

# EDUDOC SERVICES: BOOK REVIEWS



## Book Reviews July 2019

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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 **July, 2019**.

**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.

**Chairperson, LDD**

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# Labour in the Indian Economy

JAYAN JOSE THOMAS

To anyone who has ever been associated with the annual conferences of the Indian Society of Labour Economics, this volume under review brings memories of two elegant persons who used to lighten up these gatherings with their wit, energy and wisdom. They are T S Papola and Preet Rustagi, whose brilliant careers had been cut short with their untimely deaths in 2015 and 2017 respectively. The volume under review is a collection of essays on labour in the Indian economy, compiled in honour of T S Papola, and Preet Rustagi is one of its three editors.

This collection of essays is indeed a tour de force, a good reference material for any scholar interested in labour issues in India. Running into 722 pages, there are 21 essays in this volume, in addition to an introductory article written by the editors, and three short pieces remembering the life and work of Papola.

An overriding theme of essays in this volume is that institutions matter more than market forces in determining how labour markets behave in a developing country like India. This implies that rural wages, for instance, are determined not merely by the interaction between supply of and demand for labour, as neoclassical economics would suggest. More important are a range of social, economic, and political factors, which we may collectively refer to as institutions. Institutions may have taken shape through social relations such as of caste and gender, state policies (minimum wage regulations, for example), or through workers' organisations. The importance of such institutions in influencing labour market outcomes had featured prominently in the vast body of research carried out by Papola starting from the 1960s.

In India, labour markets are deeply segmented along caste and gender lines. As Sukhadeo Thorat explains in one of the chapters in this volume, members of the

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Labour and Development: Essays in Honour of Professor T S Papola** edited by K P Kannan, Rajendra P Mangan and Preet Rustagi, New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2007; pp 722, ₹1,495 (hardcover).

Scheduled Castes (scs) or other oppressed groups are sometimes denied entry into certain occupations. There are frequent instances in which workers belonging to oppressed castes are discriminated against, being paid lower wages or made to work for long hours. Thus age-old social institutions continue to have a grip on the labour market despite the relatively fast growth of the Indian economy and modernisation of many of its segments. Therefore, as Gerry Rodgers rightly concludes, the country's labour market is characterised by both continuity and change.

Globally, economic changes that have occurred during the recent decades, set in motion by globalisation and neo-liberal economic policies, have favoured capital over labour. This was in contrast to the period between the 1950s and 1970s during which the Keynesian policies of stimulating domestic demand through increased government expenditures had helped the "golden age of capitalism" to thrive. The working classes had made real gains during that phase. On the other hand, from the 1980s onwards, the neo-liberal policy prescription of cutting government expenditures to a minimum has hurt the interests of the working poor. A chapter written by Rizwanul Islam for this volume shows how governments in developing countries, including India, have been unable to increase government expenditures to stimulate demand, even in the face of the 2008 global financial crisis. At the same time, Satyaki Roy's contribution to this volume points to the inability of present-day capitalism to absorb labour without dispossessing workers of their rights.

This, he argues, is the reason for the continuing expansion of the informal sector in developing countries.

In the Indian context, the chapter written by Ajit Ghose highlights some of the key features of economic growth after 1991: a decline in employment elasticity of economic growth and a fall in the quality of new jobs created. At the same time, Ghose points out that the decade of the 2000s (which ended in 2011–12) was one in which there had been a distinct improvement in the growth of employment opportunities as well as of labour productivity in the Indian economy.

### Understanding of Informal Work

A striking feature of India's labour market is the domineering share of the informal sector as a source of employment. Papola was one of the early contributors towards an understanding of the concept of informal work in a developing country context. According to estimates cited in the chapter by K P Kannan, more than 82% of employment in the Indian economy was in the informal sector, that is, in enterprises that employed less than 10 workers (as per data from Economic Census of 2005). A growing important phenomenon in India's labour market has been the rise in the numbers of informal workers—that is, workers who do not enjoy employment or social security—within the formal sector. In one of the chapters in this volume, Ravi Srivastava and Ajaya Kumar Naik document the above-referred process, using data from the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) on employment and unemployment, and focusing on workers without a written job contract or social security.

Emergence of strong linkages between the formal and informal sectors can benefit the economy as a whole, with informal sector enterprises growing as ancillaries to or in subcontracting relations with the formal sector. However, the relation between the formal and informal sectors has been rather weak in India, especially in the manufacturing sector, as shown in the chapter by Arup Mitra and Aviral Pandey.

Within the factory sector or organised manufacturing sector in India, there has been a rising share of contract workers or other informal workers, especially from the 2000s onwards. The chapter by Bishwanath Goldar and Suresh R, which analysed the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) data for 2010–11, shows that the increasing employment of contract workers in place of regular workers reduce plant productivity and tend to depress the wages and bargaining strength of directly employed workers.

While agriculture still accounts for close to 50% of the total employment in the country, there has also been a definite shift of the workforce away from agriculture, as shown by the NSS surveys held in 2009–10 and 2011–12. However, it is doubtful if the above-referred shift has been part of a progressive structural transformation of the economy (along the lines envisaged by Arthur Lewis). Almost half of all non-agricultural jobs generated in India during the period from 2004–05 to 2011–12 had been in construction, a relatively low wage sector. In his contribution to this volume, Ajit Kumar Singh shows how non-agricultural employment opportunities that emerged for rural workers in Uttar Pradesh was driven more by distress-related or “push” factors (as per a study conducted in 2012). Most of the workers were engaged in low-paid jobs in regions within or close to the village itself. A majority of rural non-agricultural workers were young, less-educated males, owning very little to no land. Biswajit Chatterjee and Aparajita Dhara write about the barriers faced by less-educated persons in finding regular employment in the context of West Bengal.

### Labour Market

A number of essays in this volume highlight the fact that a majority of workers in India earn very little for their work. A contribution by Partha Pratim Sahu points out that 50% of the self-employed in India form part of the working poor. The chapter by A V Jose analysed the growth of real agricultural wages across Indian states for the period from 1970–71 to 2010–11. Throughout the period of analysis, Haryana, Kerala, Himachal

Pradesh and Punjab were relatively high-wage states, while Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Chhattisgarh were relatively low-wage states. Jose finds that the growth of agricultural wages across states had been associated with improvement in labour productivity and the spread of expansion of commercial agriculture.

The analysis by Rajendra P Mangain using NSSO data finds evidence for caste- and gender-based segregation in occupations in India. Women and marginalised social groups, which include the scs, Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Muslims, find themselves in low-paid jobs—as agricultural or informal sector workers—in disproportionately large numbers. At the same time, Thorat explains how caste-based segmentation of the labour market amounts to a violation of the principle of individual choice and also creates inefficiencies in the allocation of resources. S Madheswaran writes about the need to implement legal safeguards to prevent discrimination against oppressed groups and to extend policies for affirmative action to the private sector.

The low rate of female labour force participation in India (and some other South Asian countries) has been the subject of much scholarly analysis. The contribution by Sher Verick and Ruchika Chaudhary to this volume highlights the importance of policy interventions both at the supply and demand side to tackle this challenge. The supply-side interventions include creating institutions for improving women's education and providing facilities such as childcare to ease the burden of domestic work. The chapters by Jayati Ghosh and Preet Rustagi in this volume highlight how society and the economy undervalue the work performed by women within their own households. Jayati Ghosh shows that if the official statistical agencies recognise cooking, childcare, and other activities performed by women within their own households as “work,” then work participation rate of women in India will be significantly higher than that of men. At the same time, there is no doubt that creating more employment opportunities in the economy will be crucial to boosting demand for women's work.

Neo-liberal economic policies have substantially weakened the associational power of labour, posing challenges to traditional forms of trade union movement, according to Praveen Jha, Swayamsiddha Panda and Satadru Sikdar.

These authors point to the importance of broadening the scope of workers' organisations by bringing in informal workers, the self-employed, domestic workers, and persons seeking employment into their fold. K R Shyam Sundar's contribution is on the question of how trade unions can measure up to the emerging challenges posed by a highly competitive economy. He argues that trade unions will appreciate steps taken by employers to increase productivity as long as workers are provided some degree of security.

### Investment in Labour

There is no doubt that the increase in the size of the working-age population offers a huge potential for India's future economic growth. However, as the chapter by Sheila Bhalla, Arun Kumar and Manoj Jatav show, realising the so-called “demographic dividend” requires investments in education and human development. These authors cite the work of Simon Kuznets in 1960, which pointed out that a large population could form the basis for a large market and a sizeable production base. In addition, an educated population can help in the creation of new knowledge. Clearly, India's policymakers need to invest more in its people.

It is clear that in a country like India studies on labour will remain central to any attempt to understand the economy. This volume contains some reminiscences by Yoginder K Alagh of his association with Papola from the 1960s onwards, and of their successful initiatives in setting up a few premier research institutions devoted to the study of labour. All in all, the volume under review is an excellent addition to the literature on the Indian economy. One only hopes that this collection of essays inspires a young generation of economists to take up research on questions of labour and employment growth in the Indian context.

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Educational institutions need to focus on critical enquiry, and for it to happen students need to feel free to ask questions about the world they inhabit. Systematic questioning is tied to reading the basic works in the area, and it leads to better insights. This is an argument against having to learn out-of-date knowledge or learning by rote. There is also a plea for encouraging well-equipped libraries, new thinking, creating conditions for having knowledgeable teachers and bilingual education, which uses both the language of socialisation and the language of knowledge. The author is rightly critical of the use of one language, and the transmission of knowledge through translations, because they do not keep pace with the production of knowledge, and the thoughtless game of numbers in education. This is intertwined with an interesting short history of the changing forms of the language of knowledge, from Prakrit and Sanskrit to Persian followed by English.

The dreams, efforts and hard work that went into the making of Jawaharlal Nehru University into a world-class institution that nurtured and helped to imbibe

some of the best practices, including, discussions, debates and new thinking have been beautifully woven into the thought-provoking essay. It is precisely because of its ideological antipathy to these ideas and values that the present regime is out to destroy this seat of higher learning along with some such institutions through the country. Universities are sites of nurturing the incorporative spirit of our cultural inheritances, and centres where multiple competing ideas should be allowed to bloom.

We are cautioned against the idea of the singularity of culture, usually linked to cultural nationalist claims of invented identity for political reasons. Nationalism is always inclusive of several cultures and all identities do not have to be subordinated to the national identity, or the identity of the majority. The idea is to make the reader aware of the many cultures in Indian society. Cultures are intertwined with history and are dynamic and vibrant. Migrations and interface of cultures and the consequent mutual borrowings and incorporations, we are told, need recognition. Interestingly, the legend

in the Ghaznavid coins was bilingual in Arabic and Sanskrit, and the Ghurid coins carry Islamic titles and Shiva's bull Nandi, while some of them carried the ruler's name in Sanskrit. Furthermore, the Qutub Minar complex bears inscriptions suggesting its repair when necessary by Hindu craftsmen, as well as the attribution of the success of the renovation to their deity Vishvakarma. Significantly, it reinforces the larger point that the coming of the sultanate did not constitute a break in all important areas and practices, notwithstanding the usual shibboleths.

All those interested in the cultural and social history of premodern India and its bearing on contemporary times, as well as what ails India's present education system, and why our young minds usually do not ask the necessary and relevant questions, leave alone find appropriate answers for them, will find this work by Thapar, as always, intellectually stimulating and extremely useful.

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## Making Economics More Accessible

RAHUL DE

The Indian economy has been one of the fastest-growing economies in the last 15 years and has become an important standard by which to compare the development of other national economies. The successful transition to a high-growth economy has been discussed regularly in the mass media and used as a platform for election campaigns by political parties. However, this coverage has rarely focused on the structural imbalances in India's growth model such as increasing inequality, agrarian distress and lack of social security for informal workers. While governments have been celebrating their achievements in bringing growth, urban development, global products and modern jobs, few have focused on the social and ecological consequences of these changes. *Economics*

**Economics of Real-Life: A New Exposition** by C T Kurien, New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2018; pp 249, ₹995 (hardcover).

*of Real-Life* by C T Kurien comes at an important junction, where more people need to be informed about the economy's structure and the consequences of the high-growth model being followed in India.

### Economics for Daily Life

Kurien claims in his author's notes that the main motivation to write this book was to inform the lay public about the economy. This requires not only more information about the Indian economy but also communicating the theoretical tools and conceptual foundation to make sense of development and policy. This

book's ambition extends beyond the one stated by the author, to introducing readers to a different framing of economic theory. The author states that he wants to shift the emphasis of economics from a set of models and normative evaluations about markets and individuals, into a more complicated picture that conceptualises the economy as a "network of interactions of a variety of agents which are undergoing transformations over time" (p 11). The author wants to include the role of uncertainty, dynamic interactions, historical context, international relations, power structures and social relationship to understand the economy and its current condition. In doing so, he challenges the traditional "neo-classical" ontological premise of studying economics through economic variables and mathematical models. Instead, he presents a conceptualisation of economics which is embedded in day-to-day life. He states that this book is concerned with "human beings ... like you and me whom we confront in daily life" (p 15). The primary

purpose of the book is to de-intellectualise economics, make it more accessible to a non-informed audience, and provide incentives for more people to engage and understand economic policies. He states rather bluntly that the few textbooks that exist, written by Indian authors, tend to be eclectic compilations of themes. There is a dearth of critical voices pointing out the limitations of mainstream economic theory to understand real-life economic issues.

### Dynamic and Complex Economy

Kurien articulates the mandate of economics as understanding livelihoods. He starts the book by asking fundamental questions, such as how do people decide what to produce and how is the produce distributed? One of the larger imperatives of Kurien's book is to understand how economics can shape our understanding of our own lives and answer difficult social questions that we face daily, such as: why are some people rich and others poor? In order to weave in an understanding of economics in "real-life" he uses day-to-day examples throughout the book. In the first chapter, the author introduces the concept of division of labour by discussing the division of labour through which idlis are produced, which includes the role of rice traders, millers, shopkeepers, cooks and vessel producers. This is a first of many examples through which he embeds economic theories into examples from daily life.

The other interesting strategy that Kurien uses, is to explain a simple economic system and add complexity over the course of the book. The first chapter begins with the concept of a barter exchange economy, which is used to explain how production is organised through division of labour and exchange. Through the first few chapters, the author introduces the institutions that shape production and exchange relations such as markets, money, merchants, competition and prices. Kurien does not take the traditional route of explaining markets through normative models that conceptualise the interaction of economic agents in the market through maximisation and equilibrium techniques. Instead, he theorises the role of economic institutions

such as markets, firms and government in shaping the interactions and decisions of individual households. The strategic move to make the household the fundamental unit of the economy and not individuals, takes into account how social relationships are shaped by power dynamics. The running theme through the units is to conceptualise the economy within a capitalist framework and understand the structure and challenges embedded within this system.

The book is divided into three parts: the first part introduces readers to the basic tools, concepts and theories of economics. The focus of Part 1 is to concentrate on fundamental economic activities like production and consumption. This unit frames the major economic interactions within the economy as interactions between households with different resources and constraints interacting within an economic system, whose rules are shaped by certain key institutions like markets, banks, and the state. Part 2 uses the toolbox introduced in Part 1 and examples from history to create a profile of the economy as a complex entity, which is influenced by aggregate human behaviour. This unit provides the macro-context that shapes complex interactions of households. It embeds the economy within the international economy where nations are competing with each other to develop and grow. Development is explained as the process of increasing the national income and transforming the economy into an industrial, capitalistic system. It also accounts for the unequal power structure in interactions between developed and developing countries, and the role of transnational corporations and international development institutions in shaping these unequal relationships. Part 3 of the book applies the conceptual structure of the economy and the macro-economic context within which it is embedded, to understand the evolution and development of the Indian economy since independence.

This narrative traces the shift of Indian policymaking from a planning-based economy to a market-oriented one. It focuses on the main challenges and constraints faced by policymakers and explains some of the contemporary structural imbalances

in the Indian economy, which include the failure to generate sustainable livelihood options for the vast majority of the population, the stagnation of the agricultural sector, growing inequality and distance between the rich and poor, and environmental degradation. Kurien ends the book by criticising the current finance dominated form of capitalism and provides historical alternatives for the development of an economy. He also lists social movements within India that can be used as a model for developing a different kind of economy. These include the formation of co-operatives and the importance of better governance structures in villages.

The sheer breadth of topics covered—economic theory, economic history, commentary on the contemporary economy and potential alternative development models—makes this book a must-read for those who follow the economy and policy through the media regularly. This book is conceptualised to be interesting for lay audiences, and simple relatable examples which Indians are exposed to, are used throughout the book. Moreover, the book is structured to assist the reader in learning the tools and concepts that are deployed in it. It provides thought experiments, economic puzzles and probing tools to create an investigative outlook within the reader. Lastly, the book summarises the main learnings at the end of the chapter, which ensures that the reader does not get lost or overwhelmed with the book. However, this book is not an easy read, even though it has been conceptualised and structured to be accessible to lay readers. The chapters, especially the initial ones, have to be understood in order for the reader to progress through the book. For readers without a background in economics, this requires a degree of persistence and patience. The latter chapters, especially the historical discussions and commentary on the contemporary economy, are easier to read as the narratives are less conceptual and more informative. Readers who do not have the time to invest in the book, can be well-served by reading the latter parts directly, as the first and third units are not strongly linked.

The book would have benefited from more data which is easily available in

the public domain. The Indian economy story can be articulated through macro-economic data. Moreover, the impact of finance institutions and multinational corporations (MNCs) can be evaluated by looking at the balance of payments data on imports/exports and foreign investments. This could have been a good opportunity to educate the reader about understanding data and evaluating arguments based on the data.

### Imbalanced Forms of Capitalism

In undertaking such an ambitious enterprise, the book does reflect conceptual simplicities and biases of the author. While this should not be held against the merit of the book, an understanding of this will assist the informed reader in their evaluation. The main argument made is that the contemporary form of capitalism in the Indian economy, introduced in the 1990s through liberalisation policies, favours financial institutions and MNCs. Moreover, these policies are shaped by the global forces of capitalism such as Western developed nations, MNCs, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. There is an undeniable reality to this account, but it fails to shed light on the specificities of the process of liberalisation of India and gives the sense that these policies were imposed upon India from outside. It has been argued cogently that there were interest groups within India which were shaping politics from the time of independence (Chibber 2003; Frankel 2004) to ensure policies that meet the demands of economic elites and private corporations. It also fails to capture the regional specificities of the development process in India and how colonialism had shaped a regionally imbalanced system. Economic outcomes are a function of both the colonial policies and the various asymmetrical social structures that are prevalent in different regions in India. The reasons for the economic prosperity of metropolitan cities and states such as Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu are different from the economic stagnation and distress faced by farmers and landless peasants in the northern states of India.

The book fails to capture the complicated social dynamic of the Indian society

where caste, gender and race shape economic disparities. Further, it does not mention two important institutions that distinguish capitalism in contemporary India from other countries, which are: the strong influence of the central state in shaping the economy and, second, the persistence of the informal sector as the driving force of the economy.

The author provides an immanent representation of capitalism as an overpowering force driven by unequal international relations, which serves the needs of finance and predatory MNCs. However, this image is closer to the American form of capitalism. Other forms of capitalism such as the social democratic capitalism found in Scandinavian countries and Germany or the more state-controlled forms of capitalism in China also shape global economic forces. The major implications of this is that while the author criticises the damaging elements of the American capitalism, he does not critique the more general problems and

tendencies of capitalism; these are summarised in Marxian literature as asymmetric power of those who own the means of production, the tendency of economic and political power to be concentrated in few hands, and the tendency of the economy to crash at regular intervals.

Overall, *Economics of Real-Life* is a significant contribution in making economics more accessible, and creating an informed audience who can evaluate economic claims made by the mass media and political parties. This is particularly important in the current political landscape in India where the future of the economy is being created, shaped and contested.

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NEW

### EPWRF India Time Series ([www.epwrfits.in](http://www.epwrfits.in))

#### Wage Rates in Rural India

The EPW Research Foundation has added a module on Wage Rates in Rural India to its online database, EPWRF India Time Series (EPWRFITS).

This module provides average daily wage rates, month-wise, in rupees, for various agricultural and non-agricultural occupations in Rural India for 20 states starting from July 1998 (also available, data for agricultural year July 1995-June 1996). Additionally, it presents quarterly and annual series (calendar year, financial year and agricultural year), derived as averages of the monthly data.

The wage rates for agricultural occupations are provided for ploughing/tilling, sowing, harvesting, winnowing, threshing, picking, horticulture, fishing (inland, coastal/deep-sea), logging and wood cutting, animal husbandry, packaging (agriculture), general agricultural segment and plant protection.

The non-agricultural occupation segment presents wage rates for carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, weavers, beedi makers, bamboo/cane basket weavers, handicraft workers, plumbers, electricians, construction workers, LMV and tractor drivers, porters, loaders, and sweeping/cleaning workers.

The data have been sourced from *Wage Rates in Rural India*, regularly published by the Labour Bureau, Shimla (Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India).

With this addition, the EPWRFITS now has 18 modules covering both economic (real and financial sectors) and social sectors.

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## Book Reviews

✓ Smita Sahgal, *Niyoga Alternative Mechanism to Lineage Perpetuation in Early India A Socio-Historical Enquiry*, Delhi: Primus Books, 2017, 242 pages, Rs 995

Submission has been held to be an appropriate virtue of women. It was supposed that a woman submits to fate while man makes it. The subject of this book justifies this appropriately. *Niyoga* defined the destiny of a woman's life in case of the death/absence/impotency of her husband. As per this measure, she was supposed to co-habit temporarily with her brother-in-law/ designated man in order to produce a son, who would be regarded as the progeny of her husband.

In locating *Niyoga*, a judicious analysis of texts (normative and narrative) across an expansive time-frame sprawling from the Vedic times till the present has been undertaken. The Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jaina texts analyzed in this study help us to know that all these religions acknowledged *Niyoga* as a mechanism of lineage perpetuation. One needs to credit the author, for analyzing this institution from various perspectives of gender, caste, class and also comprehending it through the notions of sexuality, masculinity and feminism. *Niyoga* was an emergency measure and involved several key players namely, *kshetrin* (husband), *kshetra* (wife), *bijin* (official inseminator), and *kshetraja* (the son born out of this union) clubbed together in this uncomfortable arrangement. Above all, the lawmakers who not only crafted this practice, and laid down its norms but also accepted and rejected it as per the changing milieu.

This practice is understood in the backdrop of a chronological framework. In every chapter, a detailed historical background is inserted which fleshes out the political, social and economic aspects of each period. This would help even the people from the non-history background to understand the connotations attached with this institution in an easy way. The introductory notes may appear very lengthy, but for the historian it is very important to study the text in a context. Against this background, the understanding of *Niyoga* is preceded by the author.

The book engages with the reasons behind pursuing this alternative strategy of heirship and how it impacted the present and future of every single player involved in it. A practice deeply embedded in the patriarchal structure, the genesis behind its creation was purely based on an obsessive

desire for birth of a son. The sons have also been valued as they alone are the bedrocks on which your lineage, religious rites and inheritance lay. Consequently, the daughters born out of *Niyoga* were considered unworthy, and this arrangement was to continue till two or three sons were produced.

It is significant to note that all key players of *Niyoga* are males and the category which bears the brunt of exploitation was the sole woman. This arrangement forced women in an uncomfortable relationship which was duly sanctioned by their elders. If not so, then the same set-up was considered sinful by the lawmakers. The book substantiates many verses from the texts which bring alive how abusive this practice could have been in actuality. There is no element of surprise the women hardly exercised any individual choices in choosing their inseminators. Often, the elements of retaliation by women remain unheard. However, author brings to our notice subtle reactions and expressions of disgust towards the men they were forced to cohabit with. But women had little choice to enter or reject *Niyoga*. This practice was clearly an attempt to exercise control over women's sexuality and also confine it to the borders of the family wherein potential sexual partners could be sought.

This book also highlights how *Niyoga* was for the women both an exploitative practice and also a welfare measure. It gave women a fresh lease of married life for a limited period. On the contrary, the life of widows was extremely difficult involving celibacy, no ornamentation etc. while *Niyoga* not only allowed them enjoyment of sexual life but also ensured motherhood and social status. Most importantly, it reintegrated women in the family immediately. However, women had no choice to choose either i.e. widowhood or *Niyoga*. It was always a path dictated to them by others. In fact, later this practice came to be entangled with the issue of widow remarriage and *sati*. But here also, the fate of woman was sealed by others.

The monograph also emphasises how this institution affected women's sexuality. *Niyoga* was considered as a sort of a freedom granted to women as they were able to enjoy multiple sexual partners through this arrangement. This so called freedom was strictly under the directives of the elders. Consequently, this issue of multiple sexualities was not well digested by writers of texts of early medieval period and medieval period who disdained it in favour of monogamy and chastity.

The book also discusses about men and masculinity. In fact, the framework of masculinity crafted by the author is indeed a pioneering intervention. This aspect is significant as there are three men involved in this institution namely, the *ksetrin* (husband), *bijin* (official inseminator), and *kshetraja* (the son born out of this union). For the impotent husband, seeking refuge in *Niyoga* was also an open acknowledgement of one's impotency. This invited a dent on his social prestige and loss of inheritance rights. Further, after death, an impotent man can never aspire to enter the heaven. Consequently, the men actually persuade their wives to enter

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*Niyoga* and the book mentions several such conversations carefully chosen from the texts. The author brings a very important point that on one hand, man's incomplete masculinity is vocalised through this institution; and on the other hand, it actually gets repaired.

The *bijin/niyogin* also had to make several alterations. From facing reluctance of the woman he is supposed to cohabit with to developing sexual relationship which was clearly prohibited in presence of his brother. The *niyogin* if he was a brother-in-law also had to readjust with his wife and sister-in-law. There would have been tensions between *kcetrin* and *niyogin* which could have emerged out of his suspicion of the wife becoming close to the *bijin/niyogin*. Also, the progeny born would not carry his name. Finally, this institution decided the fate of the *kshetraja* (son) born out of this union. This son fulfilled the task of continuing the lineage but also became a claimant in both his biological and legal father's property. The author discusses at length the position of *kshetraja* vis-à-vis *aurasha* (natural son); *dattaka* (adopted son); *paunarbhava* (son of a widow) etc. as represented in various texts. The *aurasha* was always given preference over *kshetraja*. Thus, this important key player for whom this entire institution was established had the emotional and legal attributes attached to him.

One tends to forget the feelings of individuals in institutions. However, author draws our attention to that also and emphasises how the normative texts instruct the process to be detached or clinical *Niyoga* seemed to be the best solution for lineage perpetuation worked out within the family itself. However, it also invited tensions to deal with varied motions within this close familial unit i.e. a readjustment required between sister-in-law, brother-in-law and his wife. For instance, a sensitive relationship existed between the brother-in-law and sister-in-law. Without the consent of the elders, if brother-in-law had intercourse with sister-in-law it was considered a sinful. There lay an inherent contradiction as the lawmakers who forbid it on one hand, legitimise it on the other hand. This implied treating brother-in-law as a brother and later as a prospective husband. So this is the paradox of the situation underlying the complexity of the problem they would have faced with this set-up. After birth of son, the two are supposed to be in a relationship of guru and daughter-in-law and have no lust towards each other (*Manusmriti*). Also, another pertinent issue to deal was development of sincere feelings towards their sexual partners. Apart from bringing out these sentiments well, it would have been very interesting to also explore the emotional aspect of the *kshetraja* towards his legal and biological father.

The author also provides us with an exhaustive analysis of the texts ranging from Vedic period to the present in order to understand how this practice saw many deviations. A large number of statements have been made, in textual traditions, which are often conflicting and contradictory. This book also includes interesting extracts from texts which help us to

understand the origin, growth, acceptance and rejection of this practice over this long time span. The author has been careful in demarcating where the allusions of this practice are noticeable and where the term actually appears.

Another interesting angle from which *Niyoga* is analysed is within the context of *varna* and caste. Manu prohibited this practice for the *dvija* or twice born. But several verses in the texts echo that *brahmanas* were the best to produce a lineage. Even the designated inseminators for *kcatriya* wives were *brahmanas* only. Thus, in *Niyoga-brahmanas* secure the best position for themselves, and there is no element of surprise here, as they were the authors framing the narrative. The texts also reiterate that the men of lower caste could never become *bijins* for upper caste. Later modern day reformers like Dayanand Saraswati upheld the view that a woman should enter this arrangement with men of his class or higher class i.e. *vaishya* with a *brahmana*, *kshatriya* or *vaishya* as instructed in the Veda. Thus, this practice was well cast in the *varna* order. The author also brings forth a very interesting angle about the divine and mortal arrangement of *Niyoga*, with regard to Kunti. Kunti mentions how progeny with a *brahmana* would take considerable time, in comparison to gods. This could indicate on Kunti's refusal to have sexual relations with other men, and consequently she chooses gods over mortals. Another interesting notion brought to light by the author is the concept of reverse *niyogin* i.e. instead of the wife cohabiting with an appointed man to reproduce it was the sonless man who cohabited with wife of another man to produce a son.

The book also traces the journey of *Niyoga* and its continued presence in many social groups with modified versions such as *sagai* and *devarani suttoputti*. This practice in contemporary times became caste, community and region specific. However, this investigation is based purely on an empirical analysis of collective references. The author also draws parallels with evidence of levirate in other societies, tribes and regions of the world. She also mentions the common characteristics linking *Niyoga* with other levirate practices and highlights how the reasons and fruits were nearly the same with minor differences peculiar to each culture. Finally, author also traces occurrence of this institution in any other sources, namely the inscriptions. However, the results do not prove to be fruitful in this attempt. It could have been a conscious attempt to confine this institution in textual vocabulary alone. Lastly, a careful editing would have eliminated mistakes in diacritics and typo errors.

Many institutions have developed but collapsed because of insufficient resilience, inadequate flexibility to cope with subtle changes that they are faced at that time. Even today, the couples without children seek refuge in artificial insemination. Words like *Niyoga* may disappear from our vocabulary, but allusions to this practice continue to exist and this book substantiates that well. In fact, this book was written owing to a lack of comprehensive work on

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this institution. Now, any further research on *Niyoga* would not be possible without referring this all-inclusive and wide-ranging monograph.

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✓ S. Irfan Habib (ed.), *Inquilab: Bhagat Singh on Religion and Revolution*, Delhi: Yoda Press, 2018, 192 pages, Rs 295

S. Irfan Habib has spent a major part of his academic life in documenting the 1920s and 30s decades when the revolutionary struggle was at its peak and revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru, Chandrashekhar Azad, Jatin Das, Batukeshwar Dutt and Bhagwati Charan Vohra were politically most active. While in his works he has discussed in detail the years of the revolutionary struggle and the role that these and other Indian revolutionaries played, it is Bhagat Singh that has caught Habib's special attention.

The colonial government went out of its way to portray Bhagat Singh and his comrades as mere terrorists who believed in the cult of violence. The incumbent regime made sure that no other aspect of the revolutionaries' lives got highlighted. To an extent they succeeded in their endeavour. In contemporary consciousness Bhagat Singh, for instance, is looked upon as someone who through his courageous and violent endeavours was able to pose a threat to the colonial state. It is also this aspect of his life that has made him an icon among the masses. As a matter of fact if there is any leader of the national movement after Gandhiji who has earned immense respect and evoked boundless awe among the masses in not just India but across South Asia it is Bhagat Singh.

Significantly, there is only a small section of the population that has made attempts to visualise Bhagat Singh not just as a martyr but also as an ideologue. It is this aspect of the freedom fighter that S. Irfan Habib has tried to bring to fore in the present monograph.

*Inquilab: Bhagat Singh on Religion and Revolution* is an edited book which contains thirteen articles which were written by Bhagat Singh at different junctures of time. In the thirteen articles Bhagat Singh has dealt with a range of issues pertaining to universal brotherhood, religion and its role in the freedom struggle, communalism and communal riots, untouchability, relationship between students and politics and violence and its meaning.

One of the earliest articles that Bhagat Singh wrote which is included in this monograph is 'Universal Brotherhood'. Written in 1924 at the

tender age of 17 years the essay deals in detail with the idea of universal brotherhood. That Bhagat Singh wrote on such a complex issue and was able to articulate quite maturely his thoughts on this concept at such a young age is remarkable, to say the least. This article when it was first published in two parts on 15 and 22 November in *Matwala*, a Hindi magazine which was published from Calcutta, did not carry Bhagat Singh's name. Instead it mentioned Balwant Singh as the author. Balwant Singh was one of the many pseudonyms that Bhagat Singh used in his writings in order to escape the colonial state's surveillance. Many of the core ideas of this essay, Habib notes in the lucidly written Introduction, got institutionalised when Naujawan Bharat Sabha was founded by Singh in Lahore in 1926.

The formation of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha was an important political development. Formed a year after the founding of Communist Party of India in 1925 the Sabha provided an excellent 'platform for the otherwise secret group of revolutionaries' (p. xv). At a time when the right-wing communal organisations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, which too was founded in 1925, were going out of their way to further the colonial state's political agenda by polarising people on the basis of their religious identities and creating communal disturbances, an organisation like the Naujawan Bharat Sabha left no stone unturned to scuttle such vicious political agendas. Bhagat Singh and other members of the Sabha made sure that those who became part of this organisation placed the interest of the country above their community. People who practiced petty politics based on religious identities were discouraged to be Sabhaite.

There are two articles in this collection that catches the reader's eyes. These are namely, 'Varied Views of the New Political Leaders' and 'Lala Lajpat Rai and the Youth'. Both the articles were published in *Kirti*, the newspaper that was started by Sohan Singh Josh, leader of the Kirti Kisan Party. In 'Varied Views of the New Political Leaders' Singh tries to analyse political views of Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose. The emergence of these two political personalities on the national scene in the 1920s was seen by the masses as a redeeming feature. While both of them were, according to Singh, quite popular, especially among the youth, they differed radically from each other as far their worldviews were concerned. Citing from a meeting which took place in Bombay sometime in the 1920s which was addressed by Nehru as well as Bose, Bhagat Singh writes that while Bose in his speech turned out to be an emotional Bengali, Nehru's speech had a revolutionary approach. Singh disagreed with many of Bose's views which, according to him, were fodder only for the heart and not for the head. Moreover, he is incapable of providing any food for thought to the people of the country. He concludes the essay by arguing that if the people of Punjab, especially its youth, want to realise the true meaning of *Inquilab* they should follow Nehru's more practical and revolutionary approach rather than Bose's emotional approach.

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Interestingly, while Bhagat Singh respected Jawaharlal Nehru's revolutionary approach the latter too, notwithstanding Gandhiji's public censure of Bhagat Singh and his comrades on more than one occasion, had praised Bhagat Singh and his outlook on several public platforms. And following his martyrdom Nehru had stated that Bhagat Singh 'was a young boy full of burning zeal for the country. He was like a spark which became a flame in a short time and spread from one end of the country to the other, dispelling the prevailing darkness everywhere'.

In 'Lala Lajpat Rai and the Youth' Bhagat Singh critically examines Lala Lajpat Rai's political understanding. Singh begins by saying that even though Rai in the early years of his political career, having been influenced by the actions of Giuseppe Mazzini, the Italian revolutionary who played an important part in the Italian Unification movement, was quite appreciative of the youth and had encouraged them to take active part in the national movement, he had drastically altered his political views from the 1920s. This was the period in which he had grown close to the Hindu Mahasabha. He was no longer appreciative of the youth and their political outlook. On the contrary he had become quite critical of their political activism. Rai had even gone to the extent of criticising the Bolshevik Revolution. Launching a scathing attack on Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhagat Singh notes that he was nothing more than an armchair politician who was cut off from the ground realities. This and the fact that he had joined hands with the right wing communal forces had led Rai, the essay notes, to make such unfounded statements about revolutionaries and their ideology. Bhagat Singh concludes his piece by stating that the youth should not be demoralised by such statements made by leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai. Leaders like Rai and his predecessors like Surendra Nath Banerjee and Tej Bahadur Sapru will, according to Singh, get marginalised as they have compromised with the right wing capitalist forces and in the end it will be the revolutionary movement which will triumph.

It may be noted that, even though Bhagat Singh was extremely critical of Lala Lajpat Rai's politics it did not mean that he disrespected him. Singh and his comrades had utmost respect for Lala Lajpat Rai. He was regarded by almost all the revolutionaries as one of the greatest leaders of the national movement. As a matter of fact it was this sense of regard that led Bhagat Singh and his comrades to avenge Rai's untimely death which in turn led to their own martyrdom. Interestingly, Bhagat Singh's widely known piece 'Why I am an Atheist' was also first published in *The People* - the English newspaper which was funded by Lala Lajpat Rai.

The thirteen essays also include such important political and philosophical tracts as 'Manifesto of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha' which was co-drafted by him and Bhagwati Charan Vohra in 1928 and 'Why I am an Atheist' that Singh wrote during his stay in the Lahore Central Jail in 1930. The 'Manifesto' was presented at a conference of the Sabha which took place in Lahore between 11 and 13 April 1928.

The Manifesto presented Naujawan Bharat Sabha with a framework within which it was expected to function. Apart from various other issues it also laid stress on the fact that religious superstitions and bigotry should at all costs be done away with. The two, according to the manifesto, were the biggest obstacles in the country's growth.

Written over a period of two days, 5 and 6 October, 'Why I am an Atheist' is a long essay that Bhagat Singh wrote as a reply to one of his co-prisoner Randhir Singh's (who subsequently founded the Akhand Kirtani Jatha) accusation that since he had earned so much fame he had become egoistic and his disbelief in god was born out of this sense of vanity. Significantly, while he does at the outset accept the fact that vanity did form a part of his personality. However, his disbelief in god was not due to his vanity but was a result of his close reading on this issue. The article underlined the fact that blind faith and reason cannot go hand in hand. While the former should be rebutted the latter should be zealously defended. Towards the end he says that since revolutionaries have well-formed ideologies which are based on reason rather than blind faith ideologies which are governed by religion are of hardly any use to them.

In addition to the articles the book also includes the text of the two statements which were written and submitted by Bhagat Singh and his comrades to the courts. While the first of the two statements included here was submitted to the Sessions Court on 6 June, 1929 – a couple of months after Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt had thrown bombs in the Central Legislative Assembly, Delhi – and was read by their lawyer Asaf Ali, the second statement was filed in the Lahore High Court on 13 January, 1930. The drafts of both these statements were framed by Bhagat Singh himself. The two statements throw light on the idea of *Inquilab* or revolution as it was conceived by Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. A close reading of these statements shows that for Bhagat Singh and his comrades it was not merely a political revolution that they were fighting for. For them it was also social revolution which was important as that would end age old practices of discrimination. Significantly, if it had not been for the active role that Naujawan Bharat Sabha played in popularising these statements among the masses by distributing them in pamphlets forms and sending them to some of the leading newspapers of the period these statements would have been lost forever.

In addition to the articles and court statements Habib has also included in this book a letter that Bhagat Singh wrote to his comrade Sukhdev during their stint in jail. The letter was written in reply to Sukhdev's letter which unfortunately has got lost. Sukhdev was feeling quite demoralised with the way political developments were taking shape and was, therefore, contemplating suicide in order to escape this feeling. Bhagat Singh wrote his reply in the days following Jatin Das's death on 13 September 1929. In the letter Bhagat Singh completely abhors such a thought and even admonishes

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This collection of brief introductory document on 'Notebook' was a magazine in document's form in 1977-78. Su Archives as

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S. Irfan Habib thus an exhaustive present monograph. At a time when political class will help not just

Sukhdev for thinking on such lines. Suicide for Bhagat Singh was a cowardly act. Significantly, in their days of activism even Sukhdev abhorred the idea of suicide but he, as the letter says, changed completely during his days in the prison. Singh was of the opinion that one should be ready to facing consequences for his actions. In fact it would not be too off the mark to suggest that in this letter Bhagat Singh emerges as a true *satyagrahi* – one who was ready to face consequences for his actions without any fear. Indeed his thinking had matured immensely during his stay in jail.

This collection also includes excerpts from his 'Jail Notebook'. In his brief introduction to this section Habib tells us how this important historical document came into public domain. Though the earliest reference to 'Jail Notebook' was made in an article written by G. Deol in the *People's Path*, a magazine, in 1968, it was Habib who was the first historian to use this document's transcripts in his research work that he did on Bhagat Singh in 1977-78. Subsequently, its copies were also acquired by the National Archives as well as the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

Glancing through the 'Jail Notebook' one realises that his political outlook had matured immensely during his incarceration days. Very early in his life Bhagat Singh had inculcated the habit of reading. All his comrades agreed that he was a voracious reader. In fact Shiv Verma, a close colleague of Singh once stated that he was informed by librarian of the Dwarkadas Library, Rajaram Sastri, that Bhagat Singh did not just read books but devoured them. It is also known that during the days when Hindustan Socialist Republican Association's central office was located in Agra Bhagat Singh had built for himself a library of more than a hundred books. The books that he was reading during his prison days pertained to diverse areas including politics, philosophy, economics, history, literature, science and et al. Bukharin, William Wordsworth, Vladimir I. Lenin, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Bertrand Russell Upton Sinclair, Rabindranath Tagore, Trotsky, Tennyson and Spinoza were just few of the authors whose works he was reading regularly.

The books that he was reading were not easy to obtain in jail. In this regard the role of owners of the bookshop Ramakrishna and Sons as well as Rajaram Sastri, the librarian at the Dwarkadas Library – both in Lahore – was crucial. They ensured that the books that Bhagat Singh wanted to read were obtained and sent to him on time. Also crucial was the role that one of Bhagat Singh's childhood friend's Jaidev Gupta played in physically taking many of the books to the prison.

S. Irfan Habib's *Inquilab: Bhagat Singh on Religion and Revolution* is thus an exhaustive collection of Bhagat Singh's writings. I believe that the present monograph is an important contribution to Bhagat Singh studies. At a time when Bhagat Singh's ideals stand challenged and a section of the political class is trying to appropriate his legacy, albeit wrongly, Habib's book will help not just experts but also non-experts realise the rich intellectual

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legacy of this great revolutionary. It will go a long way in establishing the fact that Bhagat Singh was a mature and a serious revolutionary and not a mere wayward gun-wielding nationalist.

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Sushil Kumar, *Liberal Humanism and the Non-Western Other*, Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, xv+340 pages, Rs 695

This book, written by a senior Professor (now retired) at the School of International Studies of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, during the tenure of his Fellowship at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, is a work of immense scholarship, which advances the author's own world-view in no uncertain terms. And this world view is as original as it is ambitious. One may have disagreements with it, as I do, but there is no denying the sheer courage and extraordinary effort involved in putting it forward.

The idea that the Enlightenment project in Europe was harnessed by the emerging capitalism of the period to provide a justification for imperialism, for annexing and subjugating distant lands, has been advanced by many, and forms the starting point of the book. The Enlightenment's very definition of 'rationality' was meant to legitimise this aggrandizement by metropolitan capitalism, which converted *nature* into a *resource*. It recognised only one unique concept of 'rationality', namely the one underlying capitalism, and universalised it and spread it to non-Western societies that had hitherto been devoid of it; and this provided an alleged rationale for imperialism.

Some authors have talked of an Alternative Enlightenment that challenged even at that very time this hegemonic discourse inaugurated by the Enlightenment, but the author does not enter into that discussion. His concern is quite different: after independence from colonial rule, many of the former colonies and semi-colonies, for the sake of 'modernisation', adopted the same world view that the Enlightenment had, and on that basis sought to impose upon their societies the same perception of what was good for them. They sought to fashion their own societies in the manner of Western Europe, and adopted for this purpose a 'top-down' model of social engineering.

They accepted the universal validity of the European 'model', and imitated the European way of organising the polity and society as the only way of achieving 'modernisation'. European-style 'democracy' and European-style 'secularism' were implanted into their own countries. Their

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The Bullet Train And Other Loaded Poems | Hawakal | 64 pages | Rs 250

**ON THE BACKS**



## DeMo And Lost Loves

Bitter irony unites with savage sarcasm in poems to pin down the truths we live with

BY ANNA SUJATHA MATHAI

**R**AVI Shankar is a Malayali poet and translator who lives in Palakkad in Kerala. In his first book of poems, *Architecture of Flesh*, he articulated the semantics of violence—political, patriarchal and communal. The intensity of his concern perfectly matches the sharpness of his images, and is now matched by *The Bullet Train*, which also reveals a talent for scathing satire. Tellingly dedicated to Rohith Vemula, the writer uses “black humour, stabbing sarcasm, and mischievous word-play” as K. Satchidanandan, Malayalam’s towering man of letters, says in his foreword.

Writing of Asifa, the child who was tortured, raped and killed in Kathua, RaSh plays on the name *As if A*, to show how even such a hideous and cruel happening can be talked out of existence. As if it had never been. The funniest poem in the book, *The Anthem*, has a black man sitting next to an old man with a white beard in a theatre, asking him: “Who da fuck’re you, man?” The saintly man replies, “I’m Tagore. Who art Thou?” The black man said, “I’m Bob Marley. And I never stand up for anything but my rights.”

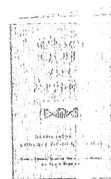
RaSh’s range and themes are eclectic. In *A Modest Proposal*, there is Jonathan Swift. The misogynist, deadly satirist makes an outrageous

In *How To Lynch A Man*, the unsparing RaSh suggests choosing someone alone, poor, starving, low caste or Muslim. And next, you need a proper slogan.

suggestion to the Irish people about what to do with their children, to deal with the famine Ireland was facing. This is soon followed by *How to Lynch a Man*. RaSh suggests choosing someone alone, poor, starving, low caste or Muslim. Next, you need a slogan: ‘Har Har Mahadev’, ‘Jai Bajrang Bali ki’, or ‘Bharat chhodo’. The actual killing is described in such an unsparing way, it draws you in squirming, appalled, participating in the gruesome act. *Love in the Time of Demonetisation* tells a good, lascivious tale of (an imaginary) meeting in one of the endless queues, spoilt in the end by the lovers having to rush off to different banks to collect cash.

Some poems, like *Sweet Porn Soup*, have a touch of, well, porn, verging on the sexually explicit. In another poem, Shankar is ‘a Darya Ganj Messiah’: “I am now in a high security press/ (Where new 2,000 rupee notes are getting printed)/with a secret mission to interpolate Gol-walker into Ambedkar.” In another typically hard-hitting ditty, *An Appeal to the Great Teacher*, the satire dwells on graphic torture of the third-degree kind: “You can teach me/How to hammer nails into a victim’s palms/How to drive a pile into a woman’s anus/Compose music from the screams of the helpless... But never, never, never never teach me/How to love.”

In the title poem of the collection, the famed bullet train itself becomes a symbol; it is the dream of the powerful. But we must recognise that there is another ‘Make in India’ model “that passes through stations with strange names like Kalburgi South, Pansare West and Dabholkar Central...” In this collection, satire looks for a way to speak of unbearable truths, with irony, laughter, savagery, and sometimes with a twist of our perception. □



Romila Thapar et al  
Which Of Us Are Aryans? | Aleph

‘Indigenous’ or ‘invaders’? The origin of ‘Aryans’ is an evocative issue in contemporary India. The authors—historians, geneticists and journalists—examine various hypotheses on the subject and draw upon Vedic compositions, linguistics, archaeological data and DNA analyses from the Harappan settlement of Rakhigarhi to challenge persistent myths and popular assumptions about our forebears.



David Robson  
The Intelligence Trap | Hodder & Stoughton

Kary Mullis, a Nobel Prize winner, claims he was abducted by aliens and swears by astrology. Arthur Conan Doyle, the writer of detective mysteries, fell for two teenagers’ scams. Through engaging anecdotes, the book scrutinises the concept of intelligence and discusses why people with high IQs are more likely to make certain kinds of mistakes.



Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain  
Freedom Fables | Zubaan

The first stirring of emancipation of Muslim women in Bengal, and India, owed much to Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain (1880-1932): essayist, poet, activist. Deeply invested in the early nationalist struggle, in these satires, ‘fables’ and ‘fairy tales’ like *Muktiphal* and *Gyanphal*, Rokeya playfully excoriates colonialism, laments the state of the poor and is anguished by the 1907 split in the Congress. Tr. from Bengali.

**Correction:** Charcoal Portrait by Selina Hossain is published by Palimpsest, not Om Books.

APARNA KAPADIA, *In Praise of Kings: Rajputs, Sultans and Poets in Fifteenth-century Gujarat*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 183 pp.

DOI: 10.1177/0019464619840581

This book is an attempt to rehabilitate the fifteenth century in the larger historical narrative as an important and dynamic period of north Indian history. The author uses the example of Gujarat to draw the argument home. As such, it is an important contribution to the steadily gathering corpus of studies on medieval Gujarat.

The bulk of the book deals with the history of local warrior chieftains of the fifteenth-century Gujarat. Kapadia argues that these chieftains had been actively participating in the politics of this region from the twelfth century to thirteenth century and continued to hold significant positions either as independent chieftains or as collaborators of regional rulers, including that of the sultanate of Gujarat during the fifteenth century. In this period, argues Kapadia, emerged a strong warrior ethos, which became an important marker of the still inchoate category of the 'Rajputs'.

The book systematically develops its layered arguments over five chapters. The first chapter sets up the historical stage spanning the Chaulukya-Vaghela era (940–1304) as a context to study the 'long fifteenth century'. It was during these centuries that many local chieftains gained political prominence in the 'interstices of a large empire' as allies and trusted subordinates of the Chaulukyas and later on the Vaghelas (p. 39). They, however, did not disappear with the decline of the Vaghelas and continued to hold sway over large parts of the territories that they had acquired with their military prowess and political acumen under the previous regimes. As Gujarat slowly slipped into the hands of the Delhi Sultanate, these chieftains did not lose their political potential. They continued to collaborate with, or offer resistance to, the distant sovereign, the sultans of Delhi first and those of Gujarat later. These local chieftains often expressed their political standing through literary narratives in the form of poems, plays and inscriptions composed by their court poets. Kapadia uses three such narratives of the fifteenth century to argue her case about the continued political vitality of these warrior chieftains. It is through a reading of these that she opens up the exciting and dynamic politico-cultural world of the local polities. As these 'sources' were not considered 'hard evidence', they escaped the attention of historians. This is a lacuna that the book aims to repair.

Thus, the second and third chapters of the book analyse *Ranmallachanda* of Sridhara Vyasa (written in Sanskrit and Dimgal), *Gaṅgadāsapratāpavilāsanātaka* and *Māṇḍalikānṛpacarita* of Gangadhara (both in Sanskrit). *Ranmallachanda* is a poem that records the superhuman encounters of its protagonist, Ranmal (a chieftain of Idar), with Zafar Khan (later Muzaffar Shah), the governor deputed by the Delhi Sultanate. Kapadia notes that *Ranmallachanda* denotes an interesting case of literary innovation in combining elements of classical Sanskrit *kavya* traditions with the oral traditions of Dimgal *virakavya*, the heroic poetry, popular amongst the warrior clans of western India. *Ranmallachanda* helps its protagonist articulate

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his newfound political status as a strong kshatriya warrior. Thus, *Ranmallachanda* represents ‘the early manifestation of what was to emerge as a pan-Indian warrior identity in the form of the category of “Rajput”’ (p. 47).

Drawing on the ideas of B.D. Chattopadhyaya (and to some extent Dirk H. Kolff), Kapadia notes how the political rise of the local Rajput chieftains such as Rathod chief Ranmal of Idar, the Chauhans of Champaner and the Chudasamas of Junagadh was closely linked to the processes of local state formation and ‘kshatriyayisation’. In this sense, the book locates the fifteenth century as one of continuity with the previous era. This continuity is also visible in the unrelenting importance of Sanskrit for the political elites of Gujarat in the fifteenth century. Making a departure from Pollock’s famous formulation whereby ‘languages of place’ eclipsed Sanskrit in political usages during the ‘vernacular millennium’, Kapadia argues that Sanskrit was put to creative usage by poets of the fifteenth century for articulating the political aspirations of their patrons. *Gaṅgadāsapratāpavilāsanātaka* and *Māṇḍalikarṇpacarita* of Gangadhara clearly attest to this trend. These texts depict the Rajput patrons from ‘regional’ kingdoms of Champaner and Junagadh ‘as universalised kshatriya kings’ while situating ‘them within their very localised political and geographical context’ (p. 100). Kapadia calls it an ‘interplay of cosmopolitan and local’ (p. 98).

By foregrounding these accounts, the author manages to recover an important aspect of Gujarat’s ‘heroic Rajput past’ which was long considered lost with the establishment of Turkic rule in the thirteenth century itself. The book thus argues in favour of ‘political and cultural continuities—not ruptures’ in the fifteenth century (p. 16).

Even more interesting is the author’s assertion, in the fourth chapter, that the vibrant culture of Sanskrit *kavya* (with its attendant focus on warrior ethos and Puranic ways of imagining universal Kingship) was not an exclusive reserve of the local chiefs in the fifteenth century. Here, the book analyses yet another Sanskrit composition, *Rājavinoda*, composed by Udayaraja for his patron Mahmud Begada, a Muzaffarid Sultan, ruler of Gujarat between 1459 and 1511. Kapadia argues that Udayaraja made extensive use of ‘the stock imaginary of *kavya*’ and joined ‘*Gaṅgadāsapratāpavilāsanātaka* and the *Māṇḍalikarṇpacarita* in projecting its protagonist as an ideal Indic monarch’ (p. 127). While Kapadia makes a persuasive case about Udayaraja’s imagining of a universal kingship, it is possible to ask, vis-à-vis her use of the term ‘Indic’, if there weren’t multiple ways of imagining an Indic ideal of kingship. The book makes a very strong case for the shared politico-cultural universe amongst the fifteenth century political elites of Gujarat irrespective of their religious associations. The vitality of the shared literary culture is evident in Udayaraja’s assertion that ‘Sarasvati, the goddess of learning has chosen to leave the heavens and move to Mahmud’s court’ (p. 127). Fifteenth century was a century of multilingualism (a point that Kapadia hints at only briefly) which was reflected in the ways in which the language of a poem like *Ranmallachanda*

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was 'freely interspersed with vernacularised forms of Persian and Arabic words' (p. 50). By drawing our attention to such layers of literary and linguistic complexity, the book helps in challenging many stereotypes about the alleged Hindu–Muslim and Sanskrit–Persian divide in the middle ages.

In its last chapter, the book takes a leap from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Through her discussion of *Rās Mālā* of Alexander Forbes, the first colonial history of Gujarat, Kapadia reiterates the larger argument about the centrality of local chieftains in the politics of Gujarat over the centuries. She finds great value in a text like *Rās Mālā* for it helps to take the focus away from 'imperial rulers like the Mughals and the Marathas' (p. 131). While this might be an interesting observation on the part of the author, it is important to understand the politics of the colonial histories like *Rās Mālā* that portrayed the 'Rajputs' as perpetual power wielders. Tod's magnum opus is another case in point. To be fair to the author, she does hint towards this but does not work out its historical implications for her own study.

The book is very loaded in terms of its arguments. In many ways, its novelty lies in the manner in which it deals with its 'sources' both as sources of information and as subjects of study in themselves. For this reason, readers might be excused for wishing that the book provided closer glimpses of the 'sources' in the form of more frequent and extended excerpts. For that would have provided the reader with a better view of the texture of the literary canvas in the fifteenth century.

Inconsistent spelling of certain non-English words and the more than occasional typographical errors are minor irritants in a book that should be a must read for those interested in historical studies of Gujarat, the literary cultures of the medieval period, cultural iconographies in a multilingual world and most certainly north India in the fifteenth century.

Sneh Jha

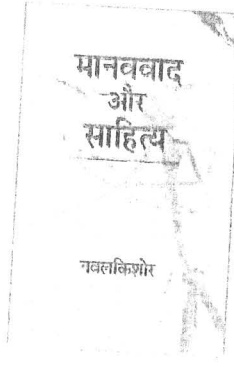
Miranda House, Delhi

RAMNARAYAN S. RAWAT and K. SATYANARAYANA, eds, *Dalit Studies*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016, 304 pp.

DOI: 10.1177/0019464619840595

Now that the scholarship on caste politics has moved away from the burden of adhering to the disciplinary injunctions put in place by the glories of India's nationalist movement, a new set of questions has emerged among its more sophisticated practitioners. These are neither decidedly political questions nor are they reducible wholly to the social. Instead, they have increasingly become epistemic in nature. That is to say, these questions seek to conceptualise caste oppression, its apparatus of power, at the very moment that they strive to unpack its machine-like rigour and conceptual coherence. For caste's violent *dispositif*, its

## व्यापक मानवीय सरोकारों के लिए आलोचना कर्म



और भगवतीचरण वर्मा जैसे बड़े कथाकारों का मूल्यांकन किया। उनकी नई किताब केवल प्रेमचंद की वर्तमान अर्थवत्ता का उद्घाटन नहीं करती अपितु एक साथ हिंदी आलोचना में प्रेमचंद की स्थिति और कथा आलोचना के वास्तविक उपकरणों की भी तलाश है। इस किताब में प्रेमचंद की सर्वोच्च उपलब्धि 'गोदान' पर उनका मूल्यांकन है। प्रेमचंद की विकासमान मानववादी दृष्टि की भव्य परिणति 'गोदान' में उपलब्ध है, जिसमें सच्चाई का बिना किसी मानववादी सुधार कामना के साक्षात्कार है। यह उपन्यास सामाजिक ढांचे को पूरी तरह बदलने का और न्यायपूर्ण मानवीय व्यवस्था की स्थापना का आह्वान बन गया है। एक कथाकार के रूप में उनकी श्रेष्ठता मानवीय दायित्व को कलानिष्ठा के साथ स्वीकार करने में है।

चाहिए कि उन्होंने जिस उदारता से साहित्य को देखने-संगठने की कोशिश की और इसके लिए उन्होंने साहित्य की वास्तविक कला कसौटियों को कभी अनदेखा नहीं किया, वह सचमुच दुर्लभ है। 'मानववाद और साहित्य' में उन्होंने अपने आलोचना के औजारों का निर्माण किया तो 'आधुनिक हिंदी उपन्यास और मानवीय अर्थवत्ता' उनकी व्यवहारिक आलोचना की पहली किताब मानी जा सकती है जिसमें उन्होंने जैनेंद्र कुमार, अज्ञेय, इलाचंद्र जोशी, यशपाल

झीलों की नगरी उदयपुर के निवासी नवलकिशोर को स्थानीय लोग समर्पित पाठक के रूप में भी जानते हैं। विगत पचास वर्षों में आई हिंदी उपन्यास और कथा साहित्य की कुछ ही ऐसी किताबें होंगी जिन्हें उन्होंने न पढ़ा हो और उन पर वे एक विवेकपूर्ण मत न रखते हों। आलोचना की अनुपस्थिति के इस दौर में ऐसे आलोचक की निष्ठा और अध्ययनशीलता से प्रेरणा ली जानी चाहिए।

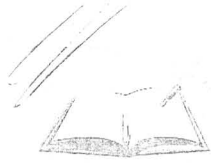
पल्लव

यह सवाल आता है कि क्या मानववाद को हिंदी आलोचना में एक वाद की तरह प्रतिष्ठित करने के लिए नवलकिशोर ने पुस्तकें लिखीं? उनका कहना है - 'ये एक दृष्टि है, जिसे आप विश्वदृष्टि कह सकते हैं। यह उस दृष्टि का प्रतिकार है, जो केवल यह मानती है कि साहित्य प्रयोजनातीत है, कथा साहित्य भी प्रयोजनातीत है।' नवलकिशोर जैसे आलोचकों का महत्व इधर के परिदृश्य में इसलिए विशेष तौर पर समझना

देखने-संगठने की कोशिश की और इसके लिए उन्होंने साहित्य की वास्तविक कला कसौटियों को कभी अनदेखा नहीं किया, वह सचमुच दुर्लभ है। 'मानववाद और साहित्य' में उन्होंने अपने आलोचना के औजारों का निर्माण किया तो 'आधुनिक हिंदी उपन्यास और मानवीय अर्थवत्ता' उनकी व्यवहारिक आलोचना की पहली किताब मानी जा सकती है जिसमें उन्होंने जैनेंद्र कुमार, अज्ञेय, इलाचंद्र जोशी, यशपाल

ली में होने वाले विश्व पुस्तक मेले में इस साल एक विशेष बात हुई। इकतालीस साल बाद एक आलोचक की नई पुस्तक का लोकार्पण मेले में हुआ। पुस्तक का नाम था - 'प्रेमचंद की प्रगतिशीलता' और इसके लेखक थे प्रो. नवलकिशोर। 1933 में जन्मे प्रो. नवलकिशोर कथा आलोचना में एक सम्मानित नाम हैं जिन्होंने नई कहानी आंदोलन तथा बाद के परिदृश्य में सार्थक हस्तक्षेप किया था। इससे पहले उनकी आखिरी पुस्तक 'आधुनिक हिंदी उपन्यास और मानवीय अर्थवत्ता' वर्ष 1977 में प्रकाशित हुई थी। हिंदी समाज में नवलकिशोर की प्रतिष्ठा जिस पुस्तक से हुई थी वह थी - 'मानववाद और साहित्य', जिसे हिंदी आलोचना और शोध के क्षेत्र में आज भी मानक समझा जाता है। यह पुस्तक 1972 में प्रकाशित हुई थी। अब यानी इकतालीस साल बाद उनकी नई किताब आना सचमुच हिंदी आलोचना संसार में एक घटना है। इन दो पुरानी और अनुपलब्ध किताबों के भी इसी साल नए संस्करण आए हैं जिन्हें एक साथ पढ़ना हिंदी आलोचना की समृद्ध विरासत को जानना है। नवलकिशोर इसे विपरीत समय में प्रेमचंद स्मरण करते हैं क्योंकि भूयंडलीकरण के जिस दौर में हम आ गए हैं वह व्यापक मानवीय सरोकारों के लिए कठिन समय है।

दैनिक भास्कर ; 21/11/19 ; Pg- 9



# किस्म के बताई हम पीर रे बिदेसिया

चित्रकला और संगीतविद प्रवीण कुमार झा की किताब 'कुली लाइन्स' इस मायने में हिंदी में एक उपलब्धि की तरह है कि हिंदी में जो चिंतनपरक पाठ्य सामग्री प्रकाशित होती थी है, वह अक्षर अक्षरों में हुए शोध का अनुवाद रहती है। इस लिहाज से लेखक का यह प्रयास दस्तावेजी किस्म का काम बन जाता है, क्योंकि गिरामिटियों को कहानी इतन योजनाबद्ध तरीके से अध्ययन और विश्लेषण के साथ हिंदी में अभी तक कही नहीं गई है। यह जानकर है कि गांधी जी को आधार बनाकर गिरिराज किशोर का उपन्यास 'पहला गिरामिटिया' सालों पहले प्रकाशित और चर्चित हो चुका है।



यह किताब पुस्तकालयों और आर्काइवज में काफी समय बिताने के बाद उन फाइलों को पढ़ते हुए तैयार की गई है, जिसमें पिछले समय में जो लोग हैं भारत से बाहर मजदूर बनाकर भेजे गए भारतीयों की व्यवस्था-कथा सलोक से दर्ज हो सकी। लेखक स्वयं इस बात को लेकर चौकन्ना है कि क्या एक विशाल साम्राज्य के हालात और हिंदुस्तानी विदेशियों के संघर्ष की यह माथा पुराना दी जाती? किताब की संकल्पना में प्रवीण झा यह उदाहण करते हैं कि जो कुछ भी सत्य उन्होंने जान लिया, वह पुरा ही है। भूमिका में यह स्वीकृतकृत, 'कुली लाइन्स' की बड़े अभिप्राय देती है- 'कई गिरामिटिया कथाएँ जो इस किताब में हैं, वो अधूरी हैं। मुझे कथा का एक ही हिस्सा मिला या कुछ अलग-अलग हिस्से मिले, जिन्हें मैंने जोड़ा...'। ये मानना है कि सत्य अधूरा भी हो तो सच्चा हो, उसके साथ छेड़छाड़ न हो। ये कथाएँ जितनी कही गईं, जैसे कही गईं, मैंने वैसे ही लिख दीं।' इस कथन के उजाले में किताब में जगित डेरों कहानियाँ पढ़ते हुए यह बात समझ में आती है कि एक ऐसे इतिहास पर मौलिक लेखन संभव किया जा रहा है, जिनका अपना लिखित इतिहास बेहद कम और मौखिक परंपरा अधिक रही है। भारतीयों की यह कहानी इस

लिहाज से बहुत वास्तव और संघर्ष भरी भी है, जिसमें अपनी को खोने, जड़ों से कट जाने और विदेश की नई धरती पर अपना भारत प्रेम बाँचकर रखने का प्रयास अधिक प्रासंगिक बन जाता है।

छोटे-छोटे उप-श्रेणियों में बंटे इन आलेखों को पढ़ते हुए आप एक बिल्कुल नए इतिहास और सभ्यता से अपना साक्षात्कार करते हैं। हमें यह समझ आने लगता है कि जहाज पर लदकर जो जहाजी सुदूर मॉरीशस, फिनो, गुयाना, त्रिनिडाड और टोबैगो, जमैका, नोदरलैंड, युगांडा, दक्षिण अफ्रीका, म्यांमार जैसी जगहों पर जाकर मजदूर बनें और अपने भारतवर्षी होने को जिया रख सकें वह कितना हतबल, कालोपक और चुनौती-भरत रहा है। प्रवीण झा अपने इस प्रयास में डेरों उद्धरणों, आर्काइवज के सूत्रों, गिरामिटियों पर लिखे गए डेरों लेखों, किताबों तथा याचिक परंपरा में मौजूद कविताओं व लोकगीतों से कथानक को विस्तार देते हैं। पढ़ते हुए यह सब सुझाव लगता है, क्योंकि एक अलग ही किस्म के नॉस्टैल्जिया से जूझता हुआ यह सारा कृतान्त अपने उन पुरखों को कबानी कहता हुआ सामने आता है, जिनके बारे में इतिहास या गजेटियर जल्दो कौड़ी की जानकारी नहीं देते।

'कुली लाइन्स' एक तरह से अभिलेखागार है, जिसमें सुनया गोसाईं, भगोड़ा कुली, तोता राम सानिन्द्य, मुंसी रहमान खान, सुखिया वैश्या, मायावी लछमन, भगवान की, सोम नायडू, गुरदीन भाग जैसे डेरों लोगों की दिलचस्प कथाएँ इस किताब का हासिल हैं। इन अनजान नायकों की कहानियाँ पढ़ते हुए वह हैरत होती है कि तथाम ऐसे भी लोग होंगे, जिनकी कोई कहानी आज हमें उपलब्ध नहीं है और जिन्होंने एक पूरा गिरामिटिया इतिहास रचते हुए खुद को तिरोहित होने दिया। लेखक को यह बड़ी सफलता है कि वे इतने जतन से सुनिश्चर के अभिलेखों को जुटाते हुए जहाजियों की कहानी सिलसिलेवार ढंग से कह पाए हैं।

एक बात जो इस किताब को बेहद रोचक और पठनीय बनाती है, वह है तमाम सारी उपकथाओं के साथ इन गिरामिटियों के जीवन से जुड़ी कविताओं और लोकगीतों का प्रस्तुतीकरण। हर गीत अपने आप में एक पूरा इतिहास है और उसके माध्यम से उनके संघर्ष, हस्तक्षेप और जड़ों से कटने के क्षण को गहराई

कुली लाइन्स  
कथा गिरामिटियों को  
से जहाजी जो कही  
हिंदुस्तानी जहाँ कीट शरत  
प्रवीण कुमार झा  
कथेश्वर  
पहला संस्करण, 2019  
संस्करण 198  
दिल्ली  
मूल्य-499 रुपये



देता है। इनमें विदेशिया गणन, ईदाल, उत्तार और परगामी कविता आदि के उदाहरण बहुत सामक्य हैं। एक विदेशिया गीत की पवित्रता यहाँ आत्मा के लिए अंकित है- 'खून-पसीने से सींचे हुए पतिया, बँटे-बँटे सुख चलाये विदेशिया'।

शेर्द में ज्यादा बातें कही गई हैं। सोरिया जहाज के डबाने की कविता, जहाज यात्रा में धीन शोकण, जगितगत भेदभाव और संघर्ष, मॉरीशस के पोर्ट दुर्ग के आगवासी घाट पर अंकित कविता, त्रिनिडाड की पहिलगार, संसृतिवियों की घटना, फिजी में किनाह, गुयाना में धर्म, बॉब मार्ल और हिंदुस्तानी, बाबा और याई, कुलियों का अपना मटल आदि खंडों से किताब समृद्ध होती है। एक तरह का सामाजिक-राजनीतिक विमर्श रचती हुई 'कुली लाइन्स' अपने आप में जितना दिश गए एक अनार इतिहास का प्रायोगिक पाठ है, जिसमें गिरामिटिया-कथा के बहाने आप बहुतेरे शब्दों ( कनाकी, अरकाटी, जहाजी, थैथर, टपूहा, कूलांबर ) के अभिप्राय और प्रयोजन भी समझ सकते हैं, जिन्हें इस तरह पहले कभी नहीं व्याख्यायित किया गया। गिरामिटियों का इतिहास जानने के लिए यह किताब आपदर्शी बन जाती है।

आप भी कुछ कहना चाहते हैं...  
litabghar@nda.jagran.com

## शायर-ए-इंक्लाब की जिंदगी की दास्ताव

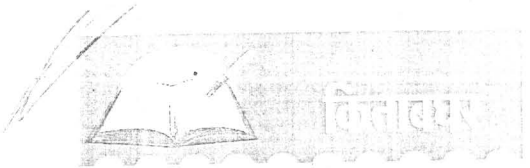
जुई के महात्मा शायर जेसा मलीहाबादी की बहुचर्चित आत्मकथा का एक संक्षिप्त रूप 'यादों की बारात' बरसों पूर्व प्रकाशित हुआ था, जिसका हिंदी संस्करण इसराज खबर ने किया था। एक बार फिर से इस किताब का पुनः संस्करण प्रकाशित करने में प्रकाशक ने जुन है। जोरा मलीहाबादी का जीवन सानगोई का भिखारू रस, जिसकी दास्ताव 'यादों की बारात' से पूरी तरह खुलकर बयां होती है। इसमें उनके द्वारा 'कालोम' पत्रिका निकालने की बात का भी रोचक वर्णन है, जिसमें वे अंग्रेजों के खिलाफ लिखा करते थे। जोशीरो, तत्काली गसद और रानिशपद इस शायर की जिंदगी की कहानी में भारतीय राजनीति के दो प्रसिद्ध चहरों पंडित जवाहरलाल नेहरू और अणुलाल बाबू का सामनाय हस्ताक्षर भी अलग से रेखांकित किए जाने सोचें। उनकी जिंदगी जितनी विवादग्रस्त रही, उतनी ही आत्मकथा चर्चित होती गई। उस दौर के सामाजिक-राजनीतिक ताने-बाने और अदब की ज्ञानदार रचनाओं को जानने, समझने के लिए यह किताब एक जरूरी पाठ और हस्तावेज है।

यादों की बारात  
शोधकर्ता शायरों की  
बहुचर्चित आत्मकथा  
संस्करण, 2019  
राजपाल एंड सन, जई  
दिल्ली  
मूल्य-198 रुपये

जुई के महात्मा शायर  
शोधकर्ता शायरों की  
बहुचर्चित आत्मकथा  
संस्करण, 2019  
यादों की बारात  
मूल्य-198 रुपये

दैनिक जागरण ; 14/7/19 Pg-02 (शुक्रवार)

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किताबघर

समकालीन लेखन परिदृश्य में ध्यायेक, पौराणिक और मिथकीय कथाओं की नई व्याख्याएं अत्यंत लोकप्रिय हो रही हैं। अंग्रेजी में इसका सर्वाधिक प्रचलन है और दूसरी भाषाओं में हिंदी में अनुदित पुस्तकधाराओं के आधुनिक संदर्भों वाले रचनात्मक लेखन का संसार देवदत्त पट्टनायक, वनमाली, आमंद नौलकटन, जनीन मैकटी, देव चारुनी, केविन विस्तार, आशिषा सत्तार आदि ने सफलतापूर्वक से संभव किया है। हिंदी में इस तरह के काम में एक नाम और जुड़ गया है आशुतोष गर्ग का, जो फलगुण और अनुवादका रहे हैं। उनकी कृति 'इंद्र-देवलोक के वर्तमान राजा-पुरंदर की गाथा' पौराणिक लेखन में एक गुणात्मक योगदान है, जिसे पढ़ने पर सुरों के अधिपति इंद्र के बारे में विस्तार से पढ़ने के लिए स्तरीय सामग्री हासिल होती है।



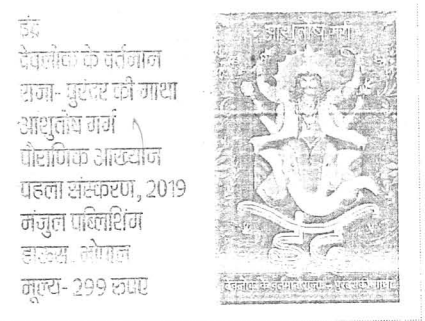
लेखक आग्रह में ही हिंदू धर्म और महाभारतों के विस्तार में इंद्र के गुण और दोषों का वर्णन करता हुए, तमाम उद्धरणों से उनकी देवी प्रसिद्ध कथाओं की पौराणिकता के संदर्भ में प्रश्न भी रखते हैं। इसमें महावेद, विष्णु पुराण आदि के हवाले से लेखक ने अपने तर्कों को सुदृढ़ भी किया है। यह जानना गौरवपूर्ण है कि आशुतोष गर्ग एक गंभीर रचनाकार रहे हैं, जिन्होंने पूर्व में अस्वस्थता के चरित्र को आधार बनाकर एक औपचारिक कृति पाठकों को पढ़ाया करवाई है। उनकी विशिष्टता इस संदर्भ में प्रासंगिक बन जाती है, जब हम पाते हैं कि पौराणिक कथाओं में अज्ञान का मूल्य का सुदृढ़ देकर जो आख्यान रचे जा रहे हैं, उसमें बिना छेड़छाड़ किए हुए वे मूल रूप से प्रासंगिक हो चुके पौराणिक व मिथकीय कथाओं की जिस का तस-तस प्रस्तुत कर रहे हैं। इस काम में जो पढ़कर चरित्रगाथा पढ़ने लायक बन जाते हैं, किन्तु अज्ञान के कारण वे कथा को बानगी विभिन्न छोटी-बड़ी कथाओं के संदर्भ में मुझाते हो जाते हैं।

'इंद्र' पढ़ते हुए यह बात समझ में आती है कि मिथक-इतिहास में देवताओं के राजा जो इंद्र के नाम से जाना जाता है परंतु वास्तव

# वर्षा, बिजली और बादलों के देवता की जीवनगाथा

में इंद्र किसी का नाम नहीं, बल्कि देवलोक के राजा की पदवी है। प्रायेक मन्वन्तर के अंत में देवताओं का नया राजा नियुक्त होता है, जो फिर उस मन्वन्तर का इंद्र कहलाता है। वर्तमान मन्वन्तर के राजा इंद्र का नाम पुरंदर है, जो मान्यतानुसार षडर्षि कश्यप व अदिति के पुत्र हैं। जिस तरह लेखक ने इस पूरी इन्द्र-कथा को बेहद सधी हुई भाषा और रथांगित भाषाओं के आधार पर उनके कृत्यों की पड़ताल करते हुए रचा है, उसे पढ़ना एक सुखद अनुभव है, जो किसी सधे इतिहासकार द्वारा किए गए प्राकृतिक विवरण को व्यवहृत करता है। इस किताब में लेखक ने विभिन्न कथाओं को आसानी से इतने करीने से सुना है कि इंद्र के मन्वन्तर, स्वर्ग, अधिमान, कामुक और कौशेय स्वभाव का तथ्यपरक आकलन हो सका है। लेखक किसी कथा का अंत करते हुए सूखत वाक्यों में उनकी छवि की प्रासंगिकता और इंद्र की पदवी के संदर्भ में देवी प्रासंगिक सवाल भी उठाते हैं। यह दरअसल वर्तमान देवलोक के अधिपति पुरंदर की कथा है, जिसे इंद्र के रूप में गरिमा और आदर मिला हुआ है। इस संदर्भ में लेखक ने किताब का उपसंहार संदर्भित किया है, जिसमें इस किताब को बल मिलता है कि 'पुरंदर' के नाम को बतते हुए उसका पाठक किसी सुविधा में न रहे। स्वयं लेखक के अनुसार- 'पुरंदर के जीवन की घटनाएं, ग्रंथों में यत्र-तत्र-सर्वत्र अव्यवस्थित ढंग से बिखरी हुई हैं। इस अव्यवस्था का मुख्य कारण यह है कि घटनाओं का 'आंखों-देखा' हाल लिखने की परंपरा समाप्त हो गई है।' लेखक का तर्क इसीलिए यहां महत्वपूर्ण बन जाता है कि जब तक आज के संदर्भ में इंद्र कथा के लिए वैदिक ग्रंथों के समान विश्वसनीय पाठ्य-सामग्री का अभाव रहेगा, तब तक 'पुरंदर' जैसे उपन्यास मौजूद खालीपन को भरते रहेंगे।

इसी कारण पुरंदर के जीवन से जुड़े अनेक पक्षों को कथाओं को उल्लेखनीय ढंग से प्रस्तुत किया गया है, जिसमें तैत्तिरीय विशिष्ट कथाएं पुस्तक में सम्मिलित हैं। इसमें पुरंदर के जीवन से संबंधित 'राज्याभिषेक', 'चीटिया', 'वृत्तासुर', 'ब्रह्महत्या', 'नहुष', 'नल-दमयंती', 'मरुड', 'मधु-विद्या', 'अहिरत्या', 'सुरवीर', 'गुरु' और 'इंद्रभ्रा' विशेष उल्लेखनीय हैं। साथ ही रामायण,



महाभारत और अन्यान्य औपनिषदीय ग्रंथों के आधार पर प्रस्तुत कथाएं- 'अर्जुन', 'प्रह्लाद', 'मांधाता', 'बालि और सुग्रीव का जन्म', 'पांडवों की अंतिम यात्रा', 'समुद्र मंथन', 'गोवर्धन', 'मैनाक', 'कार्तिकेय', 'उत्तक' और 'हनुमान' आदि रोचकता से भरी हुई।

हिंदी में इतनी प्रवाहमयी भाषा और पौराणिक आख्यानों के मूल से मेल खाती इन छोटी-छोटी कथाओं के माध्यम से इंद्र की गाथा जानना एक दिलचस्प पाठकीय अनुभव है। बहुत दिनों बाद 'अमर चित्र कथा' श्रंखला की रोचक कहानियों और रॉबर्टो कलासो द्वारा लिखी कालजयी कृति 'क' की संरचना से मेल खाती 'इंद्र- देवलोक के वर्तमान राजा - पुरंदर की गाथा' आई है। मिथकीय और पुस्तक साहित्य में रुचि रखने वाले पाठकों के लिए यह किताब एक आदर्श उपहार है। आशुतोष गर्ग ने इसे मूल हिंदी में लिखकर एक उल्लेखनीय काम यह किया है कि भारतीय-परंपरा, मिथक-इतिहास और संस्कृति के अध्यायों को भारतीय दृष्टि से देखने-परखने का जतन संभव हो सका। किताब इसी कारण रोचक और पठनीय बनते हुए संदर्भ-ग्रंथ का प्रारूप हासिल करती है।

अपनी कुछ कहानी चाहते हैं...  
kitabghar@nda.jagran.com



# 'सुधा' पत्रिका और उसका दौर

शोभा निझावन की यह किताब एक गंभीर शोधकार्य है, जिसके बहाने लखनऊ में ब्रिटिश कोलोनियल दौर में हिंदी के प्रकाशन जगत पर विस्तार से चर्चा की गई है। बीसवीं शताब्दी के पूर्वार्द्ध में हिंदी का साहित्यिक परिवेश अवकाश की संरचनाओं पर फैला था। इसकी तथ्यपरक पड़ताल इस किताब का हासिल है। एक दौर की चर्चित पत्रिका 'सुधा' और उसके माध्यम से दुलारेलाल भांगी की 'दुर्गा पुस्तक माला' की पड़ताल में उस कालखंड पर विमर्श प्रासंगिक ढंग से इस पुस्तक में आया है। 'सुधा' पत्रिका के तमाम दुर्लभ अंकों के आवरणों से सजी यह किताब भाषा के इतिहास निर्माण पर एक समृद्ध दस्तावेज है। यह पुस्तक उस दौर में हिंदी भाषा के बनने और संवरने की प्रक्रिया पर रोचक ढंग से रोशनी डालती है, जो लखनऊ को हिंदी पट्टी के एक बड़े केंद्र के रूप में स्थापित करता है। महत्वपूर्ण और शोधपरक मौलिक काम, जो भाषा के शोधार्थी और हिंदी पुनर्जागरण में दिलचस्पी रखने वालों के संग्रह के लिए जरूरी है।

हिंदी पब्लिशिंग इन कोलोनियल लखनऊ  
शोभा निझावन  
नाम किंवदंश  
फर्स्ट एडिशन, 2018  
ऑक्सफोर्ड यूनिवर्सिटी प्रेस, नई दिल्ली  
मूल्य-1,495 रुपये



दैनिक जागरण; 21 जुलाई, 2019; पृष्ठ 2 (संसार)

BOOK REVIEWS

**Basudara Stories of Peace from Maluku working together for reconciliation**, edited by Jacy Manuputty, Zairin Salampessy, Insan Ali- Fauzi and Irsyad Rafsadi, translated by Hilary Syaranamual, Australia, Monash University Publishing, 2017, xxiv + 343 pp., US \$39.95 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-925495-14-0 (paperback)

Bringing together 26 accounts of peace *Basudara Stories of Peace from Maluku* offers a collection of first-hand stories with an aim to build a more sustainably peaceful world. Excellently written with an impressive simplicity, dense with powerful narratives, this book is bound to unearth fresh ground and will no doubt come to influence the understanding of peace in the region and world wide. Various causes of this prolonged ethno-religious violence have been put forward though there is a strong taboo about telling stories regarding the Ambonese civil war from 1999 to 2002 because of three main concerns – firstly, regarding the fragility of the social harmony [in the region], secondly, respect for important institutions and thirdly, concerns of personal trauma. These qualify as erroneous concepts of history and are problematic because they perpetuate a hypocritical society. In this book, for the first time, participants in and victims of what happened speak variously of what they did and saw, of the effects of the violence on them, as individuals and members of families and communities, at the time and after, and of how they have sought to build bridges of peace.

'Basudara', a word evoking kith and kin showing care for each other, touches the central concern of the writers – the bearers of eyewitness testimony in this book – who pray for the growth of this caring spirit. 'Orang Basudara' is a phrase rich in meaning. For Moluccans being Basudara is a description of their joint identity. It conveys feelings including love and solidarity, sharing the same fate and being willing to help each other. Here, the phrase *Basudara's Stories of Peace* refers to communication, using writing, to give eye witness accounts, experiences and reflections about life by a number of local people before, during and after the conflict that took place in 1999. To mark 15 years after the end of the conflict, the stories offered in the book are of hope, comfort and optimism written in the spirit of Orang Basudara. This work also provides many valuable lessons for not just the community concerned but for humanity for now and future from the experiences of conflict in Maluku in Indonesia.

In the middle of the conflict that brought distress and suffering, which trapped people directly or indirectly, some people found their own distinctive ways to be critical of the conflict and also strive for peace. This book aims to record and document their experiences, so they do not disappear in thin air. So many old wounds have been bandaged in silence.

The book then becomes a sort of historical document from those who have not had a voice. The writers' backgrounds are varied including journalists, ulama, politicians, a former mayor, social activists, lecturers, photographers, women activists, artists and students. This variety makes *Basudara Stories of Peace from Maluku* an interesting mosaic



and helps the reader understand the events of the conflict and peace from various viewpoints.

For example, the female peddler from Wisma Atlit who reopened trading between the people of Mardika and Batu Merah or the health worker who distributed aid to refugees from all religious backgrounds. The process of compiling history brings about hope, renewal, openness and aims at regaining the humanitarian heritage of 'basudara' which has been swallowed by the vicious appetite of unfeeling ruthlessness. Experiences in Maluku can become a mirror into which we can look for lessons in preventing violent conflict and strengthening peace in other parts of the world.

For those of us who do not live in areas of violent conflict, our experience of war is via the media – in stark newspaper headlines and conflict reporting, in Twitter timelines and blogs, in magazines and television images and in the sounds of voices and gunfire on the radio. But still the coverage we consume shapes our collective understanding of what can be done – what should be done. Stories can influence peace processes, sway the escalation or reduction of conflict, and undermine – or enhance – the confidence, trust and expectations of the parties involved. Stories have real power. *Basudara Stories of Peace from Maluku* asks us all to think about how we deploy it.

*Basudara Stories of Peace from Maluku* is affecting, instructive with an emancipatory intent and sheds a unique light on the world of Indonesia's Maluku Islands. The contributors of the book speak from their consciences, from myriad cultural, religious, humanitarian and nationalistic dimensions, telling stories filled with indignation, tears, sadness and regret. All of the personal stories in this book have been conveyed with amazing honesty. Careful editorial work has ensured a smooth dovetailing of the contributions so that the book is more than simply the sum of its parts.

This book offers a panoramic and creative view of how stories can be used as a vehicle of peace education and therein lies the pedagogical genius of this volume: it practices what it preaches. In offering such a wide conceptual view; the volume simultaneously challenges you to engage its text critically and to subsequently embark upon an expedition to seek out further answers.

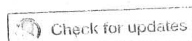
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✓ **Positive peace in schools**, by Hilary Cremin and Terence Bovington, Abingdon, Routledge, 2017, 174 pp., £24.99 (paperback) ISBN: 978-1-138-23564-9, (ebk) ISBN: 978-1-315-30423-6

The excellently written and constructed book under review here has set out to link its concerns and approaches to established theory in peace studies. With a title of *Positive Peace*, the opening sentence of the book asserts this work is grounded in the widely embraced theory of positive peace, attributed by the authors to Galtung (1969). Less convincing to me, the authors claim their work is a response to a crisis in the field of peace education, where 'there is a lack of theoretical and conceptual clarity, as well as a need for a stronger research

base' (1). I would reply that there is a vibrant literature in theoretical and applied aspects of peace education, as well as a vast number of research studies across the continents.

Each location is specific as well as global, however, and one strength of the book by Cremin and Bevington is its focus on education in the UK. In the early chapters, the authors identify the growth of school violence by students in the UK and employ the notion of schools as sites of institutional violence to establish their thesis for introducing a model of peace education that can promote a culture of peace in UK schools. Their springboard for the book is, particularly, the dominance of a systemic model of 'school improvement' managerial policies, technologies and practices that have become the dominant discourse in UK schools over recent decades. The authors devote a chapter to examining this system and draw the conclusion that 'school improvement functions as a form of violence in that it establishes priorities, which then exert pressure on the actors in the school system to behave in ways that are to the detriment of their own and each other's optimum state' (32). Teachers and students are both subjected to this system. The authors comment that the school improvement model operates also in USA, and I can add that it is embedded in Australia, as schools, historically the domain of individual states, implement a new national curriculum.

The authors propose a three-phase strategy for implementation of their peace education model in schools. These phases are: education for peace-keeping; education for peace-making; and education for peace-building. They acknowledge that peace-keeping is not strictly educational but is concerned to ensure aspects such as safety, security, rights, rules and discipline in schools. As such, 'many peace educators are wary of it' (75). However, they argue that peace-keeping is an essential premise to keep all school members safe from harm. This element certainly resonates with the context of growing violence in schools. Moreover, Cremin and Bevington believe that peace-keeping practices can be 'shifted toward more educational ends through processes of critical thinking, dialogue and inclusion' (77).

These three phases of peace education are integrated into an overall model that the authors have called the iPEACE model. They don't explain why they have given the model this particular name, which to me associates it with products of the world's biggest technology companies. Nevertheless, the authors build an operational acronym for iPEACE as follows:

- Identify conflict
- Pick the right strategy
- Enable voices to be heard
- Attack problems not people and Acknowledge feelings
- Create options
- Evaluate (57)

The authors explain that the two dimensions of this model are 'responsive' and 'proactive' components that feed into the three elements of peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-building. The elaboration of these three elements constitutes the core material of the book. The discussion and analysis of the iPEACE model are presented through well-written sections, supported by some meticulous scholarship and excellent examples for a variety of school situations. The material is thoughtfully conceived and constructed to present a coherent and original framework for peace education in the UK education system but with the possibility of broader adaptations into other school contexts.

The final Part IV of the book proposes a 'compendium of practical activities' (119) for possible implementation in contemporary UK schools as iPEACE practice. These activities come into three categories: research, case studies and a set of specific curricular activities.

The authors set out to engage with their readers by using a sometimes conversational style in instances such as: 'We look forward to hearing from our readers...' (69); 'it is useful to ask' (83); 'We would encourage readers...' (105). I liked this personalising of the reader, and the literary style facilitates engagement with the range of discussions and analysis of peace education within the framework of this book. The range of scholarship and linking of philosophical and sociological perspectives into the peace education focus add depth and dimensions to the work which is, ultimately, an academic analysis and argument for a peace education model that, the author's believe, can address the range of structural violence issues confronting schools in the UK.

In the broader peace education context, I would have liked to see the authors recognise some of the abiding concerns of peace education, such as issues of war, gender rights, intercultural conflict and environmental crises, that provide important content and values-development for peace education in schools. These concerns have been addressed by British peace educators such as David Hicks (1988, 2004). The implementation elements of the model presented in this book are towards school culture, pedagogy and relationships for building peaceful schools. However, the important responsibility of schools towards educating for peaceful societies has not been included in this publication. Thus, the book is a contribution to the literature of building peaceful schools and, with its well-conceived and explained model, is a valuable resource in this area of the peace education field.

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
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 **The fabric of peace in Africa**, edited by Pamela Aall and Chester A. Crocker, with foreword by Kofi Annan, CIGI Press, 2017, June 5, 386 p., \$37, 98 (paperback), ISBN-10: 1928096352

*The Fabric of Peace in Africa: Looking beyond the State* is the second of two volumes on African capacity for conflict management. It opens new doors of understanding for students, scholars and practitioners by focusing on non-governmental actors in strengthening the peace process in Africa. Their first volume, *Minding the Gap: African Conflict Management in a Time of Change*, highlights the role of mediation and peacekeeping in managing violence and political crises. Both editors are equally, though differently, qualified to guide such an important publishing program. Pamela Aall is a senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation's (CIGI's) Global Security & Politics Program, leading the African Regional Conflict Management project with Chester A. Crocker who is a distinguished fellow at CIGI, Professor of

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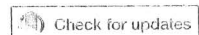
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Strategic Studies at Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service and assistant secretary of state for African affairs from 1981 to 1989.

This second volume brings together leading experts from Africa, Europe and North America to examine critical social institutions and groups, and consider how they can either improve or impede peaceful conflict resolution. The three overarching questions that are explored by the authors are: *What constitutes social cohesion and resilience in the face of conflict? What are the threats to cohesion and resilience? And how can the positive elements be fostered and by whom?* In Chapter 1, *The Social Environment and Conflict in Africa* written by the two editors ends with the three overarching questions listed above. It is this Chapter 1 and the last Chapter 21, entitled *Can State and Society Be Woven Together* that present in a nutshell the editors' answers to the three questions.

The first half of this 370-page book (Chapters 1–9) can be considered the analysis of peace in Africa followed by the intermediate crucial theoretical Chapter 10 by Alex de Waal of the World Peace Foundation entitled *Inclusion in Peacemaking: From Moral Claim to Political Fact*. He proposes a concentric circle of inclusion where not only the main belligerent actors are included but also various other institutions and particularly civil society groups. He argues that the conflict will be managed more efficiently and effectively by the careful inclusion of those additional actors. Chapters on women, youth and the private sector provide evidence for this approach, so that including civil society moves from being a moral claim to being a political fact. It is the application of this framework that guides the rest of the chapters in Part 4 – *Inclusion and Exclusion in Conflict Environments* – and Part 5 – *'Strengthening Resilience and Social Cohesion'* in the most illuminating and inspiring Chapter 19 *'Building Resilience to Conflict: The Case of West Africa'* that shows concretely how resiliency expresses itself in less fatalities and destruction and more peaceful power sharing in this subregion.

In conclusion, this anthology of peacemaking in Africa stands out in its well-conceptualized emphasis of the underestimated potential of civil society, though two minor suggestions would have added more value to the book.

The book's emphasis on inclusion of civil society in peaceful conflict management can be seen as a parallel in the non-conflict political arena. It was the United Nations in the 1990s and 2000s which moved the concept of security beyond the state to include individuals, people and groups. The first UN Earth Summit in 1992 was the first UN Conference to emphasize the role of NGOs by establishing the major groups of civil society and may have influenced the inclusion of CSOs in the pursuit of peace on the African continent. Thus, it made sense for CIGI's second phase in African conflict management to pursue the CSO angle after having considered the poor results of mediation and other governmental efforts in its first phase.

Annan's opinion of the two scholar-practitioners' editing efforts in his Foreword (p. viii) is that the book 'is a rewarding mosaic that looks at Africa's conflict challenges from the inside as well as the outside and helps us understand the complexities of building peace and building equitable, accountable and inclusive societies'.

I think that two additional observations would increase the value of the book. The first one relates to the impact of a looming climate catastrophe on conflict and peace in Africa. As a consequence, a more robust discussion of the nature of peace as the integration of both social and ecological peace would have been feasible. Thus, beside a good case study of climate change and access to water around the Lake Victoria basin, they might have asked their contributors to include the changing climate as a threat to social cohesion and resiliency, pointing to the emergence of a science of climate change and violent conflict with its concept of conditional or indirect causation.

The second observation deals with the function of civil society and the state. Our two editors rightly point to the necessity of including the relationship of state and society as an essential component for managing conflict and building peace. They identify four links: Social groups and institutions as (1). drivers of conflict; (2). victims of conflict; (3). fixers of conflict; (4). sources of social cohesion and resilience. I would add a fifth link considering social groups and institutions as maintaining a creative tension between states and civil societies because they, particularly the religious entities, project an ever extending horizon of challenges and ideals after having pointed to genuine progress in their social role of both announcing accomplishments and denouncing shortcomings in terms of ultimate values.

All in all, this well-organized and coherent book is an important resource for peace educators, proposing a transformational shift in peace research and policy by switching the focus from elites and their security interests to include civil society and its social justice movements as the foundation of enduring peace building.

### Notes on contributor

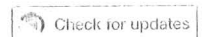
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# Books

SECULARISM, IDENTITY, AND ENCHANTMENT by Akeel Bilgrami. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2014.

*Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment* by Akeel Bilgrami, represents an ambitious project despite its own modest descriptive label as 'the moral psychology of politics'. The book is a collection of twelve essays with overlapping concerns around the issue of the relation between religion and politics. The significance of this issue cannot be overstated, which has become more and more contentious with the progress of the Enlightenment thought. Despite its original assurance of the separation of religion and politics, it is now witnessed that the place of religion in the public sphere, associated with questions of identity, has produced even more potent grounds to engender violence physically and epistemically.

The concept of secularism, as we commonly understand it, is in conflict with identity (particularly religious), which is grounded in the framework of a disenchanted Enlightenment worldview. One of the major issues tackled in this book is precisely to challenge this genealogy of secularism, and to reconfigure

the grounds for this concept, and further the liberal democratic ideals, in the light of the dissenting intellectual tradition and a history of European Romanticism, and thereby, to discuss what may be termed 'radical' Enlightenment. An important consideration in this regard is that the understanding of this tradition is not historically bound, but relies on an eclectic expansion and interpretation of the intellectual and conceptual contours of this tradition by the author. This reconfiguration of the tradition then, can accommodate figures like Marx, as well as Gandhi, both belonging to the same dissenting lineage in their critique of the modern Enlightenment world.

This intervention by Bilgrami is quite significant, especially with regards to the perspective and method of analysis, regarding Gandhi in mainstream western philosophical traditions. Outside the domain of social and political theory, where there are significant contributions in the assessment of Gandhi's thought as a theoretical alternative to the Enlightenment worldview, within the philosophical discourse<sup>1</sup> at best, Gandhi is viewed as an ethical thinker and someone with moral

1. This point is being made specifically with regards to the discipline of philosophy, with perhaps the exception of Anuradha Veeravalli, *Gandhi in Political Theory: Truth, Law and Experi-*

integrity; however, Bilgrami's claim is far more radical, and argues for a philosophical integrity to Gandhi's thought, which includes abstract epistemic, as well as methodological commitments. This is not an ordinary task, as presenting a consistent philosophical picture of Gandhi's thought, especially in the context of the western philosophical academia, is not aided by Gandhi's own writings, which at one level are considered scattered and 'inconsistent', and at the other, devoid of 'philosophical technicality', which can distract one from their intellectual depth and originality. Bilgrami's assertion then, that Gandhi is perhaps the only philosopher, apart from Heidegger, to achieve a sustained integration of political, moral and epistemological themes (118), is crucial to not only the study of Gandhi as a philosopher, but also to Bilgrami's own argument in this book, which in part, seeks to carry the insight of Gandhi's philosophical critique of modern western civilization for a reconfigured conception of secularism and democratic ideals, outside of the established lineage of Enlightenment. It is this aspect of the book that will therefore be the focus of the review.

As part of Bilgrami's argument, the question of the integrity of Gandhi's thought is critical to addressing his insights as a philosopher. What becomes particularly pertinent in this regard is the issue of epistemic commitments, which is the most contentious issue. According to Bilgrami, Gandhi's notion of truth is exclusively an experiential and moral notion; and this articulation of truth for Gandhi serves to repudiate the cognitive notion of truth, which is the paradigmatic view of truth within the scientific outlook. The dominant status of the scientific worldview and rationality, that has come to be the lasting legacy of Enlightenment, is what allows the world to be seen as a resource and therefore, as controlled and mastered. The cognitive notion of truth that Gandhi rejects refers to the descriptive property of propositions and statements, which at their core have a detached, 'objective' and purely 'descriptive' perspective of the world. There are two critical issues that need to be addressed here – one has to do with the philosophical dualism of fact and value that is inherent in the notion of truth characterized by Bilgrami, and the other, based on this dualism, is the stance ascribed to Gandhi in terms of his epistemological commitments, which truly are not epistemic but something akin to a moral state of mind, at best com-

ment (Ashgate, Chesterfield, 2014), which argues that Gandhi's approach was conscious and systematic in challenging the epistemic and metaphysical presuppositions of modern civilization and post-Enlightenment political theory.

mendable, but not illustrative of any contribution to our understanding of fundamental epistemic issues.

Bilgrami critiques the 'Humean moral psychology' wherein the perception of values is entirely a projection of our mental capacities and dispositions, and therefore by implication, nature in itself is brute and valueless. It is only our imagination that ascribes value and meaning to nature. This view of nature as entirely brute, in the British Romantic critique, is ascribed to the emergence of Newtonianism, despite the fact that the emergence of the scientific worldview predates Newton, with figures like Bacon and Hartlib. Bilgrami argues that this move reflects the transformative impact that the Newtonian worldview brings in with regard to the self-conscious worldly alliances forged between scientific organizations, commercial interests, and the latitudinarian Anglican establishment (188). This discussion hinges on the relation between fact and value. The Humean worldview posits values as a function of human mental capacities and therefore, largely subjective in nature; whereas Bilgrami is trying to argue for a value-laden aspect of nature that has been destroyed by a political move, i.e. nature bereft of value is not a function of science (epistemology) itself, but of the ideologues of commercial interests and power (politics).

To substantiate this stance Bilgrami explicitly articulates Abrams' thesis of 'natural supernaturalism' to present the value-laden nature of the world without resorting to values being a function of our subjectivity. This thesis broadly asserts that nature is not exhausted by a scientific description of it. Values and meaning are properties of which the natural sciences have nothing to say and nature therefore, cannot be exhaustively addressed via a study of the natural sciences. However, these values are not just 'supernatural' because they are immanent yet perceptible in nature, and make normative demands on us, and that is precisely the reason why they are articulated as 'natural' (183-184). Thus, in a single act of perception why is it not possible to admit to the presence of H<sub>2</sub>O in a river, as well as having a value and meaning aspect to it? Bilgrami admits to the presence of intractable philosophical considerations that emerge from this articulation, which due to their complexity have been left unaddressed in the Humean philosophical tradition and the stance of the subjective aspect of value is taken up (185).

The co-presence of natural properties and value properties in the act of perception of nature, seemingly bridges the relation between fact and value, however, invokes another underlying intractable dualism, which is that of theory and practice. Is a fact or for that mat-

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ter even value, given to us in nature or is it constituted within the framework of a theory? A response to this question goes back to Bilgrami's characterization of Gandhi's notion of truth as a purely experiential and moral notion (a question of practice and agency in the world). In considering Gandhi as having abstract epistemic commitments and yet repudiating the cognitive value of truth, a charge that Bilgrami makes against Gandhi, all that Gandhi is left with is truth-telling (118-119), which by itself is an unimpressive ideal for epistemic commitment. It illustrates at best only what ought to be done and not how to know what is to be done, and more importantly, it does not address the question of how to determine the truth that is to be told. What is unaddressed theoretically, in this formulation of Gandhi's position on truth, is the constitutive role of practice in determining cognitive truth itself – a line of thought being pursued in the contemporary debates on skill and know-how. This is also evident in Bilgrami's assessment of Gandhi's act of spinning cotton as merely a symbolic act (117), whereas in Gandhi's own articulation it is an act of emancipation for the world, grounded in 'Shastra' (philosophy).<sup>2</sup>

In the essay 'Gandhi (and Marx)', Bilgrami puts Gandhi and Marx together in their conception of the ideal of an 'unalienated world'. Further, with regards to Gandhi he makes a careful analysis via four questions of the conceptual transformations that take place in critiquing the modern sources of alienation. These questions are: '(i) How and when did we transform the concept of *nature* into the concept of *natural resources*? (ii) How and when did we transform the concept of *human beings* into the concept of *citizens*? (iii) How and when did we transform the concept of *people* into the concept of *populations*? and (iv) How and when did we transform the concept of *knowledges to live by* into the concept of *expertise to rule by*?' (133)

Through these questions the picture that emerges of Gandhi's intellectual depth is far more potent than what has been encountered so far in the book. The trajectory of exploration via these questions, details some of our worst fears about modern civilization. However, on the question of the transformation of human beings into the concept of citizens, Bilgrami attributes Gandhi's critique to his pessimism and his shrewd genealogical understanding of the emergence of European politics (146). This analysis of Gandhi does not address the

question of political theory in terms of the very conception of human nature. The very assumption about human nature in Enlightenment political theory, as something that needs to be constrained, legitimizes the state and its control on civil society and therefore, disallows self-governance, or in the vocabulary of Gandhi, *swaraj*. Therefore, this is not an assessment of genealogy, but one of fundamental assumptions about political theory.

The other very significant aspect of this essay is the articulation of the ideal of an 'unalienated life' as the basis of reconsidering the ideals of 'liberty' and 'equality'. In delineating Marx and Gandhi's affinities on the sources of alienation in modern society, he finds agreement in their critiques on two salient aspects viz. (i) on the relation between human beings and nature, and (ii) the relations among human beings. He points out that in distinction from Gandhi, Marx's account was more specific as to the account of labour (151-152), and therefore, he does not address the issues of alienation with man's own labour and with the products of his labour, in his characterisation of the sources of alienation vis-à-vis Marx and Gandhi.

This exclusion cannot be accounted for as a lack of affinity on the issue of labour; while it is true, the centrality that the concept of labour had for Marx was not there in Gandhi, nonetheless, the law of bread labour is an essential aspect of understanding Gandhian thought, particularly, in terms of a critique of the modern political economy, and also in addressing the dualism of intellectual and manual labour. The question of labour being unaddressed does not allow the issue of technology to be raised, as representing an epistemic relation, underpinned by the universality of the scientific method, between human beings and the world, and not just as a case of bad politics. Marx, Gandhi and also Heidegger, each invoke a distinction between modern technology and its alternatives or its predecessors, through different perspectives.

The epistemic commitment ascribed to Gandhi in this book, cannot be adequately analysed without contending with the issue of the relation between fact and value, theory and practice, in the framework of modern western philosophical thought. Given the framework, Gandhi's epistemic commitments amount to only having a moralising force, but do not appeal to the framework of an alternative epistemology.

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किताबघर

विज्ञान और स्वतंत्रता-सेनानी विश्वनाथ मुखर्जी की 'वंदे मातरम् का इतिहास' इस मायने में ऐतिहासिक कृति है कि यह किताब हमारे देश के राष्ट्रगीत के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित बकिम चन्द्र चटर्जी की कालजयी रचना 'वंदे मातरम्' के बारे में विस्तार से चर्चा करती है।



ये गीत कैसे बना, उसकी उत्पत्ति में कौन सी घटनाएं और तिथियां सहायक रहें, साथ ही उस समय भारत की तत्कालीन सामाजिक-राजनीतिक स्थितियां क्या थीं? गहन बौद्धिकता से इन सारे पहलुओं की यहाँ पड़ताल की गई है। आज से चालीस वर्ष पूर्व 1979 में इस किताब का हिंदी का पहला संस्करण हिंदू पॉकेट बुक्स ने जारी किया था, जिसके बाद 2019 में अब इसका संशोधित और परिवर्धित रूप प्रकाशित हुआ है, जो इतिहास में दिलचस्पी रखने वालों के लिए उपलब्धि सरीखा है।

विश्वनाथ मुखर्जी ने बेहद ईमानदारी और तटस्थता के साथ उस दौर में इस गीत के निर्माण की प्रक्रिया को लेकर उन सभी दस्तावेजों, प्रपत्रों, गोप्यियों, संवादों और राजनीतिक रूप से संपन्न हुए विचार-मंथन आदि के परिप्रेक्ष्य में इसे सिरजते हुए एक संदर्भ-ग्रंथ का स्वरूप दिया है। 18 अध्यायों में विभक्त यह पुस्तक, पाठ्य-सामग्री के स्तर पर भारतीय स्वतंत्रता के इतिहास की मौलिक, शोधपूर्ण और विचारोत्तेजक छानबीन से भरी हुई है। एक गीत के इतिहास को प्रामाणिक रूप से रचते हुए लेखक ने उस दौर के सांस्कृतिक और राजनीतिक इतिहास पर भी समानांतर रूप से लेखन किया है, जिसमें बंग-भंग आंदोलन, सशस्त्र क्रांति के जन्म, गदर पार्टी और मुस्लिम लीग की स्थापना समेत 'संध्या', 'युगांतर' और 'वंदे मातरम्' जैसे दैनिक पत्रों का दस्तावेजी आकलन किया गया है। इस दृष्टि से यह किताब इतिहास की गहराई से छानबीन तो करती ही है, 'वंदे मातरम्' से संबंधित तमाम तथ्यों, प्रचलित कहानियों

# आजादी की जंग के गीत की महागाथा

और उस दौर के बौद्धिक नायकों, मसलन- महर्षि अरविंद और रवींद्रनाथ टैगोर के विचारों और इनके गीत के समर्थन पर भी सम्यक रूप से प्रकाश डालती है।

किताब बताती है कि सन् 1896 में भारतीय राष्ट्रीय कांग्रेस के कलकत्ता अधिवेशन में गुरुदेव रवींद्रनाथ ने यह गीत गाया था। इसके ठीक पांच साल बाद (सन् 1901) कलकत्ता में हुए एक अन्य अधिवेशन में चरणदास ने यह गीत 'देवारा गाया'। सन् 1905 के बनारस अधिवेशन में इस गीत को सरलादेवी चौधरानी ने स्वर दिया। ब्रिटिश सरकार देशभर में इसकी लोकप्रियता से डर गई थी और उसने इस गीत पर प्रतिबंध लगाने पर विचार करना शुरू कर दिया था। जैसे ही राष्ट्रीय नेताओं को इसका पता चला तो उन्होंने 'वंदे मातरम्' नाम से अखबार तक निकालने शुरू कर दिए। ऐसे प्रामाणिक दस्तावेजों से समृद्ध इस ग्रंथ में इतिहास को सरल, सुरुचिपूर्ण और तार्किक बनते हुए सामाजिक अध्ययन के लिए बहुस्तरीय अर्थों वाला प्रारूप दिया गया है, जिसे पढ़ना अपने राष्ट्रीय आंदोलन के गौरवशाली क्षणों को वर्तमान में महसूस करने जैसा है।

बौद्धिक रूप से भारतीय स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन के पुनर्जागरण काल को समझने के लिए इस किताब को एक बड़े रीडर की तरह पढ़ने की आवश्यकता है। जैसे, उदाहरणों के साथ यह जानना दिलचस्प है कि 'आमार दुर्गात्सव' नामक लेख को 'वंदे मातरम्' का जनक माना जाता है, जिसे स्वयं बकिम चन्द्र चटर्जी ने दुर्गा पूजा के अवसर पर लिखा था। इसी तरह यह गीत कहाँ लिखा गया था, इस संबंध में 1937 से 1976 तक कई मनोरंजक तथा विवादास्पद कहानियाँ भी प्रचलित हुईं, जिनमें अधिकांश का आज की तिथि में खंडन हो चुका है। लेखक ने विस्तार से इस बात की चर्चा की है कि कैसे कुछ कहानियाँ 'मंजिलपुर', 'बरहमपुर' और 'चुंचड़ा' के संदर्भ में प्रसिद्ध रही हैं। यह सब वे स्थान हैं, जहाँ बकिम बाबू सरकारी नौकरी में रहते हुए विभिन्न पदों पर नियुक्त रहे। हालाँकि शोध के अनुसार यह सिद्ध हो चुका है कि यह गीत कांटाळ पाड़ा में लिखा गया था।

वंदे मातरम् का इतिहास  
विश्वनाथ मुखर्जी  
संस्करण-2019  
हिंदू पॉकेट बुक्स एवं  
पेंगुइन रैंडम हाउस  
कंपनी  
गूल्यू-299 रुपए



इस गीत को पहली बार प्रसिद्ध गायक यदु भट्ट ने राम मल्हार में रचकर गाया था, जैसी दुर्लभ स्थापनाओं के साथ इससे संबंधित विभिन्न अन्य गायकों के प्रचलित दावे भी यहाँ पढ़ने लायक हैं। इन प्रचलित मान्यताओं और उनके विश्लेषण पर आधारित एक गीत की संरचना को लेकर किस तरह एक पूरे राजनीतिक-सांस्कृतिक परिदृश्य का हाल यहाँ प्रस्तुत किया गया है, वह पढ़ने में बांधने वाला है। कई ऐतिहासिक संस्करणों का संचयन बन जाने वाली यह पुस्तक अपने कथ्य में इतनी मौलिक है कि वह देरों देर चटनाओं पर तथ्यों और तिथियों के साथ गंभीरता से विमर्श रचती है। उदाहरण के तौर पर, बारीसाल इलाके में इस गीत और नारे पर प्रतिबंध लगाने की घटना की विस्तार से चर्चा। लेखक के अनुसार- 'चौदह अप्रैल सन् 1906 ईस्वी के दिन जब बंगाल के बारीसाल शहर में नौकरशाहियों द्वारा नग्न तांडव हुआ था, तब जुलूस में लोग 'वंदे मातरम्' अंकित झंडा लिए चलते रहे।'

एक राष्ट्रीय गीत को अवधारणा, व्याप्ति और स्वीकार्यता को लेकर इस गाथा को इतने लोकप्रिय ढंग से रचा गया है कि इसे पढ़ना हमारे वैभवपूर्ण इतिहास के साथ कदमताल करने जैसा है। हर पढ़ने वाले के लिए एक जरूरी संदर्भ-ग्रंथ, जिसकी आभा समय बीतते जाने के साथ, बढ़ने ही वाली है।

आप भी कुछ कहना चाहते हैं...  
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## वक्त ने किया क्या हसीं सितम

अंग्रेजी के बेहतरीन कवि सुदीप सेन द्वारा चयनित सहयोगी अनुवादकों के साथ अनुवादित, संपादित 'कैफ़ी आजमी-पोएम्स-नज्म' एक शानदार पाठकीय अनुभूति है। अनुवाद की भाषा में इन कविताओं, नज्मों को पढ़ना प्रगतिशील शायर कैफ़ी आजमी को आज के समय में भी प्रासंगिक और अतुलनीय बनाता है। किताब को बेहद सुरुचि और कलात्मकता के साथ संपादित किया गया है। कैफ़ी साहब के जन्म शताब्दी वर्ष में प्रकाशित इस किताब का एक अलग ही महत्व है, जिसमें सुदीप सेन द्वारा संक्षिप्त रूप से लिखे गए संपादकीय में उन्हें बतौर शायर और कामरेड की तरह विश्लेषित करना सुखद है। संचयन में हुसैन मीर अली, बैदार बख्त, सुमंत्र घोषाल, प्रीतीश नंदी और सुदीप सेन द्वारा अनुवादित नज्म शामिल हैं। कैफ़ी आजमी की कुछ शानदार रचनाओं- 'औरत', 'दूसरा वनवास', 'इन्हे मरियम', 'आवारा सजदे', 'खिलौने', 'एक बोसा', 'आखिरी रात' और देरों अन्व अनुवाद इतने सुंदर बन पड़े हैं कि वे मूल कविता का आस्वाद देते हैं। उर्दू शायरी के अंग्रेजी कदवानों के लिए यह किताब एक बेहतरीन सौगात है! (यतीन्द्र मिश्र)

कैफ़ी आजमी: पोएम्स-नज्म  
सेलेक्टड, इंट्रोड्यूड, एडिटेड  
एंड को-ट्रांसलेटेड- सुदीप सेन  
फर्स्ट एडिशन, 2019  
ब्लूक्सबरी पब्लिशिंग इंडिया  
प्रा. लि.  
मूल्य-499 रुपए



दैनिक जागरण; 4 अगस्त; Pg. 02 शंकर

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# The Emergency

## A Watershed in India's Politics

ARVIND RAJAGOPAL

Although historians conceive their research as having a public use, large sections of the Indian public itself do not necessarily engage with their writing except perhaps to denounce one or other scholar every now and again.<sup>1</sup> This remains true in an age when historical arguments are increasingly prominent in social movements and in electoral battles. Witness, for example, the extent to which assessments of the Congress party's historical record figure in campaign speeches. Meanwhile, popular culture has taken a historical turn in Indian cinema, for example, if only to bring it closer to the genre of the mythological.

Whatever the future has in store, at present history in India circulates principally to mobilise consent and consolidate opposition against naysayers of one kind or another. If so, inconvenient truths are more liable to be bracketed than explored or weighed. Acknowledging the mechanisms of popular consent, and the limits revealed by these mechanisms, would therefore be important in critical history writing.

The national Emergency of 1975–77 is often invoked to illustrate the indispensability of popular consent, as if India's deviation from democracy is best understood by referring to this period, and as if the rest of post-independence history, notably the period under non-Congress rule, stood in striking contrast to it. For a historian identified with Subaltern Studies, however, in addition to the chance to correct such a characterisation, the Emergency presents another interesting problem. It brings together issues of statecraft and political intrigue, or history from above, with a people's history from below. Whereas the former approach has been associated with elitist and nationalist historiography (the two

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**Emergency Chronicles: Indira Gandhi and Democracy's Turning Point** by Gyan Prakash, New Delhi: Penguin, 2018, pp 439, ₹400.

are much the same, according to the Subaltern Studies' manifesto of the 1980s), it is the latter that has won the historians their renown. A history of the Emergency thus presents an opportunity to correct the elitism of nationalist historiography, and to explore to what extent mechanisms of consent and coercion across elite and subaltern classes worked to maintain the balance of class/caste power, and how these mechanisms have shifted over time. It can also seek continuities across the periods into which the post-independence era has been divided, and review breaks such as the Emergency itself, to provide new perspectives on our historical present.

### Conceptual Details

The book under review is without doubt the richest volume published so far on the Emergency, with an enviable command of archival and ethnographic material. It has a range of conceptual and historical references detailing the Emergency's status as a significant event in postcolonial Indian history, marking the first major rise of populism after independence, as well as the first overtly authoritarian phase with respect to the nation as a whole. Readers of *Economic & Political Weekly* (EPW), to whom the Emergency is not news, will find much to learn in each of the chapters, about student politics at the Jawaharlal Nehru University and the preventive detentions that followed, about Jayaprakash Narayan's correspondence with Indira Gandhi and Maneka Gandhi's poem written to her husband where she complains about

him; from detailed interviews with officials who actually implemented the Emergency, such as deputy inspector general P S Bhinder in New Delhi, to the crucial role of Ford Foundation officials in coercive sterilisation. The book seeks to encompass the institutional logics that enabled the Emergency as well as provide some of its micro-histories. Written in a clear and engaging style, and seeking to minimise academic vocabulary, the book aims at enlarging the audience for Indian history, building on the growing interest that has been visible for some time.

As such, the main aim of this book is not to tackle prevailing assumptions and conventions in historical debates so much as to cultivate and nurture the taste for historical engagement and to deepen the educated public's knowledge about the relevance of the period being examined. As such, despite the book's success in achieving these aims, there are shortcomings, too. For example, EPW readers might still want to know where this book stands vis-à-vis other accounts of the Emergency, and what it adds to critical perspectives on recent history. Furthermore, the author provides little analysis of economic reforms and its relationship to state power (whether exercised by the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] or the Congress). Both of these issues deserve discussion.

Authoritarianism and populism, arguably two major aspects of the Emergency, resurface subsequently, but the Emergency represents their first combined appearance after independence, Gyan Prakash notes. He begins, in fact, by noting parallels with populist protests against corruption led by Anna Hazare, and the appearance of conservative populist leaders across the world, and suggests that the Emergency is related to

those phenomena: "the intertwined shadows of populism and authoritarianism hanging over democracy in the present invite us to pay attention to the challenges it faced in the past" (p 6). But, rather than clarifying the Indian specifics of the "global history of democracy's relationship with popular politics" (p 13), the thrust of the book seems to analytically gloss over them. Thus, if the 1975-77 Emergency became "democracy's turning point," the subtitle of the book, it is hard to tell exactly how the author understands it. Did democracy retreat thereafter, or did it flower? The author seems to say "yes" to both, without indicating how to reconcile this tension.

Today, it is virtually common sense that reforms had a positive impact on the (low) "Hindu growth rate" of the economy. Not only the economy, but Hindu assertion too grew thereafter. Everything that allegedly restrained this twin growth was condemned at the same time. The term "Hindu" switched from a negative to a positive value in the course of this process, one that was political-economic and cultural too.

### Cost of Economic Reforms

After coming to power in 2014 the BJP has moved from nominally secular to openly communal party rule, and proceeded not only to take credit for the economic reforms built by the Congress, but also to demonise the Congress as if the latter had opposed reforms all along. So relentless and voluminous has this propaganda been, and so faint has been the counter to it, that a sizeable segment of the electorate may believe there is no opposing view.

It therefore bears noting that the economic reforms were initiated by the Congress, and that the political cost of the reforms was that of appeasing and aiding Hindutva. From the late 1980s onwards, the BJP led a mass movement to replace the Congress, which it denounced as "pseudo-secular," supported by the growing numbers of the middle class and by big business. But meanwhile, apart from the communists, no major party, including the BJP, contested the reforms. Although the BJP and the Congress were at loggerheads over the

right of Hindu militants to demolish the Babri Masjid, allegedly a reminder of Mughal vandalism, not a whisker's breadth separated the two parties on questions of liberalisation. This was due in large part to the adroit mediation of then Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, who masterminded the reform process, and helped the Congress stay in office even as the political consensus shifted towards the BJP with the demolition.<sup>2</sup>

The unpunished destruction of Muslim lives and property while army battalions watched and cameras rolled, amidst the triumphant declaration of Hindu power demonstrated the emptiness of secularism for all to see. The Congress may have retained political power, but the levers of majority consensus shifted to the BJP.

These events receive cursory mention towards the end of Prakash's book, although he is critical of the neo-liberal politics accompanying economic reforms in India. In other words, he omits the significance of the key trade-off between the leading parties that shaped India's neo-liberalism. A more detailed discussion of reforms might have clarified the historical transition to the contemporary politics Prakash is critical of. But his preference for narrative over analysis in the end, risks leaving the prevailing consensus about recent history undisturbed. This consensus regards the Emergency as a heroic popular uprising that changed Indian politics forever. Prakash would like to argue that democracy thereafter took a turn. If it was for the worse, a reader could be forgiven for thinking the opposite, that the populist upsurge was somehow continuous with economic reforms and for the accompanying nationalist assertion.

### Nehruvian to Neo-liberal

As is well known, the Emergency marked the end of the Nehruvian era. Also, it concluded what L K Advani called the "political untouchability" of Hindutva, today represented by the BJP. The anti-Congress alliance made by Jayaprakash Narayan brought the party of Hindutva into government, and thus breached the multiparty agreement until that time, that Hindutva was anti-national.

In other words, two forms of consensus ended with the Emergency, or at any rate, began to transform radically. First, state claims of secularism began to be weighed in terms of their popularity, whereas the Nehru era was marked by its attempt to insulate institutions and democratic processes from majority sentiment. Thereafter, such attempts would be denounced as elitist and anti-people. Second, overtly coercive state intervention, notably but not only in economic development, became rarer and invited more severe backlash. Subsequently, state coercion seldom declared itself overtly, and worked instead through proxies. Although these outcomes are frequently analysed separately, political contingencies inseparably joined the two together.

Prakash himself links the Emergency and economic reforms, discussing Sanjay Gandhi's notorious Maruti car project, a case of "crony capitalism ... that failed":

Maruti ... was the opening shot aimed at the administrative and economic norms that had governed postcolonial India. Its determined violation of official norms, regulations and procedures threw open administrative protocols and planning priorities to a new set of practices. Sanjay's doctrine of quick action empowered bureaucrats happy to oblige the powerful without regard for the governing norms of transparency, accountability and impartiality. (p 246)

It is a fleeting observation, and it is left unelaborated. But by calling Maruti an "opening shot," Prakash suggests there was a Schumpeterian "creative destruction" exemplified in the project. Factors he may be implying here include entrepreneurial initiative, the growing market for durable consumer goods, and deregulation. However, all he says is that "administrative protocols and planning priorities" were opened "to a new set of practices," of which he mentions only bureaucratic corruption.

We must banquet on the wafer Prakash offers us, for he is making a causal link between two key periods, the Emergency and economic reforms. Presumably, there is something more than arbitrary power to the former and corruption to the latter, but here he does not spell out what he thinks is involved.

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On the norms that governed postcolonial India he makes a terse remark on "the Nehruvian orthodoxy about planning and the public sector" (p 113), noting that it had become "rigid and doctrinaire" (p 112). He understands the reforms to illustrate a "neo-liberal logic, emerging as state policy in 1991" which "offers the market logic of winners and losers" (p 381). Beyond brief statements of this kind, we lack an analysis of either phase.

There are, very briefly, at least two historical links worth exploring, I suggest, between the Emergency and the period of reforms that are under-elaborated in *Emergency Chronicles*. First, although the Emergency led to suspension of civil liberties and democratic rights, it was reformist in its stated policies and in its self-representation. These reforms aimed at greater economic productivity, bureaucratic efficiency, and popular commitment to national development. We can call it an extension of the planning ethos, wherein the coercive core of economic planning was unsheathed and expanded, on the premise that the nation's internal enemies were on the rise. In this specific sense it marked the high point of the Nehruvian period, when the political character of the economy could be asserted as a guiding principle for state intervention.

Thereafter, the economy began to be conceived as having its own enigmatic logic, for which ideas of market rationality and consumer demand became surrogates. Society rather than the state became the medium of economic reforms, because political intervention no longer issued from the old "commanding heights;" rather, it became diffuse and inconspicuous, and was ventriloquised through the market where possible.

The second link with the period of reforms is the following. The escalation of public coercion during the Emergency was a forerunner of what was to accompany economic reforms, but with a crucial difference. The state could identify itself as the operating agent in the first case. Thus, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting could advertise statements by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on family planning announcing: "We are determined to implement this programme

with all the means at our command" (davp 75/596).<sup>3</sup> After the Emergency the agents of public coercion were more often non-state actors with latent political sanction, also at times operating in a blizzard of propaganda. That is, coercive state practices travelled outside the domain of the state and presented themselves as popular action. Unreformed Hindu upper-caste identities now had more overt state backing, but in a way that was designed to suggest that public consent was on their side.

### The Most Important Outcome

Such blurring of the distinction between popular and state speech suggests continuities between the beef and cow vigilantes of today and the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992, and highlights the contrast with the Emergency. Displays of popular consent and of state coercion, often starkly opposed through the time of the Emergency, increasingly overlapped thereafter. Crucial for this development were the communication infrastructures conceived and installed for secular national development, including national television. This was no accident. In a way, it was the most important outcome of the Emergency.

In the year before the Emergency, labour leader George Fernandes was able to threaten to bring the government to its knees with a railway strike, one that turned out to be the largest in the history of organised labour. The strike was brutally crushed, but it lasted for 20 days. It showed how labour could galvanise the government, if only briefly, with demands that were in fact extremely modest.<sup>4</sup> The strike unfolded in a political context centred on questions of the economy, and government management thereof. Unions had a place at the table in this context; labour leaders could go on to become national leaders, as Fernandes himself did. This decisively changed after the Emergency.

Strikes and all other kinds of labour-led action against management reduced sharply, and turned into an increasingly symbolic affair. Token one-day strikes became more customary, and meanwhile the government ceased to rush to arbitrate disputes. Alongside, communal riots grew

rapidly, specifically, mass violence against Muslims, practised with impunity and crafted to yield electoral dividends.<sup>5</sup>

### Consumption and Culture

After the Emergency, the symbolic centre of national identity gradually moved from the sphere of production to that of consumption, from the economy to that of culture. Embattled labour, and rising Hindu militancy represented the main cross-currents in the politics of the time, signalled by the decline of Datta Samant and the rise of Bal Thackeray respectively. Defeat came to the labour leader who demanded that unions with majority support should be recognised, while victory attended the demagogue who declared Hindu rights to be superior to that of minorities.

This change reflected the post-Emergency strategy of the ruling Congress party once it returned to power in 1980 and the lessons it chose to learn from the Emergency. The rapidly expanding communications infrastructure presented powerful means to mix consent with coercion. State directives could now appear as soft power, working through suggestion and repetition rather than the force of arms. In such a context what appeared like public expression could merely reiterate state speech, rather than represent people speaking back to the state.

Thus, the conditions for economic reforms were created well before the formal onset of liberalisation in 1991. Readers will recollect that Rajiv Gandhi's New Economic Plan of 1985 attempted but failed to institute reforms, due to domestic resistance. The advance of Hindutva, operating in the unorganised sector, and the marginalisation of unions, overwhelmingly in the organised sector, provides a framework highlighting the political colour of economic reforms as they took shape. Unpunished mass violence against Muslims and other minorities provided the illiberal obligato to announcements of liberalisation. The Emergency was not, therefore, the "opening shot," at the norms hitherto governing postcolonial India, as Prakash argues; it was, rather, the last waltz of the Nehru era.

The reforms drew enormous strength from the changing international context,

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specifically, the crumbling of the East Bloc, which Indian pundits, among them prominent businessmen, were quick to diagnose as the defeat not only of Soviet socialism, but of Indian government planning, as if India too had been labouring under an authoritarian socialist regime.<sup>6</sup> A columnist writing for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh magazine *Organiser*, Jay Dubashi, spelt out what he saw as the Indian link to the Cold War, writing in November 1989:

[T]he very same day the first brick of the Ram Shila Foundation was being laid at Ayodhya, the Berliners were removing bricks from the Berlin Wall. While a temple was going up in Ayodhya, a communist temple was being demolished five thousand miles away in Europe. If this is not history I do not know what is.<sup>7</sup>

Secularism and Nehruvianism were one and the same thing, in this view, and the credit for dispatching them both went to the BJP. This was a development whose conditions of possibility were created by the Emergency. By writing itself into world history (the fall of the Berlin Wall anticipating the fall of Babri Masjid) and marking itself as the party of both the Hindu majority and of market reform, the BJP wrote a narrative that, paradoxically, provides both the state perspective as well as that of its opponents. Hence, the movement against the

Emergency provided the opening shot of Hindutva in mainstream Indian politics. It became the basis of their claim that they stood for people's resistance against arbitrary power, although they were conspicuously absent in the anti-colonial struggle.

Without an analysis of the political balance of forces before and afterwards, a deep dive into the Emergency, while offering fascinating stories of power and resistance, does not provide insights into our historical present. If Hindutva represents the Indian form of authoritarian populism, indicating on virtually the penultimate page that it is "fundamentally antidemocratic" (p 380) feels like too little, too late. The long history of Hindutva and its all-too-recent success in enfolded large numbers of urban professional classes get little attention. Prakash's main interest is in the Emergency itself; discussions of its wider significance for Indian history are highly compressed, ending with warnings about the Narendra Modi government exercising emergency powers in all but name. With such an approach, there is little chance of re-evaluating prevalent perceptions or uncovering paths not taken, that might yet inform future politics. Despite Prakash's admonitions to the contrary, this history of the Emergency

can be enjoyed as a self-contained episode, with a modicum of moralising. The philosophy of history hinted at here is perhaps one where historians cannot really change anything.

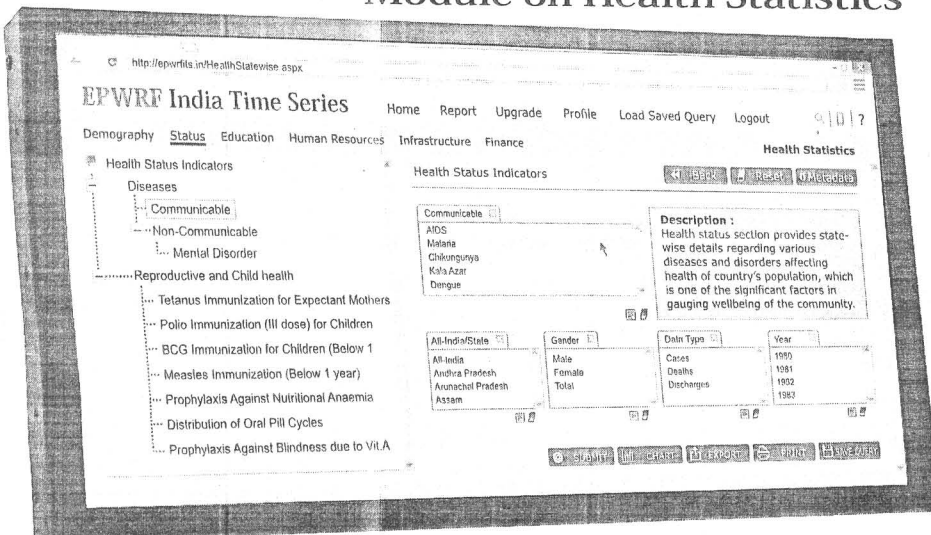
Prakash maybe right, but I would hate to think he is.

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NOTES

- 1 Dipesh Chakrabarty notes this issue in his essay "The Public Life of History," *Public Culture*, Vol 20, No 1, p 144.
- 2 Vinay Sitapati focuses on the reform process in his *Half-Lion: How P V Narasimha Rao Transformed India* (Penguin, New Delhi, 2016). I argue for its connection to Hindutva in *Politics after Television: Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Public in India* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2001), for example, Chapters 1 and 4.
- 3 I have discussed this and other examples at greater length in my essay, "The Emergency as Prehistory of the New Indian Middle Class," *Modern Asian Studies*, 45, 5, 2011, pp 1003-49.
- 4 Stephen Sherlock, *The Indian Railways Strike of 1974: A Study of Power and Organised Labour*, Rupa & Co, New Delhi, 2001.
- 5 "The Emergency as Prehistory."
- 6 For example, J R D Tata, "Berlin Walls Should Fall," *Times of India*, 1 August 1991, p 1; Ramkrishna Bajaj, "Socialism's Anti-consumer-bias," *Times of India*, 16 May 1991, p 15; Ashok V Chowgule, "Answer to Greed," *Times of India*, 23 February 1992, p 12.
- 7 Jay Dubashi, "From 'Shilanyas' to Berlin Wall," *Organiser*, 26 November 1989. Rpt in Jay Dubashi, *The Road to Ayodhya* (Voice of India Publications, New Delhi, 1992), p 18.

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Sept. 2018

BOOK REVIEW

## Reflecting science education across diverse Asian contexts

✓ **Science education research and practice in Asia: challenges and opportunities**, edited by Mei-Hung Chiu, Springer, 2016, 578+viii pp., €129.99 (hardcover), ISBN 978-981-10-0845-0 Singapore (Springer Science+Business Media Singapore Pvt Ltd)

Anyone working in science education will be aware of extensive activity in the field arising from Asian contexts such as Taiwan, Singapore, and increasingly mainland China. Turkey, often considered to bridge Europe and Asia, and here included as part of Asia (along with several other middle eastern countries), is, by some measures, one of the most active communities for research in science education. A book that seeks to offer an overview of science education across Asia is therefore of considerable interest.

The editor of *Science Education Research and Practice in Asia: Challenges and Opportunities*, Professor Mei-Hung Chiu from the National Taiwan Normal University explains in the introductory chapter that the purpose this book is to present the background to the trends and issues of science education found in 16 countries identified as falling within three regions: Northeast Asia, Southeast Asian, and the Middle East. Chiu aims to provide foci for readers to reflect on science education research and the practice of promoting science education. She hopes that through this book researchers, educators and policymakers come to understand how scientific literacy is promoted in Asian contexts. She also hopes that this book will motivate people to promote science education from a global perspective.

For Northeast Asia, Chiu invited educators from Russia, Mongolia, China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea. Southeast Asian countries covered in this book include India, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. Middle East countries covered in this book include Turkey, Lebanon, Israel and Oman. This is an impressive array of diverse national contexts, and doing it justice presents a major challenge to any editor. In particular, the editor of a book such as this has to decide whether to offer authors guidance on what to include, or whether to allow each chapter to offer the focus its authors see as most worth discussing in regard to that context. The former option can misrepresent the core concerns and issues that those working in a particular context would themselves wish to highlight. The latter approach may produce a volume that seems to lack coherence and offers readers an uneven experience as shifts between chapters may lack common themes and threads. For example, in the present volume the chapter from Russia, focuses on didactics of chemistry in particular, and chooses to offer a historical development of this theme: giving that chapter somewhat different characters to most of the other contributions.

In this volume, the different national accounts are organised into some overarching themes – perhaps representing a post-hoc attempt to impose some structure across necessarily idiosyncratic accounts. There are 31 chapters organised under five sections: an overview of science education (SE), content analysis of SE research, assessment and curriculum, innovative technology in SE, and teacher professional development and informal science learning. Each section ends with a commentary written by educators from outside of Asia (i.e., from Australia, Finland, Germany, and the USA). The commentaries summarise

corresponding sections under given themes. In this book review, I am going to summarise each section and add my own reflection at the end of the section summary.

The first section, the overview, presents a broad range of aspects of science education in several Asian countries, including China's growth of science education research (chapter 1), Lebanese and Malaysian's students' struggles with science learning in English as a second language (chapter 3 and 5), Macau's and Thailand's need to improve science teachers' pedagogical content knowledge to increase their adoption of student-centred approaches (chapter 4 and 11), Mongolia's shortage of experienced science teachers (chapter 6), Oman's limited expertise in conducting educational research (chapter 8), Singapore's thematic inquiry approach to integrate scientific ideas (chapter 9), and Taiwan's comprehensive government support to increase global prominence in the science education community (chapter 10).

This section has two commentaries. The first commentary (chapter 7, written by David Treagust and Chi-Yan Tsui) reflects on the first five chapters. It elaborates on some common theoretical frameworks and models in international SE research that underpin the growing body of studies in China, for example, NOS, BSCS course, 5E learning and constructivism, etc. It also discusses the medium of instruction being a challenge in many multilingual countries and regions. Both teachers and learners struggle with code-switching to balance between expression of understanding informally in their first language (if they actually share a common first language) and formally using academic language in English as a second/foreign language. The language issue is potentially a detrimental factor impacting on students' science achievement.

Both the second author of the commentary (Tsui) and I were brought up in Hong Kong, a former British colony. We probably experienced similar struggles, as learners to acquire conceptual understanding in science subjects in English as our second language, and as teachers to provide suitable language support to students in our science classes, especially biology which has a higher linguistic demand than physics and chemistry. Similar language issues in the science classrooms in Lebanon (chapter 3), Macau (chapter 4) and Malaysia (chapter 5) suggest that there is a need to both raise the awareness among science teachers of their role to promote academic literacy and to equip them with pedagogical knowledge to provide scaffolds to help students construct and express science concepts in academic language.

Hong Kong has returned its sovereignty to China since 1997 but the education systems are still independent of each other and thus I know very little about science education in China. The first substantive chapter introduced me to six main areas of SE research studies in Mainland China: curriculum and textbook; teaching; learning; teachers' professional development; scientific inquiry; and learning progressions and students' domain-specific cognitive development. I accessed and read 16 of the cited publications – something that would not be possible for someone without some proficiency in reading work in the original Chinese. I believe there must be many researchers from other countries who would also be curious about how Chinese researchers critiqued their SE curriculum, didactics, and so on. Perhaps there is a case for international journals to offer to publish more translated articles that were originally published in local languages?

The second commentary (chapter 12) by Jari Lavonen attempts to extract key points from the next four chapters of the section regarding the local and global factors influencing the quality of science education. It points out the commonalities and shared interests of SE among Singapore, Taiwan, Oman and Thailand. For example, they discuss the outputs of their SE policies on a global platform. Singapore and Taiwan are eager to promote regional and international collaboration. The Singaporean government is keen to promote talented students' participation in a variety of local and international programmes, such as the Science Mentorship Programmes and Intel International Science and Engineering Fair. Taiwan's participation in the establishment of East-Asian Association for Science Education (chapter

10) opens a platform for Asian countries and regions with wide variations in language, culture and educational systems to conduct comparative studies.

Lavonen observes that Oman and Thailand are working on seeking international recognition on the quality of teaching. Oman's science teacher training programme offered by Sultan Qaboos University has recently been accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation in the United States (chapter 8). Thailand has undergone frequent SE reforms: increased use of ICT, inquiry-based instruction and flipped classrooms etc., but the changes and innovations iterate all too fast to see an impact (chapter 11). The commentary ends with an observation that many countries study the outcomes of SE policies using secondary analysis of international comparative studies data. Comparative studies promote international collaboration and often PhD students are involved. So, it would be interesting to see if there could be more international collaboration to allow PhD education to be organised on a global scale.

I strongly believe that science education can be improved by international collaboration despite differences in language, culture and policies. This section reminds me of two projects of cross-country educational exchange projects initiated in Hong Kong. An Experiential Approach to Learning and Teaching in a Regional Educational Institution: Broadening Student Engagement (2016–2017) organised by Faculty of Education of University of Hong Kong, provided an opportunity for undergraduate student-teachers to be mentored by Thai researchers to produce quality STEM materials for Thailand schools. Hong Kong Jockey Club 'Learning by Doing' Academy assisted a group of teachers and their principal from a primary school to observe classes at five Finnish schools in 2016. After the trip, this primary school decided to customise an 'adaptation year' for their first-year primary pupils in 2017–18. Not only was the number of subjects reduced, the curriculum was also reformed and focus shifted from academic knowledge acquisition to self-management, self-confidence development, and autonomy in learning. The assessment was also changed from being paper-based to activity-based and it focused on measuring the progress of self-management. The successful experience of this school informed by the Finnish experience could serve as a role model for other schools in its own national context to adopt an active learning style.

Section two, content analysis of SE research, shows the trends and themes of published articles by Asian science educators. Over 20% of 365 articles on conceptual change in *International Journal of Science Education* (IJSE), *Science Education* (SE) and *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* (JRST), *Research in Science Education* (RISE) and *International Journal of Mathematics and Science Education* (IJMSE) had an Asian first or corresponding author (chapter 1). Among other notable points made, it is reported that Three Taiwanese authors (including Chiu, the editor of this book) were among the top 25 most impactful authors in Asia; that 23.5% of Korean SE research studies accepted by the three top journals-IJSE, SE and JRST between 2003 and 2007, altogether 204 published articles, are mainly about teaching and learning science in context (chapter 14); and that 45% of Turkish SE studies published in these top three journals (IJSE, SE and JRST) in the period of 1998 to 2002 were related to students' conceptions (chapter 15). Turkish researchers' contribution to international SE research has grown significantly in the past decade. Between 1998 and 2002, only one publication in each journal was published by a Turkish researcher. The number grew to 35 publications in each journal between 2008 and 2012.

The commentary on the second section (chapter 17) discusses two issues regarding the development of trends in SE described by authors from Taiwan, Korea and Turkey. The first issue is about how these trends are developed and how to avoid restricting the breadth of the research field. Parchmann, the author of this commentary, quoted Turkish author Sozibilir

and co-authors' concern about a dilemma about meeting quality assurance on the one hand and a risk of narrowing the broadness of the field on the other (chapter 16). The second issue is about the dominance of English-speaking authors in the global SE research community. She challenged the perceived practice of some reviewers expecting and demanding a study needs to demonstrate relevance for the US education system when a journal welcomes international authors. In contrast, it is suggested that, the same question is unlikely to be asked about US studies being framed to clearly show relevance for the rest of the world's educational systems (p.322, line 1-4). Parchmann describes her observation as the 'David against Goliath' phenomenon and explains that this phenomenon may make it harder for less-established Asian SE research communities to participate in the field.

Trends and limitations on research fields seem like two faces of the same coin. When there are more studies in one research programme, knowledge in this area grows richer than in other less-studied programmes, which encourages and supports further studies in the same programme: a criticism that was once raised in this journal in respect of the predominance of work informed by constructivist perspectives on learning science (Solomon, 1994). Therefore, a trend speeds up conceptual and methodological advancement of the popular area of research. If research trends seek to meet demands, then there should be many different trends, as needs for SE research and development will not completely overlap across diverse national contexts. If countries of similar culture, economic or educational policy development face similar demands in SER, trends may develop. When resources are limited (both research grant and human capital), it seems unavoidable that rare resources will predominantly be used to study particular research areas.

Section three, assessment and curriculum is the shortest section consisting of only three chapters; however, it is also the section that interested me the most. This section covers Hong Kong students' skeptical attitude towards School-Based Assessment (SBA) of their chemistry practical skills (chapter 18); how Israeli science teachers' teaching practices are influenced by international assessments like TIMSS and PISA (chapter 19); and Russian science teachers' sluggish improvement in creative thinking for instruction (chapter 20).

Hong Kong students' generally question the value of SBA, at least as they have experienced. Eighty percent of surveyed year 12 students from six schools reported that they did not receive detailed formative feedback from their teachers. Slightly more than half of the students reported SBA demotivating learning for several reasons: the workload was heavy, the same type of laboratory work was repeated, and the assessment was conducted after school or under examination conditions.

Israel has put consistent effort in boosting students' performance in international tests. Despite significant improvements, their scores remain below the international average. Author David Fortus suggests two contrasting explanations about the discrepancy between Israel's technology-based economy and dissatisfactory performance in international assessments. One explanation is that these tests fail to measure the knowledge and skills that underlie Israel's technological prowess. This is a more general issue with such comparisons: a nation could design its own curriculum and assessment programme to match well with the foci of the international tests, but this may mean compromising on the curriculum emphasis and structure that is thought to best meet the needs of its young learners. A contrasting explanation is that Israel's economic success draws from the talented people who finished compulsory education before the country began taking part in the tests. When these talented people retire from science and technology, younger generations may not be able to sustain the country's economy as the poor performance in the international assessments implies many students lack relevant knowledge and skills. Regardless of the true explanation behind the discrepancy, Fortus is strongly critical of the nation's examination-oriented

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education as most students are demotivated to learn (echoing the findings with Hong Kong students reported in the preceding chapter) and do not build a solid foundation in science at the end of compulsory education.

Methodology of chemistry teaching in Russia (also referred to as didactics) is facing stagnation according to chapter 20, as there is no active discussion on the scope of teaching methods. The majority of articles on didactics of chemistry were considered to be of very poor quality – resembling ‘scientific scam’ such that teachers come to consider what passes for didactics as merely phrase-mongering. Authors Teleshov and Zhilin claim that SE research in chemistry pedagogy in Russia can no longer be described as a scientific system that greatly influences chemical education. They believed the reason for stagnation lies in lack of interaction and feedback among specialists in Russia, and lack of connection with western educational research – for example, cognitive models and Johnstone’s triangle (Johnstone, 1982) are unfamiliar among Russian SE researchers. Readers who are interested in SE in Russia may, however, read about the scientific development of didactics of chemistry since the late 1700s in the chapter: where phases involving ‘accumulation of experience’, ‘networking’, didactics as science, ‘broadening’, and ‘expanding’ preceded the periods of stagnation and degradation. It would be interesting to know how widely this analysis is shared in the chemistry education community in Russia, and indeed whether similar situations are recognised in biology and physics teaching.

The commentary on the third section summarises the three chapters about assessing students’ performance and evaluation of teaching (chapter 21). It raises a question concerning the balance between (a) the necessity to evaluate teaching, learning and curricula and (b) the seemingly unavoidable perversion of the purpose of education by summative assessments. Though no solution is suggested, the commentary directs readers to ponder on the cause of problems that assessments bring – when the designed purpose of assessment diffuses over into non-educational areas of concern which Lederman suggests tend to be more political.

This section particularly provokes my thinking because assessment pressure has been a serious issue among students across many Asian countries (as elsewhere in the world) and among teachers who teach examination classes as they are accountable for the students’ performances in the standardised tests. The obsession with grades raises some pertinent questions. How well do students’ performances in standardised tests and in international surveys predict a country’s economic growth 10 years later? How many countries are doing well economically but their majority of young people consistently do not do well in these assessments? How well do quantitative assessments evaluate the quality of education? What is the rationale behind quantifying the quality of education? One can surely find official documents justifying assessments for educational purposes; however, many educators question how well high-stakes assessments meet their intended purposes.

Section four showcases how teachers and educators make use of technology for science learning. For example, chemistry lesson models linking science, technology, society and environment were trialled in Japan and Korea to promote environmentally sustainable development (chapter 22). Japanese authors Hiroki Fujii and Haruo Ogawa developed new chemistry lesson models and administered these with students in Japan and Korea. Lessons on the topic of biodiesel were carried out with students in both countries, while a lesson on the topic chitin and chitosan (polysaccharides obtained from shells of crab and prawn) was conducted with Japanese students who often encounter these two substances in their daily lives. (These substances are widely used in health food, and as antibacterial agents in clothes and cosmetics in Japan.) After the trial lessons, the students enumerated more terms demonstrating knowledge about the properties of the substances discussed, which was taken as evidence of learning. They also made

informed judgements on some 'Science Technology Society and Environment' issues based on their knowledge on the properties of those substances.

In contrast to this apparent success story, India developed an open resource via the internet for students, parents, teachers to meet the diverse needs of school systems in the country (chapter 23). However, the contribution to improving SE was minimal because of the lack of an appropriate culture relating to the resources by different stakeholders. The feedback of Indian teachers trying the resources suggested that there were issues with computer literacy which acted as barriers to teachers using the Internet and computer software in teaching. The majority of science teachers did not see the need for additional materials other than textbooks. They were sceptical that the use of computers and the Internet could boost students' scores. However, the Indian science teachers did appreciate the development of open educational resources for school SE in the regional language (Marathi).

The commentary on the fourth section summarises the chapters in the section about the development and implementation of innovative curriculum materials. It then elaborates on the slow progress of making environmentally sustainable development (ESD) a core vision in science curriculum reform. A key hindrance comes from the lack of conceptualisation of ESD as part of science literacy. Even ESD integration in the science curriculum is insufficient to promote ESD in the society as citizens may not yet be capable of handling science-technology-related issues in their daily lives. The commentary also critiques the adoption of innovative open education resources. Their integration into teaching depends on teachers' beliefs and knowledge about the application of digital resources. Author Liu argues that both teacher professional development on integrating open education resources into science teaching and evaluation of the effect of such integration are key to improve the quality of teaching with the use of digital resources. The last part of this commentary discusses some interrelated dimensions for successful scaling up of innovative curriculum materials: making a sustainable extensive change in classroom practice; wide-implementation across classrooms and schools; and developing internalisation and ownership of the innovative curriculum materials by teachers, schools and districts.

This section then contains both inspirational examples of good practice, and warnings of potential barriers to achieve educational objectives. Japanese authors Fujii and Ogawa suggested three key elements for innovative lessons to be effective in promoting education of sustainable development: (1) the topics should be highly relevant to students, (2) experiments and field trips to factories are integrated with classroom lessons and (3) opportunities are created for students to apply their knowledge of science and to display their creativity in addressing social issues. There can be several potential issues regarding the practicalities of this kind of innovative lesson, including the equipment and materials available in the school laboratories, additional transportation costs for trips to the factories (which can be very remote), the need for allocation of school staff to escort students on the field trips after school or non-regular school days. Moreover, the factories visited have to be able to provide guided tours to the public. If all these practical barriers are overcome, such innovative lessons would provide valuable experiences to effectively help students relate their scientific knowledge to everyday life.

I am rather pessimistic about the effectiveness of open educational resources in India, when the teachers did not even feel confident, nor consider it necessary, to adopt information technology in their teaching. As author Agarkar concluded, there was a need to raise awareness about the resources among the end users and a need to convince to them that these resources were useful. The mismatch between the effort to develop the open educational resources and the acceptance and usage by the target groups of people made me consider what triggered the initiation of the project. Agarkar explained this project was

aimed at changing the practice of teaching for examinations in India (so, again, assessment seems to drive educational innovation). In other words, this was a top-down approach without seeking opinions from the target groups of people about what they felt they truly needed. One could counter this with an analogy that consumers might not really know what they want and thus the producers ought to create a desire among consumers for the products. The problem is however that the stakes of examination success or failure are so high. Such examinations can curb the appetite of teachers for exploring new teaching methods and resources. The teachers tend to retain what they consider an examination-oriented teaching style.

Section five examines the rather distinct foci of professional development and informal learning in various Asian countries. The two cases of teacher development have rather different approaches, although both have a strong emphasis on context-directed educational research – here action research, and lesson study.

Teacher professional development in Japan, we are told by Tetsuo Isozaki focuses on globalisation retaining awareness of its Asian cultural context (chapter 28). The term 'glocal' has been used in Japan to suggest this hybrid of what is both local and global (Sumida, 2018). Different concepts of the term 'teacher' in Japan can be depicted by three different Japanese words which can all be translated as 'teacher' in English: *sensei*, *kyoushi* and *kyouin*. Among them, *sensei* is richest in its meaning in the Japanese context. *Sensei* refers to any professionals the society look up to: such as medical doctors and lawyers. From my understanding of this word, people with expertise in any fields (perhaps 'master' can be another English translation of *sensei*), both science and art, are also considered *sensei*. Therefore, *sensei* is an authority figure to be respected.

Schools in Japan are attached to teacher preparation institutions referred to as normal schools and higher normal schools in the same prefecture. The three bodies organise subject study groups for teachers to present their research findings and discuss within the group how their teaching competencies can be improved. They publish articles in educational periodicals about classroom practices, contemporary educational topics and reviews of published research studies in the region or across the country. The department of science in the higher normal schools also publish secondary school science textbooks which are authorised by the Ministry of Education. Pre-service and in-service teachers have practised lesson study since the mid-1800s. Teachers in Japan are engaged in research-based teaching training with the support of government bodies or scientific societies. Furthermore, they are not just respected because of their professional knowledge, but also because of their roles as mentors and life coaches. They are in charge of student counselling, school clubs and societies and get to know students as a whole. Given a high level of authority, responsibility and respect from the society, teachers and educators in Japan are considered to be dedicated to modernise science education independent of Western science education.

Teacher professional development in Israel focuses on leadership, action research, evidence-based professional development and teachers as curriculum developers (chapter 27). Developing leadership among science teachers was mooted to be about nurturing their ability to bring about changes in teaching. Through action research, the outcome of a change in teaching can be measured and evaluated to facilitate further improvement. Evidence-based professional development was about equipping teachers with pedagogic content knowledge (PCK) for integrating laboratory inquiry into teaching and learning. The final focus of teacher professional development prepared science teachers to integrate various science disciplines into a new curriculum, as part of the reform of SE in Israel. Having teachers involved in the process of curriculum design was believed to access a wider variation in pedagogical ideas including instructional techniques and teaching tools.

One of two chapters on informal learning also focuses on Israel where there is a strong imperative to take students outdoor to promote learning from nature (chapter 29), living in harmony with nature, and emotional attachment to the land. It is believed that only by knowing his or her motherland using all the senses, one can experience meaningful learning and construct correct and clear concepts. Nature education was dominant in science education until 1960s when the shift to 'value free science teaching' based on the structure of scientific disciplines and scientific methods began. Nature education was then reduced to occasional school field trips to designed 'edutainment' facilities like museums, archaeological parks and other sites. The idea of outdoor inquiry learning became a topic of discussion in science education when environmental sciences were introduced into Israeli high schools in the 1990s. Professional development was provided to teachers to enrich their PCK to lead the outdoor inquiry. In practice, however, it seems the vast majority of field trips were not well-designed to facilitate meaningful learning. Goals were unclear and were not discussed between field trip guides and teachers. Guides didactically transmitted information. Students' observations were not always addressed and they were rarely encouraged to explore the environment on their own. There are, according to chapter author Tali Tal, further issues. Education in Israel nowadays is more examination-oriented than before. Teachers are not confident to lead outdoor inquiry. Safety and security regulations make it difficult to take students to a wood or field. The country has become urbanised and it is more expensive to get to a field far away from school.

An alternative approach to taking children out of the classroom, is to access a wider range of resources in class. Informal learning in Thailand (chapter 30) aims to maximise local cultural resources in classrooms to raise students' interest in learning science. Such local cultural resources are called funds of knowledge – that is, those bodies of knowledge and skills needed for everyday functioning and well-being in a society, that have been developed and historically accumulated within that culture. It is suggested that the use of funds of knowledge in class might help more widely promote the impression that science is everywhere. Students' familiarity with, and appreciation of the relevance of, science could reduce fear and hence reluctance to embrace abstractness in science knowledge. It is an irony that although science is concerned with natural phenomena, Thai children, teens and young adults commonly think science is far away and irrelevant to their daily life. To raise the interest of science learning and instil a positive attitude toward science, the use of funds of knowledge is encouraged under the Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008, and all schools have been given the authority to design their own curriculum. Schools are thus empowered to integrate local wisdom and community knowledge into their curriculum. The chapter quoted several studies showing improvements in the outcomes of assessments in science since funds of knowledge were integrated into teaching. Students' attitudes toward science became more positive and they became more aware of the local culture. Readers who are interested can refer to the details in the chapter about a research project of developing teaching resources regarding funds of knowledge that match the science content of the national standard, that was separately trialled with a group of 13 primary school children and a group of 9 undergraduates.

I am particularly curious about informal learning in Thailand. It is an interesting research topic to see how traditional wisdom and modern science might go hand in classrooms. The use of funds of knowledge helps build students' sense of ownership of science knowledge and reduce the perceived distance between science and daily life. This may also help students perceive themselves as an insider of science, in contrast to perceiving only teachers and researchers in science as part of the science community.


The commentary on the last section considers three themes emerging from the chapters of this section that may undergird transformative teacher professional development: cultural context and local wisdom being central to teaching, supporting teachers as intellectuals in the transformation of teaching and learning, and how the definition of good science teaching is embedded within national contexts. These themes challenge the binaries that shape 'good teaching': formal/informal, teacher/researcher, insider/outsider and science/non-science. The commentary theorises that science teaching and being a teacher in science are strongly influenced by local wisdom, so to better develop teachers professionally, is to have teachers reclaim their agency to learn within context, to accommodate the local wisdoms of professional teaching communities as well as student communities. This resonates with the conundrum presented earlier that faces the editor of a book such as this in seeking to allow local (or at least national) foci to be presented without offering a volume that is more like the diversity of an anthology of verse than a set of coherent chapters providing common threads to give a sense of unity to the overall work.

This is not a new challenge: as readers of the volumes in the World of Science education series that have examined the same regions of the world – the volumes on the Arab states (BouJaoude & Dagher, 2009) and Asia (Lee, 2010) – will appreciate, such volumes can contain national contributions that are uneven in their approach and coverage. The present volume does not avoid this perception, but the use of thematic sections and end of section commentaries that seek to highlight themes (if unavoidably by sometimes making the reading experience a little repetitive in places) does help the reader find common threads. Overall the book manages to raise issues of common concern to many in the global SE community whilst allowing national priorities and emphases to be apparent.

It is impossible to report on all aspects of interest of SE research and practice of all the countries in Asia, the largest continent – with over 60% world population. However, editor Chiu has put much effort to be make this volume as comprehensive as she could by covering a wide range of countries to allow the SE community to learn about their history, achievements, challenges and aspirations for future development of SE research and practice. Though this book may not, indeed could not, provide readers with a both in-depth and broad understanding of SER of the featured countries, the topics selected by authors do represent key features of SER in their own contexts, and the commentary and editorial contributions highlight issues of wide cross-national interest.

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was 'freely interspersed with vernacularised forms of Persian and Arabic words' (p. 50). By drawing our attention to such layers of literary and linguistic complexity, the book helps in challenging many stereotypes about the alleged Hindu-Muslim and Sanskrit-Persian divide in the middle ages.

In its last chapter, the book takes a leap from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Through her discussion of *Rās Mālā* of Alexander Forbes, the first colonial history of Gujarat, Kapadia reiterates the larger argument about the centrality of local chieftains in the politics of Gujarat over the centuries. She finds great value in a text like *Rās Mālā* for it helps to take the focus away from 'imperial rulers like the Mughals and the Marathas' (p. 131). While this might be an interesting observation on the part of the author, it is important to understand the politics of the colonial histories like *Rās Mālā* that portrayed the 'Rajputs' as perpetual power wielders. Tod's magnum opus is another case in point. To be fair to the author, she does hint towards this but does not work out its historical implications for her own study.

The book is very loaded in terms of its arguments. In many ways, its novelty lies in the manner in which it deals with its 'sources' both as sources of information and as subjects of study in themselves. For this reason, readers might be excused for wishing that the book provided closer glimpses of the 'sources' in the form of more frequent and extended excerpts. For that would have provided the reader with a better view of the texture of the literary canvas in the fifteenth century.

Inconsistent spelling of certain non-English words and the more than occasional typographical errors are minor irritants in a book that should be a must read for those interested in historical studies of Gujarat, the literary cultures of the medieval period, cultural iconographies in a multilingual world and most certainly north India in the fifteenth century.

Sneh Jha

Miranda House, Delhi

RAMNARAYAN S. RAWAT & K. SATYANARAYANA, eds, *Dalit Studies*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016, 304 pp.

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Now that the scholarship on caste politics has moved away from the burden of adhering to the disciplinary injunctions put in place by the glories of India's nationalist movement, a new set of questions has emerged among its more sophisticated practitioners. These are neither decidedly political questions nor are they reducible wholly to the social. Instead, they have increasingly become epistemic in nature. That is to say, these questions seek to conceptualise caste oppression, its apparatus of power, at the very moment that they strive to unpack its machine-like rigour and conceptual coherence. For caste's violent *dispositif*, its

life-taking cruelty—which Ambedkar called its ‘system of graded sovereignties’—can exist in such a mutating, oblique, and adept form not because it functions in opposition to life but precisely because it is the sovereign concept in Indian conceptions of life as such. The challenge today, to put this paradox mildly, then, is to conceptually investigate caste’s ability to function as a concept itself, a concept not only *of* but *in* life, not only as an inorganic notion but an organic mechanism. Indeed, a freedom *without* caste—and not simply a freedom *from* caste in its negative, liberal sense—can only come from a freedom *outside* of this sovereignty of the conceptual division between the organic and inorganic, the living and nonliving, the touchable and untouchable: a division of which caste is the sovereign juridical articulation.

Here, especially, Indian political theory might be coming late to Ambedkar, who, in his prodigious 1916 essay ‘Castes in India: Its Genesis, Mechanism, and Development’, had already outlined the political manifestation of this sovereignty as a problem of obedience and office in Indian traditions. Not without reason do calls of reservation for Dalits and other backward castes in government office especially cause such anxiety even today in urban India (even as the clamour for reservations itself becomes universalised). Since we cannot retrace those genealogies and their moral psychological contours fully here, suffice it to note that the problem of ‘genesis’ in Ambedkar’s philosophy might be the key pivot of an anti-sovereign, planetary political thought, heterogenous to the liturgies of the nation-form that is still to come.

Roughly two generations of scholars that came before the current conjuncture had been compelled to understand caste as one of the several sites of disciplining, mobilisation, and resistance internal to the political narrative and liturgical rules of nationalist practice. Ranajit Guha’s *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (Cambridge, 1997) marked a crucial moment in this generational shift of Indian historiography and its twentieth century subaltern agenda, located as Guha’s later work was at the cusp of the extremely effective, if by then well-worn, paradigm of nationalist criticism on the one hand, and a galvanising new moment in the dialogue between Indian classicism and its explicitly punitive modern history, on the other. In contrast, a new wave of theoretical and political work places caste, in all its phenomenological density, its obdurate social ubiquity, and above all, its profound planetary salience, at the heart of democratic mentality itself.

Ramnarayan Rawat’s *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamars and Dalit History in North India* (Bloomington, 2011) marked a crucial turning point in this emerging body of scholarship. First, because it reinscribed untouchability—and the fecund world of Chamar and Dalit self-fashioning—at the centre of twentieth-century politics in north India, where genealogies of community and communal strife had for some time been the dominant—albeit not the only—concern. Gyanendra Pandey’s *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi, reprinted 2012)

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had cleared the ground here, with its influential move away from the historiography of the nebulous agrarian populism and 'unrest' of interwar United Provinces—of which historians such as Eric Stokes and Majid Siddiqui too were part—to the emblematic figures of colonial codification, such as the Muslim weaver or *julaha*. Shahid Amin's recent work *Conquest and Community: The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan* (Chicago, 2016) too continues his earlier interest in communitarian motifs as they shape national, popular story-telling in Uttar Pradesh. Rawat's work at once speaks to this earlier tradition in which strife played a crucial role in genealogies of belonging and banishment, and brings out, on his terms, the steadier textures of the history of identity-making in the colonial north.

Second, like Bernard Cohn's groundbreaking historical-anthropological essays on the Chamars, which appeared later in Cohn's *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays* (Delhi, 1998), Rawat's work subtly shifts the gravity of the caste question away from the social scientific paradigm of electoral interest towards the layered genealogies and popular archives of late colonial identity. It was a struggle for emancipation in which modern political rights were affirmed and asserted publicly in direct conflict with colonialism and its forms of knowledge (and against nationalism's subtly growing investment in the same regime too), yet, according to Rawat, in ways that remained simply irreducible to electoral vicissitudes of liberal democratic competition and opportunistic uses of the emerging social contract.

With *Dalit Studies*, Rawat and K. Satyanarayana deepen the scope of the dalit turn, bringing together a phenomenally rich collection of essays that at once probes and advances the concerns of the field on the whole. In fact, the editors do not stake their claim simply on behalf of one field among others. They propose a new way of seeing and touching the figure of the *dalit* itself. Such a project, clearly, must not simply be one of social justice or political assertion but of sensitively forcing an epistemological reckoning in Indian social science. Conceptually, the essays in this volume can be grouped into three overlapping sets, each following the thread of a specific modality of dalit question (although the editors themselves have arranged the contributions into two groups, one speaking to history, the other to the present). The first thread poses a question long associated with the work, among others, of Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd, Gopal Guru and, more recently, Soumyabrata Choudhury. Why is caste everywhere in India's social and political life today, its presence both as social identity and analytical category especially ubiquitous among theorists of knowledge (who still broadly come from the Brahmin–Kayastha complex), even as the figure and person of the dalit—Ambedkar's *bahishkrut*—in whose name they theorise remains a rarity in theoretical sciences, in fact barely seen in the practical arts of this very theory? Even if this monochromatism, which reproduces the invisibility of the dalit thinker in Indian thought and its institutions, is gradually changing its colour, the moral framework of caste, with its entrenched and oblique exclusions, still taints every political theory that emerges from South Asia.

This paradox animates Gopal Guru's intervention in the volume, which then sets the tone for the important essays that follow in the first part of the collection, titled 'Probing the Historical'. Essays by Hans, Jangam, Mohan, and Rawat—followed by Jodhka's contribution in the book's second half, titled 'Probing the Present'—highlight the fluidity of dalit identity by closely examining the long-term nuances of regional histories, including in the Punjab and Andhra. Theoretically close to these contributions is the second, overlapping set of essays by Satyanarayana, Gundimeda, Jodhka, and Shyam Babu, which together examine the contemporary openings and impasses of dalit remaking of democracy. This second set of interventions stands out for its robust refusal to unconditionally denounce the advances made by liberal democracy, a rhetorical temptation that has been for some time dominant on the global left (however heterogeneous), especially with the rise of majoritarian populisms out of the shambles of the neoliberal order in places as diverse as Turkey, the United States, Brazil, and India. Not surprisingly, class figures strongly in this set of essays (its legibility as a category now mediated more strongly by the question of reservations than, say, it was in the 1970s), and so does the problem of India's not very 'civil society' and its 'public sphere'.

Indeed, these last two categories—civil society and public sphere—appear in one essay or another, oddly complicating the success of the volume. After all, the abysmally low visibility, even presence, of Dalit and Muslim voices today in India is not just a significant problem that might be redressed by procedural means alone. It is a symptomatic blockage, constitutive of liberalism's civilisational prejudice that guards, like a 'barbed wire', the rules and logics of India's questionably urbane civility. Under these conditions, one would have wanted to press the contributors of *Dalit Studies* and ask what substantive value do these categories—and doubtlessly, they do—have for a radical dalit discourse? The third set of essays, in which we might place the contributions by Rawat, Satyanarayana, and Brueck, together pose the question that is today ineluctable. What would it take for the humanities and social sciences in India to move away from the *dalit* as a figure of 'caste politics', a term that itself reeks of liberal prejudice against it—and is used by liberals as such—and reinstitute in its place, as Satyanarayana brilliantly calls it (p. 166), a 'dalit politics of caste'?

For one, such reinstitution of *democratic politics as dalit politics* will require embracing the fact that such a project is fundamentally epistemic, and that, to rephrase Brueck's pithy formula, it demands a 'flipping' of the conventional analytical gaze that hierarchically structures caste and literary theory alike. Second, it will require *not* asking the caste question in its normative sense, of which dalits remain consigned to a non-part, at once asked to inhabit the realm of the question yet placed unequally and outside of it. Above all, it will require embracing the position that Ambedkar, in a moment of unbridled constitutional majesty in the Bombay Legislative Assembly in 1939, called the courage of being 'a part apart'.

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Then alone can the exemplary move that Brueck's essay makes be generalised to encompass dalit political imagination on the whole, one in which it is not Premchand's searing representation of caste violence but rather the dalit reading—or, under certain conditions, dalit incineration of copies—of Premchand's works that becomes a site of literary justice, a scrupulous heroism even, exemplified by those cast away by—and *in*—Hindi literature.

Is an Indian institution of such fearless equality possible? An equality at once specific to the Indian regime of use of bodies and still planetary in its theoretical vision? By way of a preliminary acknowledgement that such a possibility is real, let me end with one more crucial shift that militant articulations of dalit politics have produced today: the surge of interest in Ambedkar among scholars who have spent a fair part of their academic life either aggressively denouncing his thought as a product of India's colonial hangover or simply refusing to read him. Both these gestures have for decades reproduced the same belief: Ambedkar must be too conservative for postcolonial taste. The reversal of this doxa today, however, brings to light a fine-toothed liberal anxiety of dalit epistemic assertion rather than their endorsement of it (which dalit politics does not need). This anxiety in itself, revealed in the sheer generalisation of Ambedkar in our time, intimates that the project of dalit studies is now more important than ever, and that the task has only begun.

For now, then, by way of highlighting the penetrating challenge that the essayists in *Dalit Studies* have collectively mounted, let us simply note this. Not since *Subaltern Studies* has an entire framework of study been announced on behalf of those left behind by history. *Dalit Studies*, however, also does much more, and it does so with greater methodological liberty and decidedly greater diversity of voices than *Subaltern Studies*. Its challenges are much greater, its questions more formidable, its conceptual demands of a different order and of a different time. Yet, the agenda of *Dalit Studies* is less formulaic, its conclusions more open and understated. And its time might have come.

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NEELADRI BHATTACHARYA, *The Great Agrarian Conquest: The Colonial Reshaping of a Rural World*, Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2018, 522 pp.

DOI: 10.1177/0019464619840598

The reader may well ask why a book so deeply situated in the material and cultural landscapes of Punjab does not refer to the region in its title. As will become clear, this is because its subject is the larger colonial project of economic growth that evolved in the second half of the nineteenth century. It involved deep institutional transformations based on what Neeladri Bhattacharya calls the 'agrarian imaginary'

legacy of this great revolutionary. It will go a long way in establishing the fact that Bhagat Singh was a mature and a serious revolutionary and not a mere wayward gun-wielding nationalist.

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Sushil Kumar, *Liberal Humanism and the Non-Western Other*, Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, xv+340 pages, Rs 695

This book, written by a senior Professor (now retired) at the School of International Studies of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, during the tenure of his Fellowship at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, is a work of immense scholarship, which advances the author's own world-view in no uncertain terms. And this world view is as original as it is ambitious. One may have disagreements with it, as I do, but there is no denying the sheer courage and extraordinary effort involved in putting it forward.

The idea that the Enlightenment project in Europe was harnessed by the emerging capitalism of the period to provide a justification for imperialism, for annexing and subjugating distant lands, has been advanced by many, and forms the starting point of the book. The Enlightenment's very definition of 'rationality' was meant to legitimise this aggrandizement by metropolitan capitalism, which converted *nature* into a *resource*. It recognised only one unique concept of 'rationality', namely the one underlying capitalism, and universalised it and spread it to non-Western societies that had hitherto been devoid of it; and this provided an alleged rationale for imperialism.

Some authors have talked of an Alternative Enlightenment that challenged even at that very time this hegemonic discourse inaugurated by the Enlightenment, but the author does not enter into that discussion. His concern is quite different: after independence from colonial rule, many of the former colonies and semi-colonies, for the sake of 'modernisation', adopted the same world view that the Enlightenment had, and on that basis sought to impose upon their societies the same perception of what was good for them. They sought to fashion their own societies in the manner of Western Europe, and adopted for this purpose a 'top-down' model of social engineering.

They accepted the universal validity of the European 'model', and imitated the European way of organising the polity and society as the only way of achieving 'modernisation'. European-style 'democracy' and European-style 'secularism' were implanted into their own countries. Their

complaint against colonialism was that it could not care less what happened to *their* societies; *they* were now going to set it right by imitating Europe.

This concern of the rulers of the newly-independent countries, to repeat, was expressed through a rapid and thorough-going 'top-down' shake-up of their own economies and societies. They wanted their countries not to miss out on the European experience which alone, they felt, provided the way towards 'modernisation'.

This, the author argues was a misguided effort, which has brought much misery and strife to the people of these countries, and explains the predicament in which these countries currently find themselves. Much of the book is taken up with exposing this fallacious understanding. What the author would advocate in its place is the adoption of a Gandhian approach with an emphasis on what he calls 'value plurality', which entails the acceptance of a multiplicity of value systems and their spontaneous interaction instead of any attempt by the State to force particular values down the throats of the people. Correspondingly, he also advocates a village-centred development paradigm, in contrast to the current trend of globalisation that snuffs out all local products and imposes everywhere a consumerism directed at the products of globalised capital.

While there would be much agreement on what the author recommends, two broad questions can be raised *apropos* his argument. First, what he is suggesting cannot be implemented without abandoning, or at least curbing, the tendency towards capitalist development that is visible across much of the third world. Any such move would immediately invite retaliation from the advanced capitalist countries, so that effecting the changes he suggests is possible only with a revolutionary government. Besides, since not all means of production can be in the hands of village panchayats or Communes, there will be a substantial amount of property that would have to be owned by somebody outside of the panchayat and also outside of the capitalists. This perforce will have to be State ownership, even though the State would be acting on behalf of society at large. The author's view of the future 'good society' in short can be only a part of the socialist society, and not outside of it.

Put differently, capitalism is a spontaneous system. Nobody planned it, nobody runs it, and nobody is responsible for it, though its existence is defended by the capitalist State(s). Every economic agent is implicitly coerced by competition to act in particular ways, for otherwise he or she would be displaced from the position he or she occupies in the system and fall by the wayside. The specificity of the working class lies in the fact that it breaks out of this spontaneity to form 'combinations' and slowly acquires a political consciousness. But this consciousness acquires fruition only when the State(s) defending the capitalist order makes way for a different State; and this requires revolutionary struggles. We cannot in other words simply work out an optimal social arrangement and nudge society in that direction

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without going through struggles. And these struggles, if they are to have meaning, can only be the means to achieve socialism, though that term must incorporate diverse forms.

My second point is that the superiority of his concept of 'value plurality' over 'secularism' also raises many questions. The concept of secularism is based on a distinction: between the domain of religious life and the domain of citizenship. People are perfectly free to pursue their religions, but there is a domain of citizenship which is governed by rights and duties laid down in the Constitution, and this domain has priority over the domain of religious life. The State intruding into the domain of religious life in the name of secularism is not some arbitrary action imitating the European 'model', but is inevitable in the situation of a society that is working its way towards some sort of equality. In other words, the only alternative to secularism would be a theocratic majoritarian State, and not value plurality.

For instance would one object to the entry of *dalits* into temples? Would one object to the practice of untouchability? Would one object to State legislation giving a share of property to women? One certainly will not. But all these amount to interference by the State in the domain of religion (or more generally religious culture).

There are thus a whole range of issues where the State must intervene in the traditional religious and cultural practices, and this has nothing to do with imitating the European 'model'. Such intervention would necessarily cause frictions and conflicts, as the Sabarimala issue highlighted recently; but such conflicts must not be shirked. The essence of secularism lies in this. Value plurality would not obviate the need for such intervention if we want to progress towards equality; it can at best be another word describing secularism, but it cannot be a substitute for secularism.

The fact that these and many other questions come to one's mind while reading this book is a tribute to its stimulating character. I have dealt with only a fraction of the ground covered in this book. But a short review hardly offers scope for anything more.

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## Book Reviews

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KAVITA SIVARAMAKRISHNAN, *As the World Ages: Rethinking a Demographic Crisis*, Delhi: Harvard University Press, 2018, 336 pp.

*As the World Ages* is an interesting engagement with 'an ageing world'. Yet what is meant by ageing and the aged goes beyond the question of a global increase in older population. Instead it is the changing demographic patterns and inter-generational social relations that redefine the process of ageing in different socio-political contexts. For Sivaramakrishnan, as the title of her book suggests, the 'ageing world' becomes an imagination, where a Eurocentric view underlines that Europe has reached a matured stage of civilisational advancement, and that its aged should be protected in the same manner in which its cultural artefacts need to be preserved.

A Eurocentric approach to ageing carries with it the weight of an assumed collective social imagination and a seamless process of economic, social and demographic transition into a post-capitalist era. Nevertheless, the world is, and did not have, a unified homogenous experience of modernity; rather the expansion of Europe into Asia, Africa and the United States created a lopsided and an often deeply entangled problematic experience of modernisation, where changing demographic patterns, fertility, family norms and social structures were subjected to fundamental changes that had serious implications on the life of the aged. Societies, which were lately initiated into the logic of a globalised capitalist economy, found it increasingly problematic to cope with the problems posed by an extended life brought about by better medical care. Thus, lopsided economic growth and scant social security measures meant that it was increasingly difficult for the non-European world to protect its aged in its process of transition to the changing modes of a capitalist economy. Thus, even when the problem of ageing emerged as a major concern for the United Nations in the past few decades, there was no homogenous character to the problem as it was manifested differently in

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dissimilar contexts. Ageing became interconnected to the crisis of industrialisation, as it came to be interconnected to issues of migration and dependency leading to the breakup of the traditional social order. Thus, global concerns on ageing, on the one hand, re-inscribed the fragility of the non-European social systems in its interaction with a capitalist social system, and yet, on the other hand, it also brought back the guilt associated with colonialism and the extension of the Eurocentric capitalist economic system into the non-European world. What is meant by ageing changed with the rapid extension of life in Asia and Africa, where the aged emerged as a distinct category in accordance with the changing notions of chronological age.

While European socio-cultural and political concerns were seen to care and protect the aged, and where life was allowed to evolve into fullness, the non-European world was seen as spaces where ageing meant misery and neglect. Not only did European gerontologists visualise the other as unhealthy spaces of misery, in the process they also defined what is meant by ageing itself. For Europe, ageing was a natural process of birth, growth, maturity and decay, which in itself could be addressed through social support and care. Outside the boundaries of Europe, however, poverty, malnutrition and chronic diseases led to ageing much earlier in life. Thus, ageing was not just seen as a gradual process of the loss of vitality in accordance with chronological age, rather ageing also signified morbid bodies and societies, seen as hallmarks of non-European societies—an orientalist notion that evolved from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. Sivaramakrishnan discusses how the problems of the aged in non-European contexts are closely interlinked to the problems of development itself. One of the major challenges of the non-European world in the early decades of the twentieth century was to increase life expectancy by containing malnutrition and poverty, providing better access to safe drinking water and medical facilities, thereby addressing chronic diseases as a prelude to longevity. However, the extension of life in the former colonies brought about a whole set of issues, which disturbed the social web within which the aged was placed, leading to suffering, loneliness and misery. Thus, ageing as a social process seemingly reflected the civilisational contexts within which societies were located. Yet, even within the developed world, what is meant by ageing was highly diverse. For the United States, considered as a vibrant capitalist economy, gerontologists and policymakers placed society and its aged population within the idea of a productive economy, where the separation between work and ageing was rarely made. They considered that the European approach towards ageing was parasitic, static and unproductive.

The Indian situation shares similar patterns with those of China and Latin America, where state support for the aged was negligible. These non-European states were geared towards their primary objective of economic advancement and infrastructure building, which meant public resources had to be geared towards developmental goals. Being 'young nations', primarily in terms of their exposure to modernity, vital statistics, therefore, played an important role in defining the status of these non-European states. Here, the qualitative life of the old was of less

importance in comparison to infrastructure growth and development in defining state policies. The states did not also seemingly recognise the presence of the aged as a significant entity and as a collective that was to be supported. This was primarily because developing economies did not want to divert their resources to support an 'unproductive' collective; a growing statist agenda that looked towards Western states as ideal models for the future. Into the future, the old people were also seen as remnants of the past, who did not play any meaningful role in economic and social transition. Yet, in places like India, where social power was negotiated through a hierarchically defined social order, the aged continued to play crucial roles within families and societies. In such a context, the Indian state harped on tradition as an important mode of legitimising political and social authority. The onus of protecting the aged, therefore, fell on the younger members of the family by harping on the notion of guilt and debt to the elders.

One of the questions that could be thought of is the ways in which the aged in non-European contexts adapted themselves to new conditions of material and social life brought about with the increasing wave of modernity. Is it the aged who are reluctant to change or is it an ideology of being young that has replaced the aged and has silenced the voices of the aged? The non-European world continues to remain as spaces where families were bounded by interpersonal family-bonded relationships, where the aged were deemed to have a dominant presence within the family and the society, yet subjected to the fractured ways of non-European modernisation. Conventional understanding of Indian modernisation underlines that colonial experience repositioned traditional power structures and made relations within family and society rigid, where the elderly male patriarchal system took control over the economic arrangement of the family. In such a context, how are we to understand the process of ageing and the status of the aged within the family. Does extension of the aged in non-European contexts also bring back rigid social relationships, where the aged people were repositioned as the fountain of power within the family? Families work through a complex network of relationships where the interest of the dominant members of the community is often protected.

To imagine European experiences to have reached their pinnacle, they were also deemed as spaces where capitalist economy and social relations had seemingly reached a mature stage, where state-centred support mechanisms became hallmarks of advanced capitalist economies. However, for those who addressed ageing as a social and humanitarian problem, it was studied as a problem brought about by the intervention of capitalism in developing economies. However, the conundrum persists: we are unable to figure out or comprehend the role and status of the aged in non-European societies in a pre-capitalist era, nor are we able to understand the extent to which the aged adapted to the changing social conditions.

The book engages with the notion of what it meant by ageing or how does one categorise the 'aged', both within Western industrial countries. Kavita Sivaramakrishnan engages with the shifting contours of the notion of the aged across time and space both within Europe and elsewhere. Non-European communities,

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which were subjected to the influence of Western capitalism, had to come to terms with the new notions of individual and communitarian life and redraw their ideas of what it meant by the old. Thus, as Sivaramakrishnan puts it, 'the aged became the face of unfettered development and challenges'. Thus, the basic premise of understanding ageing arose from an attempt to understand the experiences that colonialism and a capitalist economy tended to bring about in non-European world.

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WHITNEY COX, *Politics, Kingship, and Poetry in Medieval South India: Moonset on Sunrise Mountain*, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2017, xvi + 312 pp.

DOI: 10.1177/0019464619840599

In the eighth decade of the eleventh century, three men related through ties of matrimony and refusing to see eye to eye with one another came to power in India. Two of them, Vikramāditya VI and Kulōttuṅga I, ruled for almost five decades each. The third and the youngest of them, Anantavarman Cōḍagaṅga, was in power for nearly three quarters of a century. Vikramāditya held much of the Deccan plateau to the south of the Godavari, Kulōttuṅga controlled the Tamil country and coastal Andhra, and Cōḍagaṅga, northern coastal Andhra and Odisha. Kulōttuṅga and Cōḍagaṅga apportioned between them the whole of the east coast, from Kanyakumari to at least the mouth of the Subarnarekha. With Veṅgi's integration into the Cōḷa domain, the five-century old contest between powers based in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu for its control came to an end. The three kings perfected politics distinct to them, and left behind enduring legacies. The Marathi, Telugu, and Kannada states founded by the Sēuṅas, the Kākatīyas, and the Hoysaḷas had roots in the rise in their fortunes under Vikramāditya, who promoted their regimes as military tenures involving revenue-farming assignments. Kulōttuṅga aligned himself with the Chidambaram temple, which in later times was to become a leading centre for pilgrimage in Tamil Nadu. This formidable legacy of Kulōttuṅga's paled into insignificance before the one that Cōḍagaṅga left behind in Odisha, the Jagannātha temple of Puri.

The political realignment of peninsular India during the long rule of the three kings is yet to invite the historian's gaze. The materials available for study are deeply fragmented, but all the same rich and copious. There are several thousand inscriptions and a handful of literary texts, most notably Bilhaṇa's Sanskrit *Vikramāṅkadēvacarita* and Jayaṅgoṇḍār's Tamil *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*. The book under review, Whitney Cox's *Politics, Kingship, and Poetry in Medieval South India*, is arguably the first attempt to give us a sense of what will be—if and when a historian writes it for us—an instructive piece of history.

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## Book Reviews

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Ravinder Kaur and Rajni Palriwala, *Marrying in South Asia: Shifting Concepts, Changing Practices in a Globalising World*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2013, 420 pages, ₹925. ISBN: 978-81-250-5355-2.

*Marrying in South Asia* is one of the most exhaustive and comprehensive books in recent times on the study of marriage. Editors Ravinder Kaur and Rajni Palriwala, have provided a rich and extensive variety of changes and continuities in practices of marriage in South Asia. The aim of the book, as they explain, is to examine the ‘complexities of changes and continuities in marriage in South Asia’. This poses a definite challenge for it is tricky to be able to speak of South Asia as a whole—a concern also outlined by the editors at the outset. Yet, a reading of the 18 chapters shows that Ravinder Kaur and Rajni Palriwala have indeed been able to ‘sensibly speak of marriage across the breadth of South Asia’ (p. 6), highlighting continuities whilst not compromising on the rich heterogeneity of cultures. They have examined key practices and strategies of match-making, including consanguineous marriages and impact of women’s education and employment on choices of spouse, and have also addressed cultural-specific practices and anxieties related to marriage as that of same-sex partnerships, Islamic contract of marriage (*nikahnama*), and family courts in India.

The editors specify that a key concern of the book was to not anchor the book around upper caste or elite perspectives on marriage practices and customs but ‘focus on practices and the multiple, disparate, and incoherent ideologies of family and marriage that influence individual and group choices’ (p. 6). The contributions surely fulfil this aim as, for example, Janaki Abraham’s “‘Why Did You Send Me Like This?’ Marriage, Matriliney and the “Providing Husband” in North Kerala, India’ that draws attention to the Thiyyas of Kerala, and not the Nairs, to explain changes in matrilineal societies. Whilst focusing on changes to

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the practice of virilocality, Abraham also notes adoption of certain customs which North Indian in origin and more popular in patrilineal societies such as Thiyya women dropping their *tharawad* name (matrilineal name) to take their husband's family name and increasingly wearing *sindhur* (vermilion in the parting of one's hair). Similarly, in "*Puraani aur Nai Shaadi*": Separation, Divorce and Remarriage in the Lives of the Urban Poor in New Delhi', Shalini Grover draws attention to the urban poor, and not the more widely written about middle class when she explains that the boundaries between primary and secondary marriages are flexible amongst this segment of the urban population.

Often works on shifts in marriage practices adopt a unidirectional perspective to explain changes by establishing easy and direct causalities, for example between employment and self-assertion in marriages. Ravinder Kaur and Rajni Palriwala have refreshingly not followed this simplistic framework and their book provides a more nuanced perspective highlighting the challenges and contestations to changes and continuities. For example, some chapters such as Johanna Lessinger's "Love" in the Shadow of Sewing Machine: A Study of Marriage in the Garment Industry of Chennai, South India' highlight the importance of employment for women's modern self-fashioning, and ability and opportunity to assert and espouse choice in love and marriage. At the same time, Amali Philips in 'Marriage, Women and Work: The Estate Tamils in Sri Lanka's Tea Plantations' and Anwar Shaheen's 'Marriage, Women's Economic Participation and Patterns of Support in Urban Karachi' argue that work opportunities and economic independence do not necessarily translate into gender equality and desired freedom. Another set of chapters look at the convoluted links between technology, modernity, and certain rules of marriage as inter-caste and preferential marriages, questioning the easy claim that modern technology has definitely altered these traditions. For example, Ravinder Kaur and Priti Dhanda's 'Surfing for Spouses: Marriage Websites and the "New" Indian Marriage?' draws attention to the role of the internet in match-making and acknowledges that it allows for greater individual choice—though with appropriate parental guidance. Priti Ramamurthy ('Marriage, Labour Circulation and Smallholder Capitalism in Andhra Pradesh') provides an insightful analysis of the dynamic relationship between 'new capitalism' (technologies of agriculture) and marriage practices. She argues that 'preferential marriage practices are being subtly transformed and in the process, they sometimes enable labour circulation in the service of capital, and at others, frustrate it' (p. 177). Lester Andrisi et al. ('Negotiating Marriage: Examining the Gap Between Marriage and Cohabitation in India')

explain the use of 'traditional scripts' such as early marriage but delayed cohabitation especially by families of brides so that allows there is time to educate their daughters during the interim. These chapters therefore, explain the complicated ways in which kinship, customs, and ideals of modernity interact with each other.

The editors tell us that an important consideration of this volume was to ensure that women's voice, gender, and contours of intimacy are well-documented (p. 6). Whilst all chapters cover these aspects, some contributions stand out. Johanna Lessinger ('"Love" in the Shadow of Sewing Machine: A Study of Marriage in the Garment Industry of Chennai, South India') comprehensively explains the meaning of love and marriage to women working in garment factory in Chennai, Makiko Habazaki ('Widowhood, Socio-Cultural Practices and Collective Action: A Study of Survival Strategies of Single Women in Nepal') presents the resistances and realities of single and widowed women, and Ashley Tellis ('Multiple Ironies: Notes on Same-Sex Marriage for South Asians at Home and Abroad') writes of LGBT communities' desires and ideas of family and marriage.

Whilst the book has several note-worthy features, I found two aspects particularly interesting. The first is the book's focus on consanguineous marriages and practices of dowry, which otherwise are often hastily explained away as being in decline. Chapters in this book, however, present a more balanced perspective. In her longitudinal and ethnographic study of a Sunni Muslim family of the Nawwayat Quam, Sylvia Vatak ('Change and Continuity in Marital Alliance Patterns: Muslims in South Indian, 1800–2012') notes a definite shift towards fewer cross-cousin marriages. However, she explains that close kin marriages are still preferred primarily by the bride's family. Similarly, Shareen Joshi et al. ('Why Marry a Cousin? Insights from Bangladesh'), argue that where 'marriage payments such as dowry are customary, consanguinity may be chosen when a family can neither afford a dowry nor credibly commit to paying a dowry in the future' (p 209). Sajeda Amin and Maitreyi Das ('Marriage, Continuity and Change in Bangladesh') trace a shift from bride wealth to dowry practices, as does Pushpesh Kumar in 'Transgressions, Accommodation and Change: Configuring Gender and Sexuality within Marriage practices of the Kolams'.

The second important focus of this book is on the non-state and non-family actors that validate and legitimise weddings and assist in settlements of marital discords. An outstanding contribution here is by Sidharthan Maunaguru ('Transnational Marriages: Documents, Wedding Albums, Photographers and Jaffna Tamil Marriages'), who brings much needed attention to the role of photographs and the photographer in

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being and 'witnesses' for a marriage that in turn determines a spousal visa status of Jaffna Tamils seeking visas for Sri Lanka. Katherine Lemons, in 'When Marriage Breaks Down How Do Contracts Matter? Marriage Contracts and Divorce in Contemporary North India', discusses the importance of *nikahnama* for local level adjudication, and Srimati Basu's 'Dreaming a Better Court for Women: Adjudication and Subjectivity in the Family Courts of Kolkata, India' is an ethnographic study of family courts and their ways of addressing marital grievances. Basu explains that family courts bring a certain 'newness' in the method of marital settlements, however the 'newness' itself is embedded in existing institutional and ideological structures (p. 366) such that the 'process and result' of these courts is gendered (p. 367).

*Marrying in South Asia: Shifting Concepts, Changing Practices in a Globalising World*, is a welcome contribution on understanding South Asian realities on marriage practices. At the same time, the book would have been further enriched by pushing an explanation of 'newness'—mode, imaginings, desires, and realities— of match-making, desire, and conjugality. In that regard, a chapter or two on the role of media—cinema, mobile technology, dating applications, would have been helpful (Dwyer, 2000; Hirsch & Wardlaw, 2006). Furthermore, a greater emphasis diverse forms of romantic experiences such as live-in relationships, would have certainly aided the editors interest in understanding 'contours of intimacy' (p. 6; see Agrawal, 2012; Titzmann, 2017). An inclusion of such themes would have ensured a more holistic insight into understanding shifts and continuities of marriage practices and, imaginings and realities of love and romance.

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Kalpana Ram, *Fertile Disorder: Spirit Possession and its Provocation of the Modern*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013, xiii+317 pages, US\$ 57 (hardcover). ISBN: 978-0-8248-3630-6.

DOI: 10.1177/0971521518807995

How can we approach spirit possession, the subject of several academic discussions on agency and power? In *Fertile Disorder*, Kalpana Ram uses her decades-long familiarity with south India and the Indian diaspora to provide a layered reappraisal of this much-studied phenomenon. In the process, she also examines dominant conceptions of subjectivity, agency, experience and consciousness.

If possession is a claiming of humans—often women—by spirits, it seems a strange terrain in which to wage such battles. Yet some women slowly accommodate—even invite—the spirits once experienced as alien beings. For the poor, lower-caste Tamil women who inform this study, possession arrives as affliction in lives already saturated with suffering. Yet some possessed women become mediums capable of healing others. These mediums have no training and little cultural capital when compared to other ritual healers and performers in the region. They harness their own suffering and draw from their pre-familiarity with a world where ‘mediumship is...an ingredient of the habitus’ (p. 183) to summon goddesses who heal and dispense justice. The book meets these challenges by mixing thematic investigation with critical uptakes of philosophical and analytic categories.

Knitting two main concerns, Ram considers, with a nod towards Michel de Certeau, spirit possession as a ‘minor practice’ (p. 9). First, the book reveals possession’s transformation into ‘a practice lacking a discourse of its own’, a decontextualised remainder ‘vulnerable to being reclaimed as an object of investigation’ for various modern disciplines (p. 63). This concern is met by examining social sciences and philosophy, government programmes, and modern emancipatory politics; demonstrating that these modern discourses and projects forward a ‘mentalist’ (p. 3) view of agency that privileges consciousness and mutes the body; and uncovering the attendant results in academia and politics.

Second, the book grafts insights gained by re-examining possession onto the study of diverse societies and practices (p. 69); it underlines that which ‘modernity leaves out of its adjudication’ (p. 272); and offers better ways to understand human beings, their suffering, their agency and their ways of inhabiting the world. The author achieves this through a series

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of moves. One, she repositions possession alongside wide-ranging and interrelated domains. Two, she identifies life itself, and the experience of 'ceasing to matter' for loved ones, as the primary sources of suffering. Three, Ram recovers the extensive breadth of agency and justice advanced through minor practices. Restoring the body, habit and temporality to social sciences and political projects also forwards these aims.

These concerns are cemented by demonstrating that agency emerges less through conscious knowledge than from bodily understanding, and that the modes by which mediums cultivate '*skilled* form of comportment' (p. 154) is not radically different from the non-conscious, non-intrusive skills in the 'most ordinary forms of perception' (p. 231). Dominant western models conceptualise the human subject in a continuous battle with a hostile world, and take agency as a heroic conquest of external obstacles. That such views have long overshot their origins is initially illustrated (part 1) through Indian intellectuals' support of family planning, and—in the Tamil region—the Dravidian movement's simultaneous uptake of rationalism and affect. This attention to colonial and postcolonial history, and to the spilling over, sharing and reworking—exacerbation, even—of modernity as an affective project, alerts us to Ram's critique of established moves such as comparison, relativism and ethnomethodology.

The book proceeds through other methodological and analytical orientations. Part 2 looks at the ethnography of women's possession by spirits and female mediumship in Tamil Nadu, and part 3 revisits social science models of possession and Marxist and feminist politics. The reorientations have multiple sources such as analyses of folklore, ritual practices and other popular culture domains; critical engagement with existing philosophical, governmental and political projects. Anthropological expositions of the female life cycle, possession episodes, healing sessions and life narratives are focal elements in the book's lively mosaic.

The ethnographic core of the book begins by critiquing sociological analyses that treat possession as either a manifestation of injuries caused by dominance or a short-lived, therapeutic holiday from subjection (Chapter 3). Instead, the book uses life stories, life cycle rituals and everyday practices to disclose that class, gender and caste hierarchies do not subsume all pain and suffering, that life itself is the domain of suffering, and that the most frequent human complaint is that of being neglected. This material also reveals that women's responsiveness to spirits is enhanced during moments of enhanced vulnerability in the

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female life cycle and that the positive valuation of fertility is accompanied by an abjection of infertility (Chapters 3, 4 and 7).

Simultaneous attention to folklore, cinema and memories of possession provisions, as it were, the spirits' stories. They transport us to a world marked by 'ontological continuities...and *transposability*' (p. 120) between humans, deities, demons, animals and objects. Ram argues that spirits emerge through the emotions and energy unleashed by untimely death (or arrestation), that they 'objectify...the force of arbitrariness' (p. 129) in human life and thus lend women some relief. Moreover, goddesses—phantom results of past injustices and neglect—attend to the afflicted and uncared for, dispense justice and deliver to complainants a sense that they *do* matter (Chapters 3, 4, 6 and 7).

Through women's journey into mediumship, the agency in their 'skilled forms of attunement' (p. 155) to spirits, and performativity in the divine courts where goddesses—like regional precolonial sovereigns—dispense justice (Chapters 5 and 6), we see temporality as fundamental to human existence. Mediums do not confront tradition as dead weight but rather appropriate it. This is not conscious strategy. It emerges from mediums' creativity with their pre-familiarity and bodily understanding of the world and others. The importance of temporality is bolstered by attention to mediums' interactions with spirits and clients. These interactions are marked by what Tamils call *palakkam*, the aspect of attunement or habituation that exists in wide-ranging situations and exchanges.

Ram considers *palakkam* along with Bourdieu's notion of habitus, and a phenomenology of body, embodiment, habit, place and time (via Heidegger on temporality and spatiality and Merleau-Ponty on body of habit, Chapter 6). She thus cautions against purely interiorised treatments of experience, poststructuralist assaults on the authorial subject (for indirectly diminishing our view of agency) and the pejorative tone to some models of performativity (that heighten scepticism over possessed women and female mediums). In the process, the author reveals similarities between agency in mediumship and agency in less extraordinary phenomena such as pregnancy, migration, child socialisation, writing, driving and dancing. Placing possession and mediumship alongside quotidian phenomena in a gesture of radical equivalence allows us to see agency's capacious ambit, not always predicated on individual choice, independence and consent.

The book's main strength lies in highlighting forms of agency that are not shored up on consciousness. The concluding analysis of the domain

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of emancipatory politics furthers such a gauging of agency. Chapter 9 examines some subcontinental feminist debates over agency, choice and consent, and argues that Marxism has a limited perception of agency and subjects (although Bourdieu makes for an odd representative of Marxist theories). Ram's ambition here is to defend us (individuals or groups) against astronomical demands to continuously resist subjugation and work towards empowerment (p. 217). By indicating that we are agential when we seek respite from life's 'existential ambiguities', the author illuminates the notions of justice and injustice that modernity's projects have swept under the carpet.

*Fertile Disorder: Spirit Possession and its Provocation of the Modern* is a textual *mille feuille* where multiple layers coalesce to give us a rich offering, one that advanced students of anthropology, gender, philosophy and sociology shall come to relish in stages, and over many readings.

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# Demystifying Indian Culture and Heritage

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The book under review begins by focusing on the multifaceted dimensions of Indian culture through time, and urging for locating what we identify as heritage in their wider context with reference to the artisan, patron, the times that produced them, and conditions that allowed for their persistence. Usually, it is the dominant cultures across time and space that are seen as our cultural pasts, largely because their tangible imprints are easily identifiable in the material remains of past societies. However, it is suggested that this was a perspective derived from our colonial inheritance, and recent perspectives are far more inclusive of the multiplicity of cultures in our historical pasts. What is seen as the culture of the elites or “high culture” was not bounded but shaped in communication and interaction with popular culture all through. The production of objects of art provides a good instance of the meeting of the two cultures. Flowing from it, cultures of the Dasas, Avarnas, Mlecchas, Yavanas, Sakas and Turukshas need to be recognised and retrieved for a better appreciation of our vibrant pasts. Neither cultures nor civilisations were immutable islands and that imposes on us the requirement to perceive them in their interconnectedness.

## Cultural Interactions

Ideas and institutions such as varna, jati, family, property, patriarchy and gender hierarchy were not given at any point in time; they evolved as a consequence of the conjunction of historical forces in varied locations and junctures. The spread of *janapadas* or settled agrarian localities and state-societies in pre-state areas—and these were continuous processes—expanded the ambit of cultures. Cultures like societies are not static but prone to change owing to internal developments

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Indian Cultures as Heritage: Contemporary Past** by Romila Thapar, New Delhi: Aleph Book Company, 2018; pp xl + 222, ₹599.

and external linkages. They mutate deriving from conversations and communication with other cultures, occasionally even overlaps. All through the second millennium AD, cultures in North India and the Deccan, as elsewhere, benefited and enriched themselves as a result of the fusion of cultural traditions of the locals and the Arabs, Turks, Afghans, and Mughals. Dance forms, music *gharanas* and even architecture manifest the resultant exuberance. The period also witnessed the translation of Sanskrit texts into Persian at the Mughal court and the integration of local and provincial elites into the Mughal nobility. Admittedly, there were conflicts of interests between the local elites and the Turko-Afghan and Mughal ruling classes, but, as we are reminded, so were there confrontations earlier between the Brahmanas and Sramanas. Colonial expansion and the idea of race had much to do with the understanding of cultures of the colonised from the mid-19th century onwards.

In colonial constructions Indian society, including the village community, caste system and gender relations were projected as static, and the ruling indigenous aristocracy—the bulwark of the British Raj—and their cultures were seen as worthy of mention. That perhaps explains the slant towards the “high” or dominant cultures and the exclusion of the popular and multiple cultures.

The discussion then moves on to heritage, which is inextricably tied to culture. Early British efforts at understanding Indian society and history were influenced by their Brahmin collaborators

and centred on Sanskrit and what they called Hinduism—an amalgam of deities and sects with various rituals, practices and texts, without precluding possibilities of the believer of one deity or sect having respect for other deities. Buddhism and Jainism were deemed to be a part of Hinduism despite their distinct ideas and institutions and Islam being a Semitic religion was not considered to be useful in perceiving Indian realities. Caste and religion in this perception then became the ingredients that constituted India. The reader is reminded that Indian borders have always been porous, and the sociopolitical and cultural linkages with Southeast Asia and Central and West Asia and their influences in the shaping of our heritage and cultures need to be factored in. The north-western frontier has experienced waves of migrations from the post-Mauryan times to the times of the sultanate and even after. The layers of cultural influences involving social practices, customs and traditions have been integrated and absorbed in the region over time. The Gandhara School of art bears testimony to the early fruitful interactions between cultures. As should be obvious by now, culture is not static and it is for us to appreciate and understand aspects of continuity and change through time. Viewing things through political lenses tends to distort and shrink the available possibilities.

An object or idea as heritage is an inheritance from the past. However, it needs to be located in its historical context to fully capture its significance, and not shorn out of context in constructing a cultural memory. In elaborating the argument the author makes fascinating use of the Ashokan inscriptions and associated issues, especially the Allahabad pillar inscription with its remarkable history over three millennia from the time of Ashoka to Jahangir, through Samudragupta. It leads to important questions such as who selects this heritage, for what reasons, and what we ultimately come to accept as heritage. Heritage is usually invoked to assert identity for various purposes. But then, we are told, that it raises the larger issue of the inclusion of a wide range of cultures, especially

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those that go beyond the elite, to justly claim to be representing Indian heritage.

### Sense of Time and Science

Time was perceived and used differently by segments of society depending on their concerns and in that sense, it is said, it is a metaphor of history. Cultures in India were familiar with both cosmological and historical time. Unlike the colonial construction of cyclic time, and by implication imbuing the absence of a sense of history to India's past cultures, in their conscious creation of the Other in the imperial climate of the 19th century, it is suggested that various forms of time reckoning were known in early India and they were familiar with both cyclic and linear time. Puranic literature, *Caritas* (biographies), *Vamshavalis* (paths of succession), regional chronicles and inscriptions used particular forms of time depending on their function and purpose. The layered representation of time is indicative of different segments of society viewing their pasts in dissimilar ways. One may add that on closer scrutiny within the cyclic view of time, certain linearity is also built-in. This is a fascinating chapter rich in interconnected histories through time.

Further, science as culture is located in society, and its spread is explained with reference to interactions, imitation and assimilation. The meeting of cultures in the past created the congenial atmosphere for major breakthroughs in sciences. Therefore, claims to who got their first are of little relevance. The Neolithic Revolution signalling the shift to agriculture and concomitant developments had its early origins in different parts of the globe, unlike the Industrial Revolution later. The latter through conscious control of knowledge owing to its association with power generated its own problems. In premodern times, there was a network of relationships between China, India and West Asia, which allowed for free flow of knowledge. The turn of the Christian era was marked by an expansion in medicinal knowledge in India. The shift from experience to experiment and analyses was remarkable. Buddhist monasteries played an important role in disseminating and contributing

to the science largely because of their concern for the well-being of the monks. Paradoxically, however, the physicians' association with diseased people cutting across jatis placed them in a low social category in Brahminical society. This was the period when India was open to West Asia and the Hellenistic world. Touching on the debate on how to characterise premodern sciences, Thapar concludes that because what is called proto-science actually happened to be the predecessor to science in the times of the Enlightenment; it would be in the fitness of things to call it science. Ideologically-driven scientists of recent years should take a leaf from the fact that the credibility of scientific knowledge lies "in ensuring that the rational is not converted into the irrational."

### Forms of Exclusion

In her treatment of women in early Indian cultures by juxtaposing the Brahminic and Shramanic traditions, the author successfully brings out the trends and possibilities in this area of study. Pointing to the limitations of the general expression status of women in early India, which was usually in circulation during the national movement, we are informed of the need and usefulness of studying women in their varied roles in society. The wife of the householder in Buddhist literature was substantially different from that of the *dasi*, who had to engage in doing the routine household chores. The wives of the peasants and artisans who shared in reinforcing family incomes would have been placed somewhat in between these categories. The distinction between the *ganika* or courtesan and the prostitute is again a pointer to the difference in their training, cultural accomplishments and consequently their status and earnings. While the Dharmashastras marginalised women and ensured their subservience to patriarchy, Buddhism and Jainism opened an alternate world for the nuns where they could engage in the pursuit of higher qualities with some degree of autonomy. Admittedly, within the *samgha* too she had to submit its rules framed by the monks. Differentiating between categories of women helps us to understand

them in terms of their social locations. Interestingly, the courtesan and the nun did not find endorsement in the Brahminic literature, nor was "opting out" of society acceptable to them. However, the Bhakti movement and the rise of women saints such as Andal, Akka Mahadevi, Lallesvari and Mirabai questioned and undid the norms laid down by the Dharmashastras. These contestations are as much a part of our inheritance as the often cited normative Brahminical texts.

In denying women the *upanayana*, Brahminical society not only equated them with the Shudras but also "de-varnaised" them. This was a part of the series of hierarchies it created for itself. The Vedic Dasas, Mlecchas or those who were culturally different or inferior to the Aryas, the Yavanas or Hellenistic Greeks or those coming from the West, and the autochthons or Adivasis were the Other as envisaged by the ideologues of early Indian society. Among themselves the varna/jati order created its differences and divisions. However, the inclusion of several groups, including the *dasi putra* Brahmanas, into the fold of Brahmins and the ritual provisions laid down for the conferment of Kshatriya status on ruling elites suggest the inherent flexibility in the caste system in spite of its veneer of unchanging timelessness. Strikingly, such adjustments did not extend to all the communities. Exclusion of some kind or the other is practised in other societies too, but its manifestation in India with regard to the Chandalas is unprecedented. They had to live outside the settlement, receive leftover food and were ascribed with "genetic impurity." Their pollution was emphasised to ensure the continuity of their essential services such as scavenging in urban settlements, carrying dead animals and maintaining the burial ground. Besides, their landlessness also was a source of assured labour during peak agricultural seasons for premodern agrarian societies. Even Christianity and Islam could not alter this extreme form of exclusion.

### Spirit of Enquiry and Plurality

Knowledge is perceived as heritage that one generation leaves for the next. But then how is it to be cultivated and nurtured?

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Educational institutions need to focus on critical enquiry, and for it to happen students need to feel free to ask questions about the world they inhabit. Systematic questioning is tied to reading the basic works in the area, and it leads to better insights. This is an argument against having to learn out-of-date knowledge or learning by rote. There is also a plea for encouraging well-equipped libraries, new thinking, creating conditions for having knowledgeable teachers and bilingual education, which uses both the language of socialisation and the language of knowledge. The author is rightly critical of the use of one language, and the transmission of knowledge through translations, because they do not keep pace with the production of knowledge, and the thoughtless game of numbers in education. This is intertwined with an interesting short history of the changing forms of the language of knowledge, from Prakrit and Sanskrit to Persian followed by English.

The dreams, efforts and hard work that went into the making of Jawaharlal Nehru University into a world-class institution that nurtured and helped to imbibe

some of the best practices, including, discussions, debates and new thinking have been beautifully woven into the thought-provoking essay. It is precisely because of its ideological antipathy to these ideas and values that the present regime is out to destroy this seat of higher learning along with some such institutions through the country. Universities are sites of nurturing the incorporative spirit of our cultural inheritances, and centres where multiple competing ideas should be allowed to bloom.

We are cautioned against the idea of the singularity of culture, usually linked to cultural nationalist claims of invented identity for political reasons. Nationalism is always inclusive of several cultures and all identities do not have to be subordinated to the national identity, or the identity of the majority. The idea is to make the reader aware of the many cultures in Indian society. Cultures are intertwined with history and are dynamic and vibrant. Migrations and interface of cultures and the consequent mutual borrowings and incorporations, we are told, need recognition. Interestingly, the legend

in the Ghaznavid coins was bilingual in Arabic and Sanskrit, and the Ghurid coins carry Islamic titles and Shiva's bull Nandi, while some of them carried the ruler's name in Sanskrit. Furthermore, the Qutub Minar complex bears inscriptions suggesting its repair when necessary by Hindu craftsmen, as well as the attribution of the success of the renovation to their deity Vishvakarma. Significantly, it reinforces the larger point that the coming of the sultanate did not constitute a break in all important areas and practices, notwithstanding the usual shibboleths.

All those interested in the cultural and social history of premodern India and its bearing on contemporary times, as well as what ails India's present education system, and why our young minds usually do not ask the necessary and relevant questions, leave alone find appropriate answers for them, will find this work by Thapar, as always, intellectually stimulating and extremely useful.

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## Making Economics More Accessible

RAHUL DE

The Indian economy has been one of the fastest-growing economies in the last 15 years and has become an important standard by which to compare the development of other national economies. The successful transition to a high-growth economy has been discussed regularly in the mass media and used as a platform for election campaigns by political parties. However, this coverage has rarely focused on the structural imbalances in India's growth model such as increasing inequality, agrarian distress and lack of social security for informal workers. While governments have been celebrating their achievements in bringing growth, urban development, global products and modern jobs, few have focused on the social and ecological consequences of these changes. *Economics*

**Economics of Real-Life: A New Exposition** by C T Kurien, New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2018; pp 249, ₹995 (hardcover).

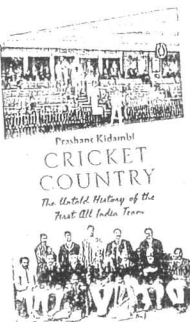
*of Real-Life* by C T Kurien comes at an important junction, where more people need to be informed about the economy's structure and the consequences of the high-growth model being followed in India.

### Economics for Daily Life

Kurien claims in his author's notes that the main motivation to write this book was to inform the lay public about the economy. This requires not only more information about the Indian economy but also communicating the theoretical tools and conceptual foundation to make sense of development and policy. This

book's ambition extends beyond the one stated by the author, to introducing readers to a different framing of economic theory. The author states that he wants to shift the emphasis of economics from a set of models and normative evaluations about markets and individuals, into a more complicated picture that conceptualises the economy as a "network of interactions of a variety of agents which are undergoing transformations over time" (p 11). The author wants to include the role of uncertainty, dynamic interactions, historical context, international relations, power structures and social relationship to understand the economy and its current condition. In doing so, he challenges the traditional "neo-classical" ontological premise of studying economics through economic variables and mathematical models. Instead, he presents a conceptualisation of economics which is embedded in day-to-day life. He states that this book is concerned with "human beings ... like you and me whom we confront in daily life" (p 19). The primary

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books Prashant Kidambi

Cricket Country: The Untold History of the First All India Team | Penguin | 446 pages | Rs 599

# Still, Baloo Spun It Square

The first cricket tour of England by an Indian team in 1911 reflected the zeitgeist—the contrasting pulls of nationalism and religious/caste identities

BY ALAM SRINIVAS

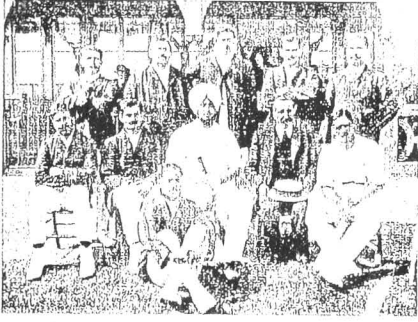
**T**HE *Untold History of the First All-India (Cricket) Team*, which toured England in 1911, is a narrative of the game's controversial, conflicting and contradictory relationship with colonialism, nationalism, communalism, commercialism and caste/class differences. The composition of the team is revelatory. An elitist, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala, led the team for reasons that didn't include cricket. The original 16 was chosen along communal lines—apart from a Sikh skipper, there were seven Parsis, four Hindus (later five), and four (later three) Muslims. Among Hindus were three Brahmins and two Dalits, Palwankar Baloo and his brother, Shivram.

For the colonisers, the aim of the tour was to inculcate Western ideals and values in the 'orientals' through cricket. As nationalist feelings turned radical/armed revolutionary, the rulers perceived that the gentleman's game could bring 'natives' closer. Cricket was seeped in 'benevolent paternalism' and 'Britannic nationalism'. Some Indians "sought to promote a reassuring image of India in Britain" in times of "intense mutual antipathy and antagonism". Others thought in nationalistic terms—what if the browns could beat the whites at the latter's game?

Such feelings resonated and echoed as Indians adopted the game in the 1850s and form the basis of Prashant Kidambi's *Cricket Country*. From the late 1870s, the Parsis, who were the first to become expert cricketers, began to win against English clubs in Bombay. After the English 66th Regiment lost to Parsi Cricket Club in 1877, the "defeated soldiers lashed out at the Parsi spectators" by "wielding their belts". The Parsi and other Indian communities savoured such victories as nationalistic wins, feeling "equal, if not superior" to the English.

As Parsi domination continued, domes-

tic cricket evolved on communal lines with the emergence of Hindu Gymkhana and Islam Gymkhana in Bombay. Communal tensions were visible when these teams played each other, and were interspersed with nationalism when one of them won against an English team. Many felt that the 1911 tour would enhance feelings of Indian-ness, and dilute communal disharmony. A letter writer remarked, "In an eleven consisting of Hindus, Parsis, and Moslems, each one will instinctively feel that he is an Indian first, and a mem-



Communal tensions were visible when the religion-based teams played each other. Many felt the 1911 tour would enhance Indian-ness and dilute communal disharmony.

ber of their race afterwards."

Within the religious divide, caste and class played a definite role. Kidambi notes that the educated middle class and the elite (including Indian and princes) were the "principal adherents of the game". Educational institutions that imparted Western teaching popularised cricket too. This explains why more than half of the 1911 team hailed from Bombay, which had an "extraordinarily dense network of (British-style) institutions". Given such roots, it was almost logical for the game to become a prism through which "Hindu

society was forced to reassess the insidious effects of the caste system".

At the heart of this caste debate was one of the country's best cricketers, Baloo Bahaji Palwankar, a Dalit spinner, and his two cricketer brothers, Shivram and Vithal. The fact that these untouchables played for the Hindu and Indian teams illustrated the "progress that had been made in the cause of Hindu social reform". For critics, it highlighted the "deep-rooted caste prejudices that defined Baloo's long cricketing career". Initially, his team members wouldn't eat with him. Only the efforts of the English, who appreciated his skills, and intense public criticism, forced his entry into the Hindu team.

Princely politics was enmeshed with cricket when the Indian Rajas realised its benefits. This was epitomised by Ranjitsinhji, who became the Nawab of Nawanagar only because of his legendary exploits in England. The captain of the 1911 side, Bhupinder Singh, initially refused to travel, but changed his mind. The reason: his belief that through cricket, he could reach out to British officials in England, who could overrule their officers in India, who were apprehensive about the Raja's character and ability to rule. Singh hardly played cricket on tour and successfully networked with key bureaucrats.

From the beginning, commercialism went hand-in-hand with cricket. The 1911 team was partly financed by the Tata Group, which funded Mahatma Gandhi's struggles in South Africa and the Indian nationalist movement. Among the earlier Parsi patrons were businessmen like Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney. Hindus and Muslims had their backers—Gujarati traders and Khoja entrepreneurs. The English aristocracy hosted the 1911 team and the earlier all-Parsi teams that travelled to England. British governors, soldiers, journalists and publicists pushed for the 1911 tour. In essence, the first all-Indian team marked the culmination of several social, political, economic, and cultural factors. □

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Book Review

***The Reflective Teacher***  
***Case Studies of Action Research***

**AUTHOR:** NEERAJA RAGHAVAN

**YEAR OF PUBLICATION:** 2016

**PUBLISHER:** ORIENT BLACKSWAN PVT. LIMITED, CHENNAI, INDIA

**PRICE:** ₹ 270

**ISBN-13:** 978-81-250-6045-1

Recent discourse on Teacher Education in India has been greatly emphasising on developing 'reflective teachers' and observing 'reflective practice as the central aim of Teacher Education' (*National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education* 2010, p. 19). Further, recent studies on Teacher Education in India have also pointed towards what has to be done and why it has to be done. However, no study has elaborated upon how it can be attained. The book, *The Reflective Teacher: Case Studies of Action Research* written by Dr Neeraja Raghavan begins to fill this void in the Indian context.

Situating her work in the frame of action research, the author proposes

'reflective thinking' which helps teachers in reviewing and improving their practice in the light of evidence and changed values related to the practice. The book is a product of the action research undertaken by teachers at the Azim Premji School in Uttarakhand, under the guidance of facilitators from the Azim Premji Foundation.

The book is divided into three main sections—the first section discusses the broad theoretical disposition around the 'action research method' and 'reflection'. Through a detailed theoretical discussion and research-based studies, relationship between action research and reflection has been

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established and rationalised in this section. It also discusses in detail the aims and setting of the study, and a 'snapshot' of the teachers involved. The second section is based on the detailed field data which includes a range of sources like the facilitators' diary, teachers' plans, field notes, learning, reflective journals, etc. The third part of the book provides an in-depth analysis of the teachers' action research documents and classroom observations with the theoretical linkages (especially with Dewey's and Schön's work). The author provides around 60 pages of analysis of the overall process of action research and its outcome, in the form of developed reflective practice in the concerned teachers.

The author has tried to develop and explore reflective thinking in teachers through 'action research', where they have to find out one problem related to their teaching method or approach and then accordingly, plan, develop strategies, take actions, assess, reflect and document the processes and critical issues. A total of seven action research problems are identified by nine teachers in the area of reading-writing, scientific observation, place value, etc. The author has provided details of the action research and discussed them at great length, emphasising the importance of understanding various practices in the field.

The teachers have recognised the importance of thinking, planning, reflecting and responding to the

problems occurred during the action research and reflection writing and documentation. It is observed that with the process of appropriate documentation of action research, the quality of reflection has increased considerably. The author discusses that '... Mohit (a teacher) acknowledged an increased sensitivity to students whose mother tongue is not Hindi and realised how he may well have assumed that their silence earlier was indicative of ignorance', and 'his action research resulted in acknowledging (and questioning) the prevalent bias towards written and spoken means of expression' (p. 213). Thus, his action research experience forced him to revisit and dismiss this belief. Discussing another example, she wrote, 'Madan's (another teacher) changed practice of using the combination of phonetic and Whole Language Approach resulted from his questioning the efficacy of a single approach to teaching language' (p. 206). The author also emphasised in the book that teachers mentioned that now the focus of their discussion, planning and reflection has changed from what the teacher is teaching to what the children are learning (p. 130).

The book emphasises that if teachers are supported and given enough confidence in carrying out research-based inquiries, they tend to express their keenness to change their beliefs and adapt to new teaching methods (irrespective of their multiple years of experience). To be a reflective practitioner, this support is essentially needed, and hence,

availability, quality, appropriateness and sufficiency of the feedback given by the facilitator or mentor are significant. However, this book does not discuss in depth what particular kind of support is required and how teachers were supported by their mentor. This book is a fundamental step towards understanding the culture of reflective practice as an essential component of professional learning and securing the future of quality education in India. The book is quite useful for Teacher Educators who are interested in assisting

and understanding the process of reflection in teachers (those who are directly engaged with teachers in becoming reflective practitioners at both pre-service and in-service level) as well as for researchers who can use it as reference in developing tools in the field of studying reflection as a practice.

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