employee health is a potent concern of the global workforce and a focus on mind training for constructive actions aimed at reducing stress and inducing calm and peaceful mind in addition to body fitness and physical fitness is a welcome addition. Many organizations have focused on and invested in the physical health of the people at the workplace. Similarly, mind training for a compassionate workplace may also facilitate well-being. Such interventions would provide immense benefits to people for a mindful and happy life. To quote His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, 'Happiness is not something readymade. It comes from your own actions'.

In the words of Lama Zopa, a highly respected Buddhist monk,

All the peace and happiness of the whole globe, the peace and happiness of societies, the peace and happiness of family, the peace and happiness in the individual persons' life, and the peace and happiness of even the animals and so forth, all depends on having loving kindness and compassion toward each other.

As my teacher of Buddhist philosophy Geshe Damdul (Director at Tibet House, New Delhi, Cultural Centre of His Holiness the Dalai Lama) reminds us always, 'Be wisely kind to yourself and others'. MSC leadership, as explained in the book may well be the next level of leadership in the current VUCA world characterized by a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous business environment. The book 'The Mind of the Leader', finds that the major reasons of disengagement at work is that organizations and leaders are not meeting employees' basic human needs of finding meaning, purpose, connection and genuine happiness in their work. But more than a description of the problem, the book offers a radical, yet practical, solution. The book makes a good case that to solve the leadership crisis, organizations need to put people at the centre of their strategy. They need to develop managers and executives who lead with three core mental qualities—mindfulness, selflessness and compassion. This book hence makes a significant contribution to the literature of positive scholarship.

As quoted in the book, Dominic Barton, Global Managing Partner, McKinsey said, 'If you are not present you are wasting your time and everyone else's'.

And it starts in the mind of the leader.

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Book Reviews

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Nayan Mitra and René Schmidpeter (Eds.), *Corporate Social Responsibility in India: Cases and Developments after the Legal Mandate*. Cham: Springer, 2016, 238 pp., €135.19 (Hardback). ISBN: 978-3-319-41781-3.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) in India has come a long way, from Mahatma Gandhi's 'trusteeship model' of CSR to being mandated for certain companies through a statute in the Companies Act, 2013. However, this leap from voluntary to mandatory is witnessing a period of transition. This review outlines a brief history of CSR in India from the mid-1850s to 2016 and especially lays focus on the CSR mandate. Furthermore, this review introduces the readers to the structure of the book titled *Corporate Social Responsibility in India: Cases and Developments after the Legal Mandate* and provides a brief peek into its various chapters.

This book is a first of its kind that unveils to the world the implication, implementation and the way forward of the historical CSR mandate in India. Comprising of 13 well-thought-out chapters, the book is published by Springer International Publishing, Switzerland.

The first chapter authored by the editors provides a brief preview, 'The Why, What and How of the CSR Mandate: The India Story', which presents a brief background of the mandate in relation to the socio-economic realities of India as well as the historical evolution of CSR in India. In recent times (2013), India has come up with the Companies Act, 2013, replacing the previous 57-year-old Act of 1956. This new Act has a section dedicated to the CSR mandate for certain companies. This has created a storm in India's socio-economic environment. But who formulated this mandate? What was the genesis of this mandate? How is this CSR model different from other CSR models? What are its unique/novel points? The questions are many.

The next chapter by Dr Bhaskar Chatterjee—also known as the father of CSR in India—for the first time in this book elucidates, through a step-by-step process, the genesis of Section 135 and Schedule VII under the Companies Act, 2013, in an interview to Nayan Mitra, one of the editors.

The chapter written by Meeta Sengupta seeks to recognize the need for CSR contribution to education in India, understand the history of education and philanthropy existing in India, the CSR spend on education, the impact of the CSR legislation on it and the three large trends that supported this transformation. Sengupta points out that although the CSR mandate has faced much debate among India Inc. as an extra tax on corporates, incurring additional administrative burden and a rather indirect way to direct corporate behaviour, there was little debate on the inclusion of education within the purview of the mandate as the gap between need and national spend in education (3.9% of India's GDP).

CSR has emerged as a topic of concern in government, corporation and international business forums due to its multidimensional benefits. Today, as people are getting increasingly conscious about global warming and ethical business practices, it is expected from business organizations that they become concerned about their responsibilities for the people and the society as a whole. Hence, CSR has emerged as an inescapable priority in the corporate world in present times. In India, companies have also started

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to realize the immense importance of CSR as a vital part for attaining sustainability in a highly competitive business organization. This book highlights the present situation in India regarding the issues of CSR implementation, and also the challenges that companies are regularly facing while implementing CSR projects. It also discusses possible impacts of the recent CSR law in this country. It is argued in this book that despite impressive financial growth and enhanced privatization and liberalization initiatives, the corporate sector in India is still lagging behind in terms of CSR implementations, and companies have to move faster in this regard in order to ensure the continuing economic progress of the country.

Further, through another chapter on 'CSR Implementation: How It Is Done in India', Dr Bhaskar Chatterjee details how CSR is expected to be accomplished under the new mandate. Since, the two chapters use an interview technique of deliberation, the language and the logic flow is conversational and succulent to provide a touch-feel effect. As a matter of fact, to reinforce the academic and industry corroboration, this book has a rich anthology of case studies from some of the most eminent companies in India like Tata, ITC, Jindal Steel and Ernst & Young, authored by Sukanya Patwardhan, Dr Ashesh Ambasta, Brig. Rajiv Williams and Sridhar Iyer, respectively. Academic interceptions like Dr Sumona Ghosh's empirical study on CSR reporting and the thought-provoking deliberations of Dr Ananda Das Gupta, Dr Asif Akhtar and Dr Ahmad Faraz Khan on the future of the mandate further enhances the rich content of the Book.

The views of Dr Vikrant Shirodkar of University of Sussex and Dr Rene Rueth of the Institute for Management Education and Culture, in two separate chapters, brings together the world view to this mandate. Overall, this book provides a holistic vision of the CSR environment in the early years of the CSR mandate, by documenting its past, present as well as its predicted future by some of the most illustrious CSR stakeholders—policymakers, academics and practitioners.

Research on the political connotations of CSR is gaining momentum. Political CSR includes social and philanthropic activities undertaken by firms that enable them to access political stakeholders while safeguarding their legitimacy and reputation at the same time. One such activity includes participation in the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), which, since its inception in 2000, has provided an opportunity to organizations to voluntarily participate in addressing social challenges from a global multi-stakeholder perspective. However, governments in several emerging-market countries have been making CSR mandatory to address social and environmental issues at a local (or domestic) level.

Predominantly, CSR has been approached by organizations in two ways—acting as donors to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in social sector, and/or establishing and funding their own foundations/NGOs. Both of these approaches fall short in ensuring sustainability and social impact. This book presents a conceptual model of new found ways of CSR engagement for organizations. The model connects the phenomenon of CSR to a wider developmental agenda. This research explores links of CSR with sustainable development and social entrepreneurship/intrapreneurship. It further tries to expand the policy discourse on CSR by presenting some fresh propositions. The model shall contribute to the growing body of literature on CSR, especially in the developing world milieu. It uniquely contributes to the policy making discourse, thereby reducing the vagueness regarding CSR implementation, whether voluntary or mandatory (by law).

This book traces the political and bureaucratic influence on CSR in India since the 1990s to the reality of the CSR mandate outlined in the Companies Act, 2013, to beyond, where CSR is perceived to be integrated within the purview of ethical businesses of the future and through responsible business practices. In addition to insightfully documenting this journey, this book outlines three key perspectives, as brought about by the mandate that can be taken as the foundation of the future of CSR in India.

The passing of the CSR mandate in the Companies Act, 2013, has brought about a unique opportunity before organizations in India to innovate on models that can impact at scale, yet be frugal in terms of

costs and bring about speed and rigour in implementation. Some of the opportunities include, but not limit to, enrolling children from financially deprived families in private schools by making use of the 25 per cent quota under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) Act, 2010; improving the learning levels in the government schools by making the government system the principal stakeholder in the intervention; or empowering women federations in rural India to make them self-sustaining. This book seeks to critically analyse and explain these unique opportunities for the Indian corporations through high impact, high return innovative models that can successfully unleash the true potential of India. These same models can be replicated in other sectors like health, nutrition and so on.

Aruna Das Gupta

Independent Researcher on CSR and Values in Business,

Bengaluru, India

E-mail: arunadg26@gmail.com

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The Real *i* in the Apple Universe

The State of Workers in a 'Workers' State'

ANAND PARAPPADI KRISHNAN

The violence in the Wistron factory—Taiwanese supplier producing Apple products—in Karnataka in December 2020 due to serious lapses in labour practices generated considerable debate on the realities of hi-tech manufacturing, which are built on outsourced, precarious labour. This incident also provided a window into the modes of operation of global electronics and hi-tech brands that bolster their corporate profile and reap profits through transnational production processes and practices involving chains of suppliers and subcontractors while also squeezing the lives of workers who produce sleek, high-definition gadgets and devices in sweat-shop conditions. The debates over labour contention and resulting violence in the Wistron facility had somehow missed the connections and parallels in the work practices and operations of Taiwanese subcontractors in Mainland China (Krishnan 2020). It is in this context that *Dying for an iPhone: Apple, Foxconn and the Lives of China's Workers* provides a rich, in-depth study of the lived experiences of the workers of Foxconn, the major supplier for Apple, thereby also helping to comprehensively understand the intertwined relationship of the global brand and its suppliers.

The title of the book itself, while being provocative, also juxtaposes two kinds of deaths—on one side, the figurative one, where consumers around the world who are keyed into the new products of Apple, queue up to buy them; and on the other, a new generation of workers forced to bear the costs of producing these products, keeping up with corporate requirements of speed and precision. Thus, both the “deaths” are well connected to each other.

Emerging from deep research and investigation by the three authors who collaborated with researchers from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong for close to 10 years—with significant work being done

Dying for an iPhone: Apple, Foxconn and the Lives of China's Workers by Jenny Chan, Mark Selden and Pun Ngai, Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2020; pp xvi + 277, \$19.95.

undercover in Foxconn's manufacturing sites across nine locations in China—the book provides first-hand accounts of the precarious lives of thousands of young male and female migrant workers. As the authors note in the preface, the seed for their research was the rampant suicides by workers in Foxconn's factories in China in 2010–14 in total, along with four attempted but survived with injuries, as enumerated and tabulated in detail in Appendix 2 of the book. In fact, it was the spate of these suicides that brought Foxconn and its production ecosystem into focus. From then on, Foxconn as well as other suppliers of Apple in China have been under scrutiny with reports of violations of labour standards and safeguards on various counts; a good portion of these reports also included forced internships of students studying in vocational educational institutions to work overtime on the assembly lines without any social protection, even amidst wilful violations of mandatory labour laws and regulations in this regard.

Divided into 12 chapters, along with four appendixes, the book covers all the different aspects related to the ecosystem of Foxconn and its intertwined relationship with Apple, exploring the experiences on the factory floors and assembly lines on the one hand, and the lives of young workers in working as well as living spaces on the other. The book is able to build a powerful narrative which is informed by rigorous ethnographies of workers and their lived experiences, with numerous first-person accounts. In fact, the latter is made possible by the strong rapport the authors and their team of researchers were able to build with the workers and their community networks.

The book successfully combines the different contentions and stories that have emerged over the past decade with regard to labour practices in Foxconn—and other suppliers of Apple as well as other electronics brands—and is able to provide a focused analysis.

Precarity of Workers' Lives

Over the last four decades since the 1980s, China has witnessed successive waves of rural to urban migration as young male and female workers make their way into cities to find opportunities in the booming industries and services. According to the country's official statistics, there are some 288 million rural migrants in the manufacturing, services and construction sectors. Their move to the cities is “driven by the desire to broaden their horizons and experience modern life and cosmopolitan consumption” (p 120). Foxconn has been one of the biggest beneficiaries of this migration as it absorbs the workers either through direct recruitment or through labour dispatch agencies. At Foxconn, the young workers “aspire to earn a living wage, develop technical skills, enjoy comprehensive welfare benefits, marry and secure the full range of citizenship rights in the cities they inhabit” (pp 177–78).

However, these dreams and aspirations crash when it meets the harsh realities of the assembly lines, factory floors and exploitative conditions in working as well as living spaces. These include regimented work arrangements and practices, constant disciplining and surveillance by line leaders, supervisors and managerial staff, compulsory overtime work, often with low pay and inadequate social protection, the blurring of their working and living spaces; being forced to handle hazardous industrial chemicals without proper safety equipment (Chapters 6 and 9); lack of proper compensation on work-related injuries and accidents (Chapter 10); forced transfers and relocations to newer cities as production units expand (Chapter 7); and socio-spatial exclusion in the cities on account of hard urban regulations (Chapter 7). The exhaustion, strain and hardships of the workers are not just physical but also extend to mental and emotional realms. The “hidden

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injuries" include strain and disruption of marital and familial relations. The precarity of workers' lives and the complete disregard for their well-being in Foxconn is aptly summed up in this small poem below titled "A Screw Plunges to the Ground," penned by a former worker Xu Lizhi, who committed suicide in 2014, which also figures in this book (Chapter 12):

A screw plunges to the ground
working overtime at night
it drops straight down, with a faint sound
that draws no one's attention
just like before
on the same kind of night
a person plunged to the ground.

With a lack of avenues or resources to escape from the vicious cycle of production and reproduction on the assembly line, lives are unsettled, and experiences of alienation are deep. While capturing these experiences vividly, the book also captures workers' anxieties and unresolved tensions regarding their future and families, and how some attempt to seek solace in religion (Chapter 9). In the absence of any substantive and truly representative unions for the workers in which they are invested or inadequate collective bargaining mechanisms, the book also elaborately discusses the various minor and major strategies and tactics employed by them to amplify their grievances and discontent—this ranges from stoppages and slowing down the assembly line through well-crafted coordination (these are timed at critical moments in the densely connected, just-in-time manufacturing process. The transnational production process also ensures that localised work stoppages could cause disruptions at a wider level), to strikes, walkouts, traffic blockades, and in extreme cases, rioting (Chapter 11).

Intertwined Business Models

As rampant labour violations and workers' suicides gained international attention, Apple came under strict scrutiny for its role and responsibility (or lack thereof). Unlike in present time where global activism, international labour solidarities and consumer awareness have prompted greater responsiveness, the brand's standard strategy was to shift the onus onto its suppliers including introducing a

code for them in this regard. One of the two important hallmarks of the book is how the authors have throughout persevered relentlessly in bringing to relief the intertwined business models and relationships of Apple and Foxconn. In doing so, they also successfully demonstrate the dependency of both entities on each other, and how global brands also cannot escape responsibility by pushing the blame on suppliers while themselves taking the moral high ground. The authors also detail the establishment and growth of both Apple and Foxconn, their pioneers and leaders, their products and business practices to lay the background to understand the logic and rationale for both joining hands. With a strong reference like "Apple meets Foxconn, here, on the shop floor where workers assemble iPhones day and night" (p 27, Chapter 3), the authors are able to profoundly capture the reality of this relationship on the actual terrain where it gets played out.

Elaborated further, the book finds that the regimented management systems, unsafe working conditions and severe labour disciplining in Foxconn facilities that dehumanises the workers and accentuates "their race to bottom" emerge from Apple's very business model and practices to stay ahead of the curve and be the global leader—the tight timelines, constant upgradation and fine-tuning of design and style based on consumer choices/evaluation, and striving to maintain high quality precision standards and efficiency, thus demanding high speed. Percolated down, it meets Foxconn's own standards and specifications based on Taylorist "scientific management,"² by squeezing workers to pay meticulous attention to detail while at the same time maintaining high pace on the assembly line. This requires the Foxconn facilities—remarked as a city in itself by the authors—to work 24×7, continuously churning out "SMART" devices. Furthermore, by uncovering the hazardous chemicals involved in electroplating and polishing of the products, the authors are also able to accurately pin down Apple since it is corporations who determine the kinds of chemicals and processes that go into manufacturing, rather than the suppliers. There are also

other illustrations provided throughout the book to fix proper accountability on transnational electronics brands and how they shape the lives of workers who manufacture their products.

Foxconn and the Chinese Party-state

The other equally important hallmark of the book is the symbiotic relationship between Foxconn and the Chinese party-state, especially provincial and sub-provincial governments. As the logic and rationale of market became embedded in the state-directed development under the Reform and opening up of the Chinese economy post 1978, it coincided with the global transformation of industrial production and increased outsourcing by corporate giants in the United States, Europe and East Asia, as part of the strategies of maintaining lean workforces. The unlimited supply of rural migrant labour at low wage levels further propelled the creation of offshore assembly facilities. As transnational brands eyed the huge potential of the Chinese consumer market, and the Chinese diaspora increased their investments in the Mainland, the country's formal entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001 solidified matters.

Foxconn was one of the prime beneficiaries of these changes. Beginning initially from the coast in southern China, Foxconn gradually expanded across the Mainland (especially under the "Go West" strategy for inland development), on the wings of lavish incentives, infrastructural support and preferential policies of local governments who are eager to showcase development and whose officials' career progression is indexed to the levels of economic progress. Further, Foxconn has also hung onto the coattails of China's Belt and Road Initiative, thereby aligning their interests to the party-state's strategic objectives. The authors lay out in detail how, in the face of regional competition for foreign investment, local governments have led active mobilisation efforts for the ease of doing business ranging from infrastructural support, recruitment of labour (workers and student interns) and also charting out the division of labour for different administrative departments in the service of Foxconn.

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Given China's skewed tax and revenue system in favour of the central government, the local governments are also dependent on suppliers like Foxconn for resource support, especially in the field of education. This illustrates the serious constraints and limitations on local governments to ensure the compliance of labour standards by companies like Foxconn. The inadequate labour protection system that forces workers to resort to different protest methods on their own against violations, is met with ad hoc responsiveness at times but mostly with different modes of repression by the local governments. Such state absenteeism in everyday practice in the labour arena is a visible contradiction for a country ruled by a vanguard party whose political and ideological system places workers in the forefront. In fact, there have also been vivid imaginations of Karl Marx visiting industrial facilities in Mainland China in the country's online sphere despite tight controls by the party-state.³

The book truly covers a vast canvas and travels through the worlds of work in China and shows how workers are integral to the large ecosystem of corporations that transcend territorial boundaries; and whose profit maximisation is at the cost of dehumanising the workers who manufacture their state-of-the-art, hi-tech products. It is another valuable addition to a wide range of literature that rigorously interrogates China's state-directed, market-oriented economic growth and development, bringing into relief its faultlines, and thereby, further underlining the "success trap within the success story" (Mohanty 2018). As the book covers such an expanse, almost breathlessly, a little more exploration of the lives of those workers who do manage to break the vicious cycle and are able to move out of Foxconn, and stories of workers who are forced to relocate to newer locations as the Foxconn facilities expand across the country could have been undertaken. These are but minor quibbles.

Overall, the book is a tour-de-force. While built on substantial interviews with Foxconn workers, student interns, teachers who monitor internship programmes, managers and government officials

by the authors and their team of researchers, these are supplemented with embedded field observation and extensive documentary research through poems, songs, open letters, photos and videos shared by the workers and their support groups. Additionally, the authors also list a dedicated website—dyingforaniphone.com—which is a repository for all the visual and audio materials as well as a platform to further amplify the global networks and solidarities that have developed in support of workers in supply chains in China on the one hand and hold global electronic brands accountable on the other. While not compromising on rigour in research, the authors have also taken great care to stay off from jargons and keep the language lucid, thus making it accessible to a wide range of audiences.

Anand Parappadi Krishnan (anand.p.krishnan@gmail.com) is a visiting associate fellow at the Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi, and a non-resident fellow, under the China India Scholar Leaders Initiative, at the India China Institute, the New School for Social Research, New York City.

NOTES

- 1 Original poem in Chinese edited by Qin Xiaoyu and published as a selected collection, titled *Xin de Yi Tian*, in 2015. English translation appears in *Iron Moon: An Anthology of Chinese Migrant Worker Poetry*, edited by Qin Xiaoyu and translated by Eleanor Goodman (2016), Buffalo: White Pine Press.
- 2 Propounded by Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856–1915), this philosophy breaks down the labour processes into minute components and forcing workers to maximise their intensity, thus emphasising on orderliness, cleanliness, standardisation and discipline. For more, see Taylor (1998).
- 3 "Marx Pays a Visit to Foxconn" (English translation of an illustrated piece circulated among electronics workers in the Pearl River Delta, in southern China), originally published in *WeiGongHui*, an independent platform of news and analysis by and for young migrant workers in southern China, 13 March 2018, accessed on 12 February 2021, <https://chuangcn.org/2018/03/marxconn>.

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