

EDUDOC SERVICES: BOOK REVIEWS



Book Reviews

September - 2019



LIBRARY AND DOCUMENTATION DIVISION

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

National Council of Educational Research & Training

Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi - 110016

Phone: 01126592316, 26592237, 26592317

E-mail: dldi.ncert@gmail.com

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 **September, 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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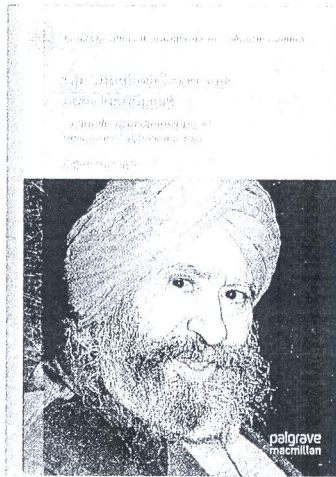
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The practical economist

The biography of the economist Ajit Singh is also the history of the tactics neoclassical economists have adopted all over the world to drive out reality-based heterodox economics. BY AMIYA KUMAR BAGCHI

THIS is the most impressive intellectual biography of any economist I have ever read. It is eloquent and passionate, engaging closely with every theme Ashwani Saith touches, be it Ajit Singh's Punjabi Sikh background, his early engagement with the support of student demands in Cambridge, his opposition to the Vietnam War, his almost 50-year-long battle to save the core of the Marshall-Keynes-Kaldor tradition of economics as a subject grappling with real-life problems from the neo-classical mafia of theory without content, and the enormous contribution Ajit made to economics as a professional. The book sometimes appears to be hagiographic, written by his PhD student, Ashwani Saith, but Ajit attracted affection amounting to reverence from his other students also. For example, when Andy Cosh, another of his PhD students, was offered by Queens' College, Cambridge, a Fellowship to be created in his name, Cosh wanted it be named after Ajit: so there is now an Ajit Singh Fellowship in Queens' College.

Ajit came from a privileged Sikh background on both his mother's and his father's side. Saith's use of



Ajit Singh of Cambridge and Chandigarh
An Intellectual Biography of the Radical Sikh Economist

By Ashwani Saith
 Palgrave Macmillan, New York

Pages: xxxviii + 463
 Price: \$113.99

“radical Sikh” as the appellation of Ajit is justified, because Ajit was radical, and he wore his long hair covered with a colourful Sikh turban as a proud marker of his identity without being a regular gurdwara-goer all his life. He was born in Lahore on September 11, 1940, to Sardar Gurbachan Singh and Pushpa (nee Bawa). Gurbachan was a sub-judge in the Punjab judiciary and Pushpa, a university student. Pushpa's family stood in the direct line of descent from the third Sikh Guru, Amar Das. Ajit's paternal grandfather was Deputy Inspector General of Punjab Police. Pushpa studied in a “convent” school and enrolled for a BA in history at the elite Kinnaird College. Her maternal grandfather

was a doctor. After Partition, Ajit's father rose to be a sessions judge in Ambala. Both his parents were keen that their children study in a local government school with vernacular (not English) as the medium of instruction so that education would not distance them from the ground reality of their country.

Ajit was a precocious student. In 1955, aged 15, he enrolled for a BA degree at Government College for Men, Chandigarh. He chose to study Sanskrit for nationalistic reasons and mathematics as the main subject. But, in his own words, “in order to understand how India could become a modern, prosperous country”, he also studied economics. There was no formal faith instruction in Sikhism at

home. There were no regular *diwan* trips every Sunday to the gurdwara. These trips were limited to gurpurabs, Diwali and Baisakhi festival days; the annual *akhand path* and monthly *sangrant* were performed at home. There was a separate *darbar sahib* where the holy book, Guru Granth Sahib, was kept. But ritual obeisance to the book was not taught to the children. Pushpa's mother being a Hindu, the children learnt tales of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana and sang bhajans.

Ajit got into politics in college. He won the election to be president of the students' union of the college, but the principal forced him to stand down in favour of then Punjab Chief Minister Pratap Singh Kairon's son. The second brush with the principal was more serious. The principal had upset the entire student body by using his arbitrary authority over some disagreements, and the students went on strike. At this time, the annual college magazine was released, with a full-page photograph of the principal. When the principal arrived in the classroom, student after student ripped out the page containing the

photograph of the principal. The latter picked on Ajit as the ringleader, and as punishment his marks were arbitrarily docked in the ensuing examination.

JOURNEY TO U.S.

Experiencing this harassment, Ajit decided to leave India for further study. In the winter of 1958, Ajit secured admission to Howard University, Washington, D.C. In that city, he was welcomed by a network of Sikh families. Through the influence of his Sikh friends, he obtained a job in the India Supply Mission and with those earnings he financed his evening studies at Howard. He also took the lead in organising gurburabs. Howard mainly catered to African Americans and Ajit came face to face with racism, a form of internal colonialism. Ajit completed his MA in economics with straight As in 1960. On the advice of a Sikh cab driver, Ajit made a three-day journey to Berkeley, California, arriving there penniless. Another Sikh lent him money to tide him over. There also he found support from the expatriate Sikh community.

At Berkeley, Ajit won the competitive interdepartmental Alice J. Rosenberg Fellowship in 1961-62, boosting both his reputation and finances. He mentions being particularly influenced by Harvey Leibenstein, Dale W. Jorgenson and Tibor Scitovsky and realised that his inclination was in testing theory with facts; this was further strengthened under the influence of Brian Reddaway at Cambridge. Serendipitously,

Robin Marris was spending a year at Berkeley, when he took on Ajit as his research assistant in the summer of 1961. Marris arranged for Ajit to go to Cambridge to work on Marris' magnum opus, *The Economic Theory of Ma-*

nagerial Capitalism. Marris thanked Ajit fulsomely for his help in his book.

When Labour won the election in 1964, Marris joined the government as an economic adviser, and Ajit took over his teaching. Alan Brown left Cam-

bridge for a Chair at Bristol, leaving a gap in the Department of Applied Economics (DAE) and in the teaching at Queens'. Ajit joined the DAE in 1964-65, and in the course of 1965 became a Fellow (Economics) of Queens'



FEBRUARY 17, 1981: Miners picket outside the Nantgarw/Windsor Colliery near Caerphilly in South Wales. Under Margaret Thatcher, new laws allowed employers to sack strikers, reduced dismissal compensation, forbade workers to strike in support of others, repealed protections preventing courts seizing union funds, and made unions liable for huge financial penalties.

THE HINDU ARCHIVES

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and Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Economics and Politics. Saith (page 62) gives a list of South Asians and Sri Lankans who did their PhD in Cambridge, from the 1950s through the early 2000s, which begins with Amartya Sen and ends with Sukti Dasgupta. I would add to that list G. Uswatte-Aratchi, S.K. Rao, Jitendra Gopal Borpujari and S.M.P. Suriya Aratchi.

When Ajit joined the faculty of economics and politics, the Vietnam War was raging. As in other universities, the faculty was divided between hawks who wanted the Americans to continue the aggression and doves who wanted them to withdraw from the war. Ajit naturally belonged to the latter camp. According to Martin Bernal, Ajit and he had been involved in protests against the Vietnam War from 1962. Ajit and Tariq Ali were involved in the teach-in on the Vietnam War at Oxford Union on June 16, 1965. On the American side, there was not only the U.S. Ambassador, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr, but also the Labour Foreign Secretary, Michael Stewart. Stewart and especially Lodge were so raucously heckled by the audience that Lodge appealed to Christopher Hill, who was chairing the meeting, to bring the audience to order, but to no avail. So the teach-in ended in chaos. Ajit immediately followed this up by writing a booklet, published by CND, in which he demolished Stewart's arguments point by point.

From 1969, Ajit was actively involved in addressing several thorny is-

ssues, including the reform of the examination system that the students of economics demanded. The first formal Staff-Students Examinations Committee was set up in Lent 1969 and was jointly chaired by Nicholas Kaldor and B. Rivers-Moore for the students, with Ajit as a member; a second Staff-Students committee was set up with William Brian Reddaway and Rivers-Moore as co-chairs and Ajit as a member. There was finally a third committee set up by the Faculty Board to look into the specific issue of having a by-dissertation-only option as a substitute for written examinations, again with Ajit as a member. It shows how much Ajit was central to the whole process and how much students trusted him.

Of the reform proposals, the dissertation-only alternative to Part II was dropped but the other proposals were sent by the Faculty Board to the General Board for approval. But the General Board peremptorily rejected the proposals. The Faculty Board persisted and asked the General Board for its rationale. This was immediately followed by a huge Staff-Students meeting in Lady Mitchell Hall. This meeting became confrontational, with students from other faculties being present and demanding student representation on faculty councils and boards.

After a student sit-in there was an inquiry by Lord Devlin into the events. Devlin first wanted to know what Ajit Singh and Bob Rowthorn, both

members of the Faculty of Economics, had said in Lady Mitchell Hall. Ajit then overnight prepared a crystal-clear document for Devlin. The latter was impressed both by this document and another prepared by Ajit, a 24-page statistical analysis of the pairs of marks from first and second readers. Though Lord Devlin pulled up the student body for excesses, the student body had effectively won its argument at the highest level, so the university was now obliged to introduce changes demanded by the students. The students' arguments had clearly been boosted by Ajit's radicalism and hard work.

BATTLE OF IDEAS

From the 1970s, a battle began between Keynesians, post-Keynesians, Marxists and other heterodox economists on the one side, and the neoclassical economists on the other side. The neoclassical side was led by the triumvirate of Frank Hahn, Partha Dasgupta and Robin Matthews, and those ranged against them by Ajit and Robert Rowthorn (the latter changed sides later). Behind the triumvirate was the benign presence of James Meade (who also happened to be the father-in-law of Partha Dasgupta), who was the author of an elaborate neoclassical theory of growth and whose Nobel Prize was primarily for the neoclassical theory of international trade. What Hahn and Co. wanted to do was to mathematise economics into pure theory without content. They accused the heterodox economists of mathematical illiteracy

(although one of the three had done badly in the Mathematics Tripos and minted gold by shifting to economics). The heterodox side comprised some brilliant mathematicians, David Gawen Champernowne, Brian Reddaway, Richard Stone and Richard Goodwin. Except for Stone and Goodwin, who used formal mathematics in their work, the others generally followed the Cambridge tradition descending from Marshall to Keynes of hiding their mathematics in footnotes or appendices, giving their findings in clear prose. Goodwin was a creative mathematician, collaborating with Le Corbullier and Iliya Prigogine (a Nobel laureate in chemistry) in his work and using differential equations to solve a variational problem in his paper "Optimal growth path for a developing economy" (*Economic Journal*, 1961). His short paper for the Maurice Dobb Festschrift, modelling the Marxian theory of growth cycles, has generated a huge literature.

So the battle over the soul of the Faculty of Economics and Politics was not about the use of mathematics in economics but whether economics would be based on empirical evidence or not. Ajit, with his firm grasp of sophisticated statistical methods and his determination to confront all hypotheses (or theories) with hard empirical evidence, was a natural leader of the group. That Ajit was no respecter of persons was shown by his *Economic Journal* article in 1975 in which he refuted the theory of takeovers put forward by Robin Marris,

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the person who eased his path to Cambridge. Before I go on, I must correct a misapprehension of Saith, who writes on page 89 that "Kahn and Sraffa, Keynes and Robertson, or Kaldor and Sraffa, were unlikely to consult each other". In fact, Kaldor and Piero Sraffa were good friends and went mountain climbing together. For many of that generation, for example, Joan Robinson, Sraffa was the final arbiter on questions of theory. Saith calls Sraffa a recluse, but he was not: he was choosy, as I know from my own experience. Sraffa used to have long conversations with Amartya Sen, Luigi Pasinetti, Pierangelo Garegnani and Krishna Bharadwaj.

To get back to the main story of the fight over the control of the faculty, if Hahn was Machiavellian in his tactics, so was Ajit. In the election of the Faculty Board, members of the Faculty of Economics and Politics as well as members of the DAE had voting rights. The latter, being hard empiricists, were naturally on the heterodox side. Ajit would mobilise all faculty members as well as DAE members on his side. But the seniors in the heterodox camp had little strategic sense. They failed to recruit young hopefuls on their side. For example, they did not try to retain Pasinetti or recruit Amit Bhaduri, one of the most brilliant theorists of the younger generation.

AGE OF CAPITALISM

In the meantime, the external environment turned increasingly in favour of the neoclassical economists. (*The Golden Age of*



JUNE 1982: British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher with U.S. President Ronald Reagan during a summit in the Palace of Versailles, France.

Capitalism: Reinterpreting the Postwar Experience was a book co-edited by Stephen Marglin and Juliet Schor, published in 1990. Two years earlier, in 1988, Andrew Glyn, in collaboration with Ajit Singh and two others had published a working paper, "The Rise and Fall of the Golden Age".) The wages and working conditions of workers in the advanced capitalist countries of western Europe, north America and Japan were boosted by post-War reconstruction in Europe and Japan and the investments of countries trying to catch up with U.S. technology, which had come out economically much stronger than before. Workers' movements and the threat of spread of communism led most western European countries, formally social democratic or not, to institute wide-ranging social insurance measures such as public healthcare, free education up to the university level in Germany, France, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries, scholarships for

poor students in the United Kingdom, old-age pensions and insurance, unemployment insurance, and so on. In several countries, public utilities such as railways, electricity and gas were brought under public ownership. Rates of investment in advanced capitalist countries were unprecedentedly high and labour productivity rose faster than before. For the world as a whole, manufacturing output more than quadrupled between the early 1950s and early 1970s.

The whole structure began to unravel when the U.S., battered by the costs of the Vietnam War and competition from a resurgent Germany and Japan in crucial sectors such as steel and automobiles, had large, unsustainable balance of payments deficits and decided to delink the dollar from gold in 1971 and thereby greatly disturbed the currency markets. Also, the profitability of capital had been eroded by high and rising wages, and capitalists began their counterattack, getting the state to undertake repress-

ive measures against striking workers, banning trade unions in their companies and so on.

The counterattack acquired massive force with the election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister of the U.K. in 1979 and Ronald Reagan as President of the U.S. in 1980. Even before that, the appointment of Paul Volcker as chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York marked the advent of monetarism and the pursuit of deflationary policies in order to protect the assets of the wealthy and creditors in general.

In Britain, Margaret Thatcher smashed the miners' strike by building up enough coal stocks, getting some miners to work and using the police to break up pickets by miners. The coal industry was privatised in 1994. Under Margaret Thatcher, new laws allowed employers to sack strikers, reduced dismissal compensation, forbade workers to strike in support of others, repealed protections preventing courts seizing union funds, and made unions liable for huge financial penalties.

Changing the law was not, however, enough: examples had to be made. The government inflicted "a series of defeats on unions in set-piece battles with the public sector, and encouraged private sector employers to take on the unions". The first to face Margaret Thatcher's iron fist were the steelworkers in 1980, who lost a 13-week strike battle and would pay the price with thousands of jobs. She also privatised public utilities, the railways, electricity

and gas. All of them were downsized and trade unions lost members. By the time Margaret Thatcher finished her 11-year reign, trade unions had lost half their numbers. As Sir Alan Walters, official adviser to Margaret Thatcher, told me at an Asian Development Bank seminar in Manila: "I told Mrs Thatcher to kick the trade unions, and go on kicking them when they were down."

THE CAMBRIDGE STORY

To go back to the Cambridge story, the first attack by Sir Keith Joseph, the Minister for Education in the Thatcher government, was against the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), then headed by Michael Posner, a Cambridge don. Posner managed to persuade Joseph to allow the inquiry to be made by Lord Rothschild, a respected zoologist and scientific adviser to several governments. Rothschild renamed the SSRC as Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in 1983, ridding the word "Social Science", which, according to the Conservatives, turned its scholars into troublemakers.

One of the first groups, headed by Wynne Godley, as head of the DAE, was the Cambridge Economic Policy Group (CEPG). There were basically two reasons for this. "First, the economic strategies—such as import controls on manufactured goods, keeping out of the European Common Market (ECM)—recommended by the CEPG were not compatible with the new orientations of the government and its finan-

The first issue of "Cambridge Journal of Economics" featured Ajit Singh's important paper on deindustrialisation of the U.K. economy under the impact of globalisation.

cial back-stoppers, the IMF [International Monetary Fund], which underwrote the precarious bottom line of the economy" (Saith, p.118).

"Second, the CEPG analysis forecasts and policy prescriptions were quite unpalatable for the Tory monetarists" (Ibid). In 1982 the SSRC decimated the funding for the CEPG, which it did without paying a site visit or engaging in any significant consultation. As a protest Godley resigned as head of the DAE, and the Hahn group secured its first scalp.

The Cambridge Growth Project (CGP) was started by Richard Stone and Alan Brown in 1960 and received substantial SSRC funding support from 1967 onwards under various chairmen.

From 1981, however, "the CGP applications met hostility from SSRC, and in 1987, after a couple of rounds of grudging conditional extensions, funding was rejected altogether, leading to the termination of the project and its team of researchers. The decision was made by a Consortium comprising, among others, experts from the Bank of England, Her Majesty's Treasury, and the SSRC itself" (Ibid, page 120).

The next stage of the attack on the DAE was operationalised by an unexpected Review of the DAE by the General Board of Faculties of the University. The Review lasted from 1984 to mid 1987, the Review hanging like the sword of Damocles over DAE staff.

The Review recommended that the DAE should be managed by the director and a management committee of professionals—mostly outsiders—with no representation of the DAE staff. It also recommended separation of the sociologists from the DAE. The new director of the DAE was David Newbery, a staunch member of the Hahn camp. The vote bank of the heterodox economists was greatly weakened and the victory of the neoclassical camp was more or less complete.

The truncation of the faculty and the DAE resulted not only in the expulsion of the sociologists to a new faculty of Social and Political Sciences (SPS) but also in the termination of economic history after the retirement of Phyllis Deane, and the extreme truncation of development studies. Many of the heterodox economists, but not Ajit, migrated to the Judge Business School, led by

Alan Hughes. When *The Economic Journal* was taken over by the neoclassical economists, the Cambridge Left started *Cambridge Journal of Economics* (CJE), with Brian Reddaway, Goodwin and Luigi Pasinetti as patrons. The first issue featured Ajit's important paper on deindustrialisation of the U.K. economy under the impact of globalisation. The CJE has continued to thrive both professionally and financially.

I will not try to summarise Ajit's contributions to the theory and practice of economic development or on stock markets. On the latter, his basic contribution was to show that the stock market is rudderless: it neither operates efficiently, nor does it reveal fundamental values. Takeovers are more a matter of financial muscle than of perception of undervaluation of firms. Ajit also crafted policies for industrial development and advised many governments in the Third World. What is remarkable is that his energy in fighting battles of the Left and writing an enormous number of papers on diverse subjects remained undiminished over a 35-year-old battle against Parkinson's disease. What is also remarkable is the number of collaborators he could attract: I counted 24 of them.

This book will be useful not only to the aficionados of Cambridge University but to all students of economic development and of the tactics neoclassical economists have adopted all over the world to drive out reality-based heterodox economics. □

Food for thought

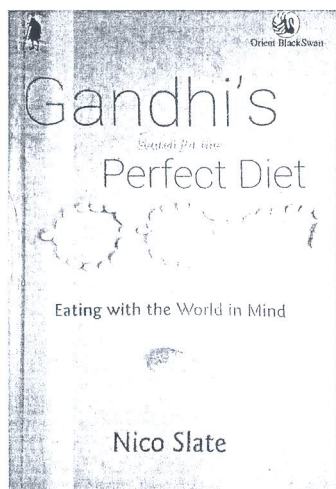
The book explores Mahatma Gandhi's obsession with diet and food and his experiments and innovations in them to improve health and nutrition. BY J.N. SINHA

TO add to the vast body of literature already existing on Mahatma Gandhi, a fresh series has appeared on the centenary of his first visit to Champaran, Bihar, in 1917. The earlier literature deals mostly with his contributions to India's Independence through a non-violent struggle that inspired people across the globe.

However, this focus has meant that Gandhi's extensive experiments in his personal life and his innovations in the socio-economic domains were ignored. All of them have deep implications for the development discourse, the role of science and technology in human progress, and for the environment. From this angle, the book under review, *Gandhi's Search for the Perfect Diet: Eating with the World in Mind* by Nico Slate, is a welcome addition. It is a work that has insights from various disciplines, but I review it as a social historian of science.

SEVEN CHAPTERS

The book is divided into seven chapters: "Salt"; "Chocolate", "Goat Meat and Peanut Milk", "Raw, Whole, Real", "Natural Medicine", "Farming" and "Fasting". The simple-



Gandhi's Search for the Perfect Diet

Eating with the World in Mind

By Nico Slate
Orient BlackSwan,
Hyderabad, 2019

Pages: 237
Price: Rs.850

sounding chapter titles are deceptive, however, as the chapters contain intricate details culled from diverse sources and analysed from various angles. The introduction sets the tone for the study, briefly sketching Gandhi's approach to diet in terms of his sociopolitical and ethical grounding and goals. Through Gandhi's diet preferences, Slate follows his evolution from a shy and reticent student in Britain to a public leader. Gradually, the author delves deeper into Gandhi's passion for diet and food in general, a theme little examined in the past or, at least, never in the way Slate has done.

For Gandhi, diet was crucial in life in many ways: Personally, he was concerned about diet to

keep himself healthy to serve humanity, and control over his palate was an exercise in control over his temptations and desires.

Beyond that, in Gandhi's view, the correct diet was vital for national health, productive labour and national development. Many of the ideas and practices that defined his diet also "came to shape all facets of his politics: not just non-violence, but also tolerance, humility, and relentless experimentation" (page 6), the author underlines in the successive chapters.

The author starts with Gandhi's views on salt, chocolate, sugar and sweets (Chapters 1 and 2) and then tackles Gandhi's engagement with the issues of vegetarianism, and this

mirrors his non-violent opposition to colonial rule. He associated himself with the vegetarian movement in Britain before he turned to South Africa and finally to India (Chapter 3).

"Raw, Whole, Real" looks at the problems of poverty and backwardness of the country and Gandhi's concern for the diet and health of the poor. Raw food "would emancipate not only India's poor but also its women. If cooking could be avoided, ... women will be set free from the prison-house of the kitchen", Gandhi believed (page 80).

As he pursued multiple goals—the unity of India, the end of poverty, and the liberation of women—he juggled multiple dietary plans to achieve them (page 80). While focussing on the various elements of a diet, he also tried to find substitutes for them from the wild, and after experimenting with many plants and tubers, he recommended some of them for public consumption, including *luni* (purslane), *chakwat* (white goosefoot), *sarsau* (mustard) and *suva* (dill) (pages 97-98).

The author looks at simple facts or episodes and unlocks deeper meanings in them though he occasionally fails to grasp

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AFP/SOTHEBY'S

GANDHI (middle row, fourth from left) and his close friend Hermann Kallenbach (next to him) at Tolstoy Farm, Transvaal, South Africa, in 1910. Gandhi had conjured up a romantic view of self-sustained village life. He tried to recreate it, first at Tolstoy Farm and later at his ashrams in India.

their subtleties. Gandhi is shown to have imbibed ample influences from the vegetarian movement in Britain, but the impact of his indigenous culture, including Jain influences, is somewhat underestimated (though referred to on pages 26, 50-51). Maybe it is an error in understanding the background.

Nonetheless, Slate has presented an excellent history of Gandhi's dietary evolution. The Mahatma is shown to perceive some kind of violence even in the pursuit of agriculture and consumption of fruits (pages 95-96). In that, he may be seen as one of the earliest exponents of what we call "deep environmentalism" today.

The chapter "Natural Medicine" talks about Gandhi's perception of

food as a preventive agent against illness. For this and to mitigate widespread starvation, he researched and experimented with numerous ingredients, developed new recipes and even offered them to celebrities such as the American activist Margret Sanger (pages 113-18).

HEALING PRACTICES

He also scrutinised all forms of healing practices—Ayurveda, Unani, naturopathy and allopathy. He criticised the traditional schools for the tall claims they made without evidence. He opposed modern medicine but praised its practitioners for not shying away from learning from others and for owning up to their mistakes. By the mid

1930s, Gandhi was undergoing significant changes in his attitude towards Western medicine and modern science essentially because of their emphasis on evidence, data and experimentation (pages 111-12). While he learned from all traditions, he praised "evidence-based medicine" rooted in nature and diet (page 101).

Gandhi's interest in food led him to look at farming and agriculture, where he was confronted with a variety of problems. Malnutrition and starvation introduced him to famine and unequal land distribution and, finally, to the role of colonialism in the matter. Gandhi had conjured up a romantic view of self-sustained village life. He tried to recreate it first in South Africa

at his Tolstoy Farm and later at his ashrams in India. But his stint in rural India revealed the harsh realities—poverty, starvation, malnutrition and insanitary conditions.

Therefore, he stepped up his efforts to alleviate the situation. He prioritised innovation in diet. He experimented himself and consulted with experts in the field, such as Wallace Ruddell Aykroyd, director of nutrition research in India. When the All India Village Industries Association was founded in 1934 to promote rural uplift, Gandhi brought on its board the noted expert Robert McCarrison, Director of the Nutritional Research Laboratories, Coonoor (pages 90-91, 135-36). Thus, "Gandhi developed an ecological diet that respected the many connections between his food and his physical, social, and political environments. He re-

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THE HINDU ARCHIVES

MAHATMA GANDHI, with a six-year-old Indira Priyadarshini, during his 21-day fast in 1924 in Delhi for communal amity.

financed nutrition in a way to build a more just world" (page 4).

Initially, Gandhi considered the measures the colonial authorities took during famines to be philanthropic. But once he realised the complexity of the problem, he traced the genesis of famine to colonialism. Thus, food became a tool of his opposition to the Raj. The starvation during the Bengal famine of 1943 laid bare the realities. Unequal land distribution was a major contributory factor but was tricky to deal with because many of the big landlords were members of the Congress. So, while Gandhi did not give up the issue altogether, he chose to appeal to the rich to address it on moral grounds; however, he himself stepped up initiatives on the issue in many ways. He had already been employing fasting as a method to achieve his political, social and ethical goals; over time, he used it also at the level of spirituality (Chapters 6 and 7.)

Slate concludes with an intricate discussion on Gandhi—the man and the Mahatma—torn between

worldly desires and spirituality. The author inquires into Gandhi's psyche and philosophy, illustrating his points with examples such as Gandhi's love for mangoes and his fond relations with Sarla Devi Chaudhurani, a Bengali feminist who at the time was working for women's empowerment.

A little baffled, Slate, a historian, calls on experts from other disciplines to resolve the puzzle that goes beyond both diet and science (pages 162-69).

Slate is no doubt impressed by the Mahatma, and the epilogue is in part a tribute. He happily notes that many key elements of Gandhi's diet (raw, vegetarian and fasting) are undergoing a "renaissance" and there is a movement afoot "to link food to the social and economic empowerment of the poor and to the health of the planet".

The book depicts Gandhi's obsession with food—which resembles a phenomenon medically known as the eating disorder anorexia (page 8)—in numerous instances. But one must not forget that Gandhi was almost

equally obsessed with everything he decided to work at, be it the freedom movement, the practice of ahimsa, sanitation, communalism or the *charkha* and khadi. He had the stamina and capacity to work on many things at the same time and still maintain his composure. His daily routine was packed with engagements, yet he never lost sight of his concerns relating to freedom for his countrymen and for humanity from subjugation, exploitation and poverty and the welfare of all species. This was apparent also from his diet. His constant interest in experimenting and innovations in diet as a means to good health were ultimately aimed at many of his life goals. He kept ethics and the socio-economic considerations of the country always at the forefront, Slate demonstrates.

There are many things one can learn from Gandhi's experiments. The present-day agencies dedicated to food and nutrition in India may learn valuable lessons for research and food and agricultural practices. Gandhi's approach in re-

gards to calories, nutrition, suitability and economic viability for people employed in different sectors, particularly those involved in hard labour, deserves attention. Was Gandhi a faddist or futuristic? Most of his dietary fads have been favourably validated by science now. Additionally, his approach and preferences (as the one for raw food) are not only feasible for everyone but also reduce energy consumption and may increase economic productivity and reduce health care expenses.

Similar innovations by Gandhi may be adopted to develop healthy and affordable food for public food outlets in places such as railway stations, government canteens and university campuses.

The author's use of the obscurest of sources is amazing. He elaborates on his theme with current information and perspectives (pages 50, 61, 98 and 117). Yet it is welcome as it helps the reader understand the issues properly. However, the repeated use of quotation marks reduces readability; plain text with occasional footnotes would have been better. The book is an excellent example of interdisciplinary and micro research. It is well produced, and its bibliography and notes will be helpful for further research.

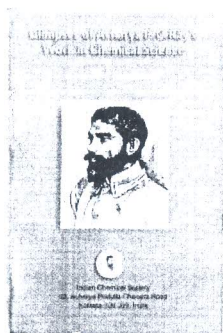
The simplicity and novelty of "Recipes from Gandhi's Diet" make one feel like joining the Mahatma at mealtime. The narrative is engaging, and the book is sure to be a trendsetter. □

J.N. Sinha was an associate professor of history at the University of Delhi.

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Glimpses of Acharya P C Ray's Work in Chemical Sciences*

N Sathyamurthy



Glimpses of Acharya P C Ray's Work in Chemical Sciences

Author: Animesh Chakravorty

Published by: Published by the Indian Chemical Society, Kolkata

Price: Rs. 250

Sooner or later, we all become history. But seldom do we create history. Acharya Prafulla Chandra Rây (1861–1944) did so in the case of teaching and research of modern chemistry in India. A multidimensional talent, he founded the Indian Chemical Society. As an entrepreneur, he set up the Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works, the first big chemical industry in India. As a historian, he wrote the History of Hindu Chemistry, and as a philanthropist, he gave away his all. In the centenary year of his birth a postage stamp was

brought out in his honor. His 150th birth centenary coincided with the International Year of Chemistry – 2011. The same year, the Royal Society of Chemistry, London established an International Chemical Landmark Plaque on Rây in Presidency College, Kolkata, where he started his career.

Prafulla Chandra received the Doctor of Science degree from the University of Edinburgh in 1887 and later spent 27 years packed with activities in Presidency College, Calcutta. In 1916 he moved to become the first Chair Professor of Chemistry in College of Science, Calcutta University at the invitation of the legendary Vice-Chancellor Ashutosh Mookherjee, who later appointed C. V. Raman as the first Chair Professor of Physics.

The author of this book Animesh Chakravorty is a former student of the University College of Science. He has been writing on the life and work of Rây for some years [1, 2], and has now consolidated and augmented the material in the form of the present book. As the name suggests, the book primarily focuses on Rây's original research contributions to chemical science.

The book has 16 chapters with an index. The state of chemistry when Rây was working in Edinburgh and his doctoral research on double sulfates are examined in Chapters 2 and 3. The serendipitous discovery of mercurous nitrite opened up the-then little known field of inorganic nitrites. This engaged Rây and his

*DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12045-019-0869-2>

students for many years (Chapters 6–9). Notable discoveries by Rây included pure mercuric nitrite and its complexes such as those with alkaloids, molecular ammonium nitrite in vapour form and families of aminium nitrites. The other important area of his research concerned the sparsely known and difficult field of sulfur ligation, especially thioether sulfur (Chapters 10–14). Notable discoveries pertain to ligation of trivalent gold and iridium, tricoordination of mercury, mixed-valence species and more. With few physical methods then available, the path of discovery and characterisation was strewn with pitfalls. Though primarily an inorganic chemist, Rây had a latent interest in organic synthesis. Towards the end of his career, this got expressed in his work on the use of certain inorganic reagents in the synthesis of thioketones and fluoro-organics (Chapter 15). Armed with prevalent new ideas such as isoelectric isosterism, Rây revisited double salts on the question of isomorphism (Chapter 16). His works were regularly appreciated by European chemists, and Nature magazine highlighted his research frequently.

What is unique about the present book is that the well-illustrated but brief chapters are written in an easy to read but critical style, examining the status of each work on the anvil of current knowledge. Each chapter is well referenced and begins with a quotation bearing its theme. There are other illuminating quotes from various sources in the text. It is very important for the millennials to know how the Acharya started modern chemical research in India, with nothing in his hand, except single mindedness and a lifelong commitment. In this context, I recommend this book to them all.

Suggested Reading

- [1] A Chakravorty, *Resonance*, Vol.6, 3, 2001.
- [2] A Chakravorty, *Indian J. History Sci.*, Vol.49, 361, 2014.

N Sathyamurthy

Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced
Scientific Research
Bengaluru 560 064, India.
Email: nsathyamurthy@gmail.com

Hicks' observation that "there is much economic theory which is pursued for no better reason than its intellectual attraction; it is a good game" (Hicks quoted in Hutchison 1984: 14). The only difference in the case in point is that some of these games may end up in social disaster, if they are to serve as a basis for policymaking!

The author of the book goes on to explain as to what really is the restraining force behind employment growth, and brings into focus the constraint of effective demand. He proposes a simple model and shows how "in an imperfectly competitive set up, that real wages and employment (contrary to orthodox claim) are actually positively related when effective demand is introduced in the picture." He goes on to show how even in an open economy model the arguments for LMF turn invalid. And concludes that

in the world we live in, where effective demand has an *autonomous* role to play, there is no theoretical justification to carry out LMF to augment employment. In fact, LMF is harmful for *both* organised and unorganised sector workers in terms of employment creation. Hence, neither empirical evidence (Chapter 2) nor theoretical arguments (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) support any justification for making the labour market flexible. (p 255).

The title of the book could be misleading. It is not about labour legislation in legal terms, but a substantive contribution to the basic economic theory substantive contribution to the basic theory and consolidated evidence that systematically deconstructs and exposes the neoclassical theoretical premises of a critical policy domain of the neo-liberal regime. It is an ideal, though challenging model for any ambitious PhD student to follow. It is a must-read for all scholars and policymakers engaged in uncoding

the nature and motive of neo-liberal policy regimes.

D Narasimha Reddy (*duvvunarasimha@gmail.com*) is a former professor of economics, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad.

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of sedition as well as its normative relationship with a liberal democracy.

Conflicts and Contestations

The central theme of the book is to reveal the competing tendencies within a liberal democratic state, in particular India, as it tries to accommodate the twin political impulses of liberalism and democracy. Singh engages with the work of Carl Schmitt and Chantal Mouffe, both theorising the persistent tensions that result from the essential conflict that is a liberal democracy. "It is in the contestations emerging from the convergence of these conflicting tendencies that the category of 'extreme speech' of which sedition is a kind, emerges" (p 3). In this review, I will offer some suggestions to think further about the central theme, that is, the contradictions of Indian democracy that Singh presents us with, but first let me present an account of how Singh arrives at her conclusion.

The first two chapters are a comparative study of sedition within the legal regimes of four countries: the UK, the United States (US), Australia, and India. It turns out that India is the only country to continue using the same definition of sedition that was introduced in British India in 1870. The other three countries have

Sedition Cross-examined Understanding the Contradictions of India's Democracy

ANKITA PANDEY

There is an oft-repeated pattern in progressive talks and petitions dealing with sedition in India. Legal experts, journalists, academics and civil society-based activists often argue that Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which defines sedition, is a political tool used primarily to silence dissent. They remind us that in colonial India sedition was used to arrest and detain several well-respected nationalists and find support in Jawaharlal Nehru and M K Gandhi's statements that sedition has no place in a liberal democracy. They point out that the country which introduced the section on sedition to British India, that is, United Kingdom (UK), has itself since abolished it. On these and other similar grounds, academics and activists have long demanded the repeal of this section. These oft-repeated assertions are necessary, for repeating what we believe in,

Sedition in Liberal Democracies by Anushka Singh, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018; pp xii + 393, ₹995.

strengthen our convictions, reaffirm the worth and value of the demand, and mobilise public opinion in its favour.

However, these political positions also define the limits of what is said and written about sedition in India. To engage with sedition analytically, one needs to go beyond the assertions made in taking a political position on sedition. A couple of recent studies that focus on the jurisprudence on free speech and sedition in India have been undertaken by Siddharth Narrain (2011), Lawrence Liang (2016) and Gautam Bhatia (2016). Anushka Singh's book, *Sedition in Liberal Democracies*, is an excellent addition to these engagements. Singh adopts legal, historical, and anthropological approaches to understand the evolution and practice

either abolished, restricted or modernised their sections on sedition. Singh, however, qualifies this observation by pointing out that this does not necessarily mean that Western democracies have become more tolerant of political opposition or dissent. Instead, they restrict “extreme” speech by legislating newer security and counter-terror laws, rather than using sedition. The next four chapters of the book focus on India. Chapter 3 focuses on the historical evolution of cases, trials, and verdicts on sedition in colonial India. These were against editors of newspapers and prominent leaders like Gandhi, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and, just a year before independence, Sheikh Abdullah. During the anti-colonial movement, being seditious was seen as democratic political resistance by the nationalists. In time, however, sedition would come to mean *deshdroh* or anti-nationalism. The next chapter traces the journey of sedition in postcolonial India where other security laws also came into force. It examines first the debates of the Constituent Assembly and then the judicial trials that were centred around sedition. Through these debates we witness how the Supreme Court disaggregated between categories like a strong criticism of the government, incitement to violence, disaffection, and disapprobation in order to define the scope of the Section 124A.

Singh then moves from a jurisprudential perspective of sedition to its practice and deployment on the ground. Predictably, Singh finds that in its everyday application, sedition is deeply embedded in local politics and in variables such as caste, class, and community. For instance, her fieldwork reveals that in Haryana various marginalised groups experience sedition as a tool for upper-caste domination. In the final chapter Singh chronicles the recent cases of sedition in India to demonstrate how the law and its popular understanding as *deshdroh* play out. In case after case, she demonstrates that successive governments have deployed sedition in order to criminalise political opposition. This is also made evident by the fact that there is an extremely low rate of prosecution for sedition but a high rate of registration of cases. Evidently, such cases are registered

merely to intimidate and inconvenience movement groups and activists. In her conclusion, she returns to the theme of the persistent contradictions within a liberal democracy, “[T]he general finding in relation to all liberal democracies interrogated in this work points towards an enduring discomfort among all regimes with political dissent” (p 363). In particular, Indian democracy is characterised by a “moment of contradiction in relation to sedition” (p 365). In the next section I engage with this theme and ask if sedition has survived in India due to the internal paradoxes resulting from the two contradictory sides of liberalism and democracy? Or is it possible that the two contradictory sides in this equation were never evenly matched and sedition has survived in India due to a tragic resolution of the two?

Partnership and Rivalry

Singh’s observation regarding the contradictions in Indian democracy stands on the shoulders of giants in postcolonial scholarship on Indian democracy and India’s political economy. Sudipta Kaviraj (1997, 2010) and Partha Chatterjee (1986, 2007) amongst others have argued that both the colonial state as well as the postcolonial Indian state have suffered and sustained contradictory impulses. In the realm of political-economy, Francine Frankel (1979) wrote about the paradox between a commitment to radical social change on the one hand and capitalist development on the other. Singh identifies sedition to be a manifestation of a moment of contradiction in Indian democracy but stops there. I believe her book would be considerably richer with a long-term historical analysis of the two contradictory sides through the lens of sedition. With over seven decades of India’s democratic journey to observe, the career of these foundational contradictions in Indian democracy could itself be explored.

For instance, one wonders if the two contradictory sides, that is, liberalism and democracy are evenly matched or were they ever so? What has been the evolution of the two forces that are fuelling this contradiction? One of the most fundamental and universalisable liberal

value is liberty or freedom. Let us consider the status of liberal values and practice in contemporary India. A quick survey of the stories reported and opinion pieces in the newspapers (Bhargava 2018; Mehta 2018) will confirm that developments in contemporary India indicate a troubled status of citizen freedoms, in particular the freedom of speech and expression. Conservative voices within several communities have gained a bigger foothold. Self-proclaimed custodians of morality are prescribing life choices for the young. Increasingly, more and more people in the public sphere; writers, journalists, comedians, academics, even ordinary people find it difficult to express themselves freely or have become cautious regarding what they say and write. In one of her chapters Singh quotes the report of the World Press Freedom Index where India has slipped three positions to be at 136 out of 180 countries. Self-appointed representatives of their communities, seemingly hurt, often take offence and then take law into their own hands.

Strong surveillance mechanisms have been introduced that allow for severe breach of privacy without the necessary safeguards instituted. Harassment, online trolling, and intimidation of various public figures is now routine. “Left liberals” or “liberal elite” are terms that are used pejoratively to refer to an ostensible numerical minority that is disconnected with the realities of the country. The kind of legitimacy freedom or liberty ought to enjoy in order to perpetuate this contradiction between liberalism and democracy seems to be absent.

I suggest that the key relationship that needs to be examined to think through the liberal-democratic contradiction and the role of sedition within this matrix in India is one between liberalism and nationalism. It is this relationship that holds the key to an analytical understanding of why sedition has survived in India in its colonial form. Scholars of the nature and evolution of liberalism in India have noted that liberalism in India came on the shoulders of nationalism (Khilnani 1979; Bhargava 2018). In her essay on the various forms of Indian liberalisms, Rochana Bajpai demonstrates that key episodes of nationalist politics

in India invoked classical liberal values: freedom from arbitrary arrest, right to vote, freedom of speech for press, etc (Bajpai 2012). Yet, where nationalism so required, classical liberal principles were recast, like in the choice of economic protectionism over free trade in the decade following independence. In the trajectory of Indian democracy nationalism could trump liberal principles, but not the other way around. In fact, politics in India today is the most intense period of nationalism trumping over liberal values. In the first few decades of Indian independence, sedition was a tool to manage the contradictory impulses, on the one hand of a commitment to democracy and on the other to secure the territorial unity of India as a nation.

Today with the triumph of a certain form of cultural nationalism (in the popular public opinions at least), sedition continues to be deployed frequently despite the fact that liberalism as one of the contradictory sides is significantly weak. In my opinion, it is the antecedent compatibility of nationalism and liberalism that fuels the subsequent antagonism between the two sides of liberalism and democracy in Indian politics.

The above observations were possible only because Singh has put together a rigorous, scholarly and interdisciplinary narration of sedition in Indian politics. It is a book that encourages its readers to engage with its subject matter. The detailed account of the history and practice of sedition would be of special relevance to those who are interested in focusing on sedition within the larger galaxy of similar security and anti-terror laws. More broadly, the book would be of much value to students of history, politics, law, and journalism. Academically, the book paves the way to think through the nature of the Indian democracy, and politically it strengthens the grounds on which academics and activists have often repeated the demand to repeal Section 124A from the IPC.

Ankita Pandey (ankitapandey1@gmail.com) teaches political science at Indraprastha College for Women, University of Delhi. She recently finished her DPhil at the University of Oxford.

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Neo-liberalism, Development and Deprivation in India

ISHAN ANAND

In 1960, Joan Robinson wrote in the *Economic Weekly*: “I am concerned particularly for India and other developing countries whose economic doctrines come to them mainly from England and in English. Is what we are giving them helpful for their development?” (Robinson 1960). She was worried that the economics departments in Britain, which used to attract some of the best minds from the third world, were indoctrinating students with “notions soaked in a prejudice for *laissez-faire*.” Orthodox teaching led students to distrust their native common sense, submit to the orthodoxy and perpetuate the cycle by going back to the country of origin and disseminating those ideas in the third world. Robinson gives a specific example of teaching theories in support of the free market and free trade in British universities; ideas which were once favourable to Britain and damaging to India’s interest. She hoped that with proper training, a “generation well-educated, resistant to fudging, imbued with the humility and pride of genuine scientists” could make significant contributions to knowledge and the state of affairs. Utsa Patnaik, in honour of whom the book under review is written, is among the few in India to challenge the conventional and self-serving body of economic thought originating in the first world. In her illustrious career, Patnaik has been an inspirational teacher and worked tirelessly towards developing alternative frameworks of analysis that further the interest of the downtrodden and the developing world.

Dispossession, Deprivation and Development: Essays for Utsa Patnaik comprises 10 chapters on themes that are central to the academic work of Patnaik. Chapter 1 by the editors trace her academic contributions. This chapter highlights the contributions of Patnaik in the mode of production debate, developing of the labour exploitation criterion to study agrarian

Dispossession, Deprivation and Development: Essays for Utsa Patnaik edited by Arindam Banerjee and C P Chandrasekhar, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2018; pp x+270, ₹ 750.

class formation, critique of “neo-populism,” role of income deflation in immiserisation and exposing the conceptual and methodological errors in the official poverty lines. Patnaik has identified distinct mechanisms in the development of capitalism in the North. These include capital accumulation using the drain of wealth from colonies, deindustrialisation of colonies through distortionary trade practices and export of unemployment, and mass outmigration of Europeans to other parts of the world. The pattern of capitalist development in the North, therefore, cannot be replicated across the developing world today. Patnaik’s recent work is a strong critique of the structural adjustment programmes (SAP) pushed by the Bretton Woods organisations that led to income squeeze in countries such as India.

Agrarian Economy

Chapters 2 to 5 deal with different aspects of the agrarian economy. In Chapter 2, Sam Moyo, Paris Yeros and Praveen Jha outline the persistence of agrarian crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and suggest ways to overcome it. Agrarian change in SSA traversed a variety of paths, given the heterogeneity in peasant farms, agroecological and climatic conditions and historic specificity. The peasantry in SSA is faced with high levels of disparity and concentration of landholdings, declining per capita arable land, exploitative labour relations such as bondage in some areas, low productivity driven by limited access to inputs and credits, vagaries of weather and volatility of markets. While peasant farms have shown resilience in dealing with existing challenges, climate change brings a new set of risks, mitigating which will require

large-scale public investment in research and development. The authors call for equitable distribution of land and strengthening the capabilities of peasant farms through institutional support.

The next three chapters deal with aspects of India’s agrarian economy in the context of pro-market reforms. Banerjee examines the implications of neo-liberalism on the contemporary agrarian question in India. The study uses Patnaik’s labour exploitation index to study peasant classes using data collected from the states of West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. The author discusses a high degree of peasant differentiation in the villages studied, with the average labour hiring-in being many times more among the rich peasants in comparison to the poor, small and medium peasantry. The analysis of household assets reveals the concentration of wealth and capital at the top end of the peasant class structure, which leads to further accumulation and control of capital by rich peasants and landlords. An analysis of crop incomes reveals high levels of disparity between poor and rich peasants and the presence of negative incomes across classes owing to outstanding interest payments. Peasant classes are shown to be in a perpetual debt trap, and much of the informal indebtedness is linked to input dealers. The author notes that while peasantry is not homogeneous, neo-liberalism has adversely affected all peasant classes and the agricultural sector as a whole is in a state of crisis.

In the next chapter, Sudipta Bhattacharyya revisits the mode of production debate. This study uses field survey data from West Bengal as well as the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data and compliments Banerjee’s study. The empirical exercise does not find evidence for Chayanov’s claim of higher consumer-to-worker ratio being positively related to higher family input. The author rejects the inverse farm size-productivity hypothesis and shows high levels of disparity in land, yield and access to input and output markets. While arguing that class analysis remains relevant, the author concludes that neo-liberal policies have rendered agriculture unviable. Suneet Chopra discusses the crisis in Indian agriculture and suggests solutions to resolve the crisis. He notes that

the severity of the agrarian crisis can be seen in the swelling ranks of agricultural labourers. Neo-liberal policies have led to a decline in jobs in agriculture, without creating alternative opportunities elsewhere. Chopra critically discusses the adverse impact of demonetisation on agriculture, transfer of resources to big capital, reversal of land ceiling laws, large-scale dispossession of traditional forest dwellers, worsening food security and cow-vigilantism. The common thread in the chapters on agriculture is the recognition that neo-liberalism has pushed the agrarian economy into crisis, and the worst affected are the agrarian classes at the bottom end of the distribution.

Neo-liberal Reforms

The chapter by Smita Gupta is an analysis of the debates surrounding the concept of primitive accumulation in Marxian theory, and the process of dispossession and displacement in India. In the first part of the chapter, Gupta contests Harvey's theorisation of "accumulation by dispossession" as a spatio-temporal fix adopted by capitalism, and also argues against the formulation that primitive accumulation precedes capitalism and is in that sense a relic of history. She contends that primitive accumulation is a "premise of existence" for capital, and separating the masses from the means of production is an intrinsic process to the logic of capital accumulation and concentration.

Following this formulation, the author argues that neo-liberal reforms in India have continued to dispossess people of land through legislations and extra-economic coercion by the state, actively working on behalf of global capital. Coercive land evictions for development projects, reversal of land reforms and creation of slums in urban areas have resulted in a large number of displaced and disposed people. Robert Pollin and Shouvik Chakraborty explore the possibility of a growth strategy for India which generates employment opportunities while curbing carbon dioxide emissions. Their estimates show that with an economic growth of 6.5% per year and investment of 1.5% of the gross domestic product (GDP) on clean renewable, and energy efficiency for an investment

cycle of 20 years, the emission per capita in India can be reduced drastically. This would require changing India's energy mix by reducing reliance on coal and fossil fuels, and increasing the share of low-emission bioenergy and other sources. The authors are also able to show that the move towards a clean energy programme would require significantly more labour inputs than the current energy mix, thereby creating millions of jobs while reducing emissions.

Vikas Rawal and Partha Saha analyse the trends in women's employment patterns in India. Arguing that the existing explanations for declining the labour force participation rate (LFPR) are inadequate, they explore the NSSO employment-unemployment surveys for 1999–2000, 2009–10, and 2011–12 to find satisfactory explanations. They show that the low and declining trends in women's LFPR are largely driven by a fall in agricultural employment, which is directly linked to the rise in landlessness in India. Increasing concentration of land and labour-displacing mechanisation has drastically reduced female labour absorption in agriculture. At the same time, women have not been able to migrate or commute to access construction and other alternative jobs due to hurdles in physical mobility. With dismal levels of education and technical training, women are further denied employment opportunities. The authors show that among women who are principally engaged in housework, a substantial number engage in care work and obtain various items for household use. It is argued that these women should be considered a part of the labour force.

The paper by Chandrasekhar traces the evolution of macroeconomic policy in India in the post-liberalisation era and studies its effect on employment generation. The author argues that the macroeconomic policies in the post-liberalisation era in India were not effective for labour market outcomes, and employment and work conditions were adversely affected even with high economic growth. He calls for a proactive fiscal policy and state investment in areas of physical and social infrastructure. It is also argued that monetary policy must not be restricted to inflation targeting, but should be part of the overall development

strategy and focus on employment generation and poverty reduction. Malini Bhattacharya then discusses the process of communalisation in society, in the context of rise of right-wing political forces in India. The author notes that even though secularism in India evolved through the anti-colonial struggles, the state has time and again jeopardised its secular credentials. The author discusses the role of the ruling classes in stoking communal passions when it suits their class interests. The rise of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is discussed in the context of growing anti-democratic tendencies under the neo-liberal regime, which the Indian state has been embracing to be able to serve the interests of global finance capital. The author urges the left forces to go beyond the liberal agenda of tolerance and actively intervene in educational, cultural and social spheres to challenge the deeply entrenched caste and communal prejudices in society.

The chapters in the book are based around the academic work of Patnaik and are also connected in contesting neo-liberal economic reforms in different areas. The neo-liberal regime has brought upon us a crisis of agricultural growth, but also a much deeper agrarian crisis which is devastating people's livelihoods, creating and perpetuating economic disparities, dispossession and social oppression. While India's "transformation" has been much celebrated across the world showcasing high growth and decline in poverty based on a botched methodology, it is important that voices of reason stand up to the dominant orthodoxy in the world of academics and policy. At the same time, it is important that we understand the changes in the sphere of economy and society that has led to a discernible rightward shift in recent times. This book is a testimony to the work that Patnaik did and inspired others to do, maintaining methodological rigour, understanding history, and seeking truth from facts, even if it upsets the conventional wisdom.

Ishan Anand (ishan.jsr@gmail.com) teaches economics at Ambedkar University Delhi.

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The World of Work

Labour Market Reforms and Legislation in India

PRAVEEN JHA

As its title suggests, this important volume under review here focuses on labour market reforms and industrial relations in contemporary India, and has been put together to honour professor Lalit Deshpande, one of the doyens and most important labour economists in the country. It is edited by his student and an important scholar of labour rights and industrial relations, K R Shyam Sundar, who has been working on these issues for several years now. As stated in the author's introduction to the volume, the two chosen themes have been of utmost importance in Deshpande's writings, and his pioneering contributions to these areas are very well acknowledged by the academic and policy communities. It may also be noted, right at the outset, that the volume is a very significant contribution to the ongoing debates on both the themes, and provides rich insights, drawing on diverse perspectives and voices, to several important bones of contention in the world of work in contemporary India.

The book brings together contributions from academics, policymakers, political activists, and other important so-called "stakeholders," who have been part of the discourses on labour law reforms and industrial relations in India, for many years. It consists of 16 chapters from diverse academic and political perspectives. The book is not divided into different sections as several themes recur across chapters; yet in terms of treatment of the larger questions, one may read it as progression through three parts. The first part, consisting of five chapters and the introduction by the editor, provides an overview of contemporary debates on labour law

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Contemporary Reforms of Labour Market and Industrial Relations System in India: Ease of Doing Business versus Labour Rights, Essays in Honour of Prof Lalit Deshpande edited by

K R Shyam Sundar, *New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2018; pp 379, ₹1,495 (hardback).*

and governance reforms. In addition to the introduction, Shyam Sundar has three additional chapters. In the introductory chapter he tries to provide an overview of the book as a whole and his summary of different perspectives on the chosen themes by the contributing authors. In the second chapter, Sundar outlines the institutional framework of the main legal provisions and labour regulations, which he terms as the "governance system," the politico-economic dynamics and inter-temporal structural changes could have received some more attention for the benefit of the general readers. The third chapter by Sundar outlines the labour law reforms strategy and traces the brief history of labour law reforms in the states.

Labour Market

The main thrust of his argument is to show that the central characteristic of the reforms is "informalising formality," a phrase that denotes the process of informalisation of work in the formal sector that has occurred because of labour law reforms. Sundar calls this an "institutionalist" approach to labour law reforms and shows its difference with the neo-liberal approach which encourages these reforms that are designed to promote a low labour cost regime. The issues encompassed and raised by neoliberal labour market reforms are

comprehensively tackled by the former labour secretary of Government of India (1995–2000), Lakshmidhar Mishra who argues that there is a need to have an integrated and holistic perspective for meaningful labour law reforms. Mishra details the types of social safety nets needed for labour-friendly reforms and also points out the need to strengthen the existing laws rather than change them for the benefit of business.

The next couple of essays, by economists, engage with the ongoing debates over labour market flexibility through their disciplinary lens, in technically nuanced ways. Rahul Suresh Sapkal provides a broad overview of the labour regulation debate through a review of the existing empirical studies on the subject. His analysis of these studies shows that the Indian industry has been adjusting its workforce to respond heterogeneously to legal and non-legal institutions. It is, therefore, not possible to state that the so-called labour market inflexibility has been a major impediment in the development of firms. He further argues that firm-level data hardly looks into the problem of working conditions and welfare of labour. Therefore, it is imperative that the Indian state has a multidimensional approach towards labour-oriented reforms and argues that the labour welfare agenda ought to be at the centre of the reform process.

While Sapkal's essay is largely based on an empirical analysis, Anamitra Roychowdhury and Nivedita Sarkar provide an analysis of the theoretical debates on labour market regulations. The authors consider the claims of the institutionalist and distortionist schools on the question of employment protection regulation. They contend that the institutionalists need not be unmindful of questions of efficiency when considering labour law employment protection legislation. Rather, labour regulations can enhance efficiency and create employment. Thus, the aim of providing employment security is not necessarily in contradiction with the objective of attaining full employment.

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The subsequent chapters of the book provide multiple perspectives on different legislations that have been introduced as a part of the project of labour law reforms.

Legislation on Labour

Michael Dias considers the Labour Code on Industrial Relations Code Bill, 2015, from the point of view of Ease of Doing Business. From an employer's perspective, Dias urges that the government must be more serious in changing archaic labour laws to promote business interests. Three articles following this are written by trade unionists from different political spectrums. Sanjay Singhvi, lawyer and trade unionist from the Trade Union Centre of India, gives a broad overview of the worldwide struggles that have been undertaken for achieving protective labour laws. It shows that misplaced labour law reforms are shortsighted and will not be able to address the problems of the workers. The author urges that the Indian trade union movement should learn from history to take its struggles forward. CK Saji Narayanan of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh does a strong critique of the labour reforms under the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance.

On the other hand he terms the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led labour reforms as "pro-labour" which should not be opposed. It is this perspective that has divided the trade union movement on political lines. In sharp contrast to this, the next essay by Tapan Sen, general secretary, Centre for Indian Trade Unions, makes a more comprehensive systemic critique of the labour law reforms. He shows that neo-liberal labour market reforms have reached new heights once the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance came into power. Discussing the nuances of these changes, Sen urges the united trade union movement to intensify its resistance to reforms and fight for universal social protection for all forms of labour. He contends that there is already a consensus within the trade union movement on this principle.

Apart from the trade union perspective, the volume also has essays by people belonging to the bureaucracy and the

service sector. Manish Sabherwal and Sonal Arora from Teamlease Services focus on the need for bringing reforms in the Contract Labour Act. Their contribution shows that at present, the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act is not beneficial to the industry, nor does it solve the problem of labour. The authors contend that reforms in this law will also make India a "fertile habitat for job creation" and will create formal employment to the extent of 20% of the labour force. Former bureaucrat, Vasantkumar N Hittangi also focuses on the Contract Labour Act, but from a workers' perspective. He makes two concrete proposals regarding changes in the Contract Labour Act: (i) contract labour should be paid the same wages as permanent workers, and (ii) contract workers should be absorbed into the regular workers category after they have worked for a specific period of time. Without these reforms the contract workers would face a life of indignity, servitude and bondage.

The last two essays of the volume focus on the Draft Social Security Code. B N Som, general secretary of the Social Security Association of India, calls the draft code an advance over previous legislations and also points out the areas for its improvement. Sharath Babu, a law professor, sees the code from a different perspective and argues that it is misguided in many respects and requires a well-defined institutional and structural arrangement which does not exist in the present proposal. Apart from these essays, the book also has a useful appendix with abstracts of deliberations and decisions of different committees and commissions which have a bearing on the reform of labour regulation.

As should be evident, from the brief foregoing remarks, the diversity of contributors to the volume, many of them with serious long-standing engagements with the nitty-gritty at the ground level, as official administrators, representatives of employers and trade unions, etc, has resulted in bringing on board multiple prisms and thus a large range of rich insights on the chosen themes, and this in itself makes the volume quite special. However, the book could have included at least a couple of chapters on investigating the ascendancy and hegemony of neo-liberalism during the last few decades, since the 1970s, to pay adequate attention to the political economy of labour reforms/industrial relations at the current juncture.

I am of the view that it is impossible to understand the major developments in the world of work, in India or elsewhere, without a serious examination of some of the most powerful correlates of contemporary neo-liberalism such as massive financialisation of the global accumulation processes, trans-nationalisation of production systems, etc. But, as Sundar informs us there are other volumes pending in the pipeline in honour of Deshpande and these issues might receive appropriate attention in them. However, on the whole, the present volume is quite informative and provides a wealth of material for students and scholars who are interested in the legal aspects of labour law reforms in contemporary India.

Praveen Jha (praveenjha2005@gmail.com) teaches economics at the School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

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Unpacking the Motives of Neo-liberal Regimes

D NARASIMHA REDDY

The economic reforms that unfolded under the neo-liberal regime in India, as elsewhere, have been premised on a number of postulates. These include the postulate that: any intervention in the free operation of the markets would distort resource allocation resulting in inefficiency, and thus act as disincentive to investment and affect growth of output and employment. Therefore, the dismantling of the regulatory regime assumes instrumental primacy. In the case of the labour market, the prevalence of too many labour laws, even though most of them are confined to the organised sector, have been seen as an obstacle to competition and efficiency resulting and translating into disincentives for growth of investment and employment. The Second National Labour Commission's (2002) recommendation for rationalisation of labour laws, including retrenchment, and lay-offs of workers and closure of units by suitable compensation, to facilitate labour market flexibility gave credence to this approach.

For almost two decades, ever since the labour law reforms were brought on the policy agenda of successive governments, there have been a number of empirical studies, examining the veracity of the argument for labour market flexibility. In spite of the gestalt that implies the shift in labour laws, there have hardly been any attempts to examine the nature of the theoretical underminings of these reforms. That gap is sought to be filled by the book under review, *Labour Law Reforms in India: All in the Name of Jobs* by Anamitra Roychowdhury. One of the stated main objectives of the book is to study the logical consistency of the theoretical framework and empirical underpinnings underlying labour market flexibility. It begins with a thorough analysis of the current status of legal provisioning

BOOK REVIEWS

Labour Law Reforms in India: All in the Name of Jobs by Anamitra Roychowdhury, *Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2018, pp xxii + 313, ₹1,095 (hardcover).*

relating to labour, and the main proposals put forward in the labour market flexibility (LMF) debate for rationalising labour laws in India, followed by an extensive review of the debate on LMF which has been mostly in empirical terms. It then turns to critical examination of the theoretical framework underlying the arguments for LMF and their internal consistency. Towards the end it shows not only how the results suggested by the neoclassical theoretical underpinnings are logically inconsistent and invalid, but also how factoring in autonomous role played by effective demand could explain unemployment.

India has an estimated 45 central and 170 state laws broadly relating to industrial relations, wages and social security. However, most of these apply to the organised sector. Of these several laws, the ones that are relevant to the question of labour flexibility relate to industrial relations and two of the laws, namely the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 have become the focus of debate. Chapter 1 discusses in detail the changes, proposed as well as some already effective, in the name of rationalisation that would bring about LMF. A few of the proposed changes discussed include the Labour Code on the Industrial Relations Bill, 2015, which aims at amalgamating critical industrial relations, legislations to raise the size of the units that require to seek state permission for closure, retrenchment or lay-offs (Industrial Disputes Act, Chapter vB) from 100 workers to 300, and the Factories (Amendment) Bill, 2016 to

raise applicability of the act to units from those employing 10 workers and using power, and 20 workers without using power, to 20 workers in the case of the former and 40 workers in the case of the latter. The latter would take out an estimated 70% of units from the coverage of the Factories Act. The freedom held out to the states to amend some of the labour laws under the proposed Labour Code was utilised with alacrity by those like Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. The brief but graphic description of the changes in some of the labour laws towards achieving flexibility in the name of ensuring competitiveness, and more investment and employment forms the background for the empirical and theoretical analysis that follow.

Ever since the neo-liberal regime took over firmly, there has been a persistent argument that labour laws in India are at the root of labour market rigidity which in turn restricts growth of employment. There has been a wider debate on the issue essentially in the typical institutional framework that has generated a large number of empirical studies contesting this proposition. Chapter 2 is devoted to critically scrutinising the claims in favour of undertaking reforms towards labour market flexibility in India by pooling together the extensive empirical studies. This chapter which occupies almost one-fourth of the book, with substantial empirical evidence and detailed notes, systematically denies each of the claims made for LMF in India. In the debate, job security regulation (JSR), that is, Chapter vB of the Industrial Disputes Act, has been singled out as the root cause of the problem. The author classifies the literature proposing labour flexibility into two strands and musters evidence as to how every argument in each of these strands does not stand empirical scrutiny.

Variety of Arguments

One strand of literature argues that rigid implementation of labour laws or what is referred to as JSR is the main reason behind not only the employment downturn during the 1980s in the organised manufacturing sector, but also for the

small size of units (missing middle), sub-contracting to smaller firms and employers' preference for contract labour. Therefore, the prescription was to rationalise the public sector or privatise public sector units. The author's evidence counters these arguments.

First, since the JSR covered only 35% of the organised sector workers, the small size cannot be attributed to it. Second, it is shown that employment flexibility was more in evidence in units covered by JSR than in those units not covered. Third, employers' subcontracting to smaller firms was not to escape labour laws, but to take advantage of cheap labour. And similarly, employers' preference for contract labour was not because of JSR, but the wage difference. Since the private sector was responsible for not creating quality employment, merely privatising public sector units would not automatically usher in more efficiency. The book engages with the second strand of arguments in favour of LMF which claimed that rapid real wage growth was the

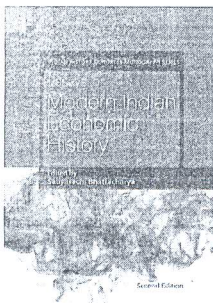
primary reason for employment downturn in 1990s. But, the available evidence questions such models and assumptions. First, the author draws attention to the literature pointing out that the proponents of the second strand of arguments confused wage rates and earnings per worker, which meant that the so-called rise in wages was not due to increase in "wage rates," but in the period worked. Second, during the period under reference there was a significant positive association between output and employment growth in units governed by labour laws, and no such association in segments not covered by labour laws.

Chapter 3 attempts to answer the question: if labour regulation and rising wages do not explain "jobless growth," what is behind the phenomenon of jobless growth in 1980s and later? The two-part analysis looks into, first, the nature of technological progress, and second, the labour militancy or labour power as proxy for rigidity of labour market. The available evidence presented

in this chapter shows that the proportion of "functional trade unions" (unions submitting returns) to registered unions has steadily been on the decline from 25% in the mid-1980s to 10% in 2008-09. In general, trade unions in the organised sector were on the decline. The number of lockouts rose until the late 1990s, but declined thereafter and the decline in strikes was more than that in lockouts. Person-days lost due to strikes or per strike were less than those lost due to lockouts or per lockout, and overall person-days lost due to strikes and lockouts—an indicator of industrial unrest—were on the decline. This was also mirrored in the decline in labour absenteeism. The real wages of workers in the organised manufacturing sector were less by the mid-2000s compared to the mid-1990s. The author argues that there was no way that labour militancy or labour market rigidity could be seen as the source of "jobless growth."

The author's evidence points to a sharp rise in labour productivity as well

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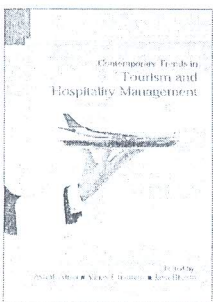
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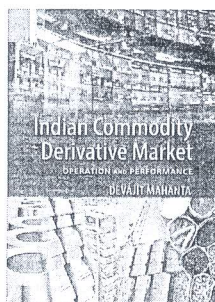
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as productivity of capital due to upgraded technology. Therefore, it was labour-saving technological progress, and not rising cost of labour, that was at the root of jobless growth. Thus, Chapters 2 and 3 show that empirical evidence for implementing LMF was on shaky ground. These chapters also help buttress the otherwise familiar but scattered empirical arguments that deny labour regulation as the source of high wages and of lack of growth of employment in the organised sector. The significant original contribution of the book, however, lies in the chapters that follow—in identifying and critically engaging with the theoretical structure underlying labour market flexibility—a task that was not attempted earlier.

Theoretical Structure

It may appear rather odd to move from empirics to theory (after scrutiny of empirical evidence for the proposition of LMF which was found to be shaky) to scrutinise the theoretical underpinnings of the same. However, the intention seems to be one of moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar, that would facilitate better attention of the reader and smoother explanation by the author. The theoretical basis for LMF begins with the identification of two strands, one that zeroes in on “labour turnover costs” (LTCs) and the other, the so-called “insider–outsider” theory of employment and unemployment. The theoretical explanation in terms of “labour turnover costs” is based on the works in the early 1990s of Fallon and Lucas which were “extremely influential” in the Indian context (pp 144–49). They argue that broadly JSR acts as impediment to employment growth by enhancing the bargaining power of the labour that in turn raises wages and thus labour turnover costs. They also suggest that workers appropriate part of the returns to capital thus discouraging investment and growth of employment and hence the need for LMF to promote growth and employment.

However, the focus of the discussion on the theoretical basis for LMF is on the second strand, namely the insider–outsider theory, and a substantial part of the chapter is devoted to two contributions:

one in the form of a series of articles in the late 1980s by Assar Lindbeck and Dennis J Snower (1987, 1988), and the other by Robert Solow (1985). Lindbeck and Snower originally designed the insider–outsider theory to study the employment stagnation in European labour markets in the 1980s, but they generalised its application to developing economies like India to recommend policies of free hire and fire for labour markets. The author engages in extensive critical analysis of their theory (pp 149–65). Lindbeck and Snower “draw attention to one critical source of labour market power enjoyed by incumbent (insider) workers,” namely LTCs and the insiders utilise LTCs in their own favour without taking into account the interests of unemployed outsiders and thereby generate involuntary unemployment. The insider wage is positively related to the magnitude of LTCs, and a rise in insider wage (with a rent-like premium because of their power enjoyed by the job security legislation like the one under Industrial Disputes Act) leads to a rise in the level of unemployment. Thus, “like all neoclassical explanations of involuntary unemployment, insider–outsider theory tries to provide an answer *solely* based on the labour market and quite predictably explains it through rigid real wages set above the market clearing level” (p 151).

The upshot of the insider–outsider theory is a set of recommendations in the name of “structural labour market policies” of two kinds. One set of “power reducing policies” diminish the power of insider by dismantling job security regulations, reducing severance pay or simply firing and legislation to reduce union power by legal restrictions on strikes and picketing. The other set of “enfranchisement policies” increase “outsider” power that enfranchises them in wage negotiation and helps to reduce the labour costs of hiring outsiders with an apprentice system that would lengthen the critical period.

The insider–outsider theory assumes that JSR extends to all sectors of the economy. If there are two segments in an economy, one segment covered by JSR and the other not covered by the legislation, then competition in non-JSR would

result in full-employment. Besides being a closed model, the critical discussion of the insider–outsider theory exposes the restrictive assumptions often turning out to be logically inconsistent. Turning to the other insider–outsider theory, the one by Solow (1985) with an inter-temporal approach, the author contests the assumptions and the logical inconsistency of the theory. Solow’s theory suggests that insiders’ activity negates the possibility of hiring outsiders, hence the employment opportunities of outsiders, and thus resulting in persistence of unemployment. But, these are based on several unrealistic assumptions like one which argues that in an inter-temporal context hiring of workers is only in the first period, but not in the second, and that firms can lay off workers but cannot replace them by drawing from the large reserve army. Further, it is pointed out that Solow’s proposition of unemployment cannot be explained if firms can replace existing (insiders) workers by newly trained ones or by new firms that come in. The sum and substance of the critical discussion on the theories underlying the policy proposals for LMF demonstrates their flawed nature.

Game Theory Approach

Chapter 5 analyses the market clearing models on labour market flexibility with the focus on two contributions—Basu (2007) and Basu et al (2009)—with a game theoretic approach to labour market flexibility with skill differentials. These models assume away involuntary unemployment and rely on full wage flexibility and voluntary signing of contracts between workers and owners. These theories assess workers’ welfare in terms of equilibrium wages under two situations, lay-offs and non-lay-offs. They try to show that enabling retrenchment and lay-offs (read removing Part VB of Industrial Disputes Act) may result in larger employment and higher wages in the equilibrium. The entire Chapter 5 (pp 190–237) is devoted to contest the unrealistic and mythical nature of the assumptions and the models. Reading through the critical appraisal of these two sets of theories (Chapters 4 and 5) underpinning LMF, one cannot but recall

Hicks' observation that "there is much economic theory which is pursued for no better reason than its intellectual attraction; it is a good game" (Hicks quoted in Hutchison 1984: 14). The only difference in the case in point is that some of these games may end up in social disaster, if they are to serve as a basis for policymaking!

The author of the book goes on to explain as to what really is the restraining force behind employment growth, and brings into focus the constraint of effective demand. He proposes a simple model and shows how "in an imperfectly competitive set up, that real wages and employment (contrary to orthodox claim) are actually positively related when effective demand is introduced in the picture." He goes on to show how even in an open economy model the arguments for LMF turn invalid. And concludes that

in the world we live in, where effective demand has an *autonomous* role to play, there is no theoretical justification to carry out LMF to augment employment. In fact, LMF is harmful for *both* organised and unorganised sector workers in terms of employment creation. Hence, neither empirical evidence (Chapter 2) nor theoretical arguments (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) support any justification for making the labour market flexible. (p 255).

The title of the book could be misleading. It is not about labour legislation in legal terms, but a substantive contribution to the basic economic theory substantive contribution to the basic theory and consolidated evidence that systematically deconstructs and exposes the neoclassical theoretical premises of a critical policy domain of the neo-liberal regime. It is an ideal, though challenging model for any ambitious PhD student to follow. It is a must-read for all scholars and policymakers engaged in uncoding

the nature and motive of neo-liberal policy regimes.

D Narasimha Reddy (duvvunarasimha@gmail.com) is a former professor of economics, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad.

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Sedition Cross-examined Understanding the Contradictions of India's Democracy

ANKITA PANDEY

There is an oft-repeated pattern in progressive talks and petitions dealing with sedition in India. Legal experts, journalists, academics and civil society-based activists often argue that Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which defines sedition, is a political tool used primarily to silence dissent. They remind us that in colonial India sedition was used to arrest and detain several well-respected nationalists and find support in Jawaharlal Nehru and M K Gandhi's statements that sedition has no place in a liberal democracy. They point out that the country which introduced the section on sedition to British India, that is, United Kingdom (UK), has itself since abolished it. On these and other similar grounds, academics and activists have long demanded the repeal of this section. These oft-repeated assertions are necessary, for repeating what we believe in,

Sedition in Liberal Democracies by Anushka Singh, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018; pp xii + 393, ₹995.

strengthen our convictions, reaffirm the worth and value of the demand, and mobilise public opinion in its favour.

However, these political positions also define the limits of what is said and written about sedition in India. To engage with sedition analytically, one needs to go beyond the assertions made in taking a political position on sedition. A couple of recent studies that focus on the jurisprudence on free speech and sedition in India have been undertaken by Siddharth Narrain (2011), Lawrence Liang (2016) and Gautam Bhatia (2016). Anushka Singh's book, *Sedition in Liberal Democracies*, is an excellent addition to these engagements. Singh adopts legal, historical, and anthropological approaches to understand the evolution and practice

of sedition as well as its normative relationship with a liberal democracy.

Conflicts and Contests

The central theme of the book is to reveal the competing tendencies within a liberal democratic state, in particular India, as it tries to accommodate the twin political impulses of liberalism and democracy. Singh engages with the work of Carl Schmitt and Chantal Mouffe, both theorising the persistent tensions that result from the essential conflict that is a liberal democracy. "It is in the contestations emerging from the convergence of these conflicting tendencies that the category of 'extreme speech' of which sedition is a kind, emerges" (p 3). In this review, I will offer some suggestions to think further about the central theme, that is, the contradictions of Indian democracy that Singh presents us with, but first let me present an account of how Singh arrives at her conclusion.

The first two chapters are a comparative study of sedition within the legal regimes of four countries: the UK, the United States (US), Australia, and India. It turns out that India is the only country to continue using the same definition of sedition that was introduced in British India in 1870. The other three countries have

Substantiated Storytelling

KAVITHA IYER

Some day in the foreseeable future, news may no longer live in a binary world of social media versus mainstream media. YouTube channels are already the chosen medium of many chroniclers of the current world, some with greater finesse or wider reach or sharper narratives than others. Tik Tok videos, Insta stories and many more hybrid models of storytelling will be de rigueur journalistic practice. And, while I am happy to report that good journalism in India does not expect to be rendered redundant any time just yet, the newspaper or television channel as we know it is already in the throes of metamorphosis. Whether you see it as journalism under siege or news-reporting 3.0 being liberated depends which side of the debate you are occupying, but, either way, one thing that is not difficult to agree upon is that books such as *Poverty Matters: Covering Deprivation in India* by K Nagaraj (based on lectures)/Nalini Rajan (ed) are going to be important, key additions to the discourse on how journalism will stay relevant in the coming decades.

The book, part of the Studies in Journalism series of monographs, textbooks and edited volumes, is a distillation of a series of annual lectures delivered by visiting professor K Nagaraj at the Asian College of Journalism (ACJ) in Chennai between 2001 and 2016. The series editor is Nalini Rajan, also professor and dean of studies at the ACJ. According to the editor's note, the book has also used contributions, in the form of lectures, by P Sainath, Utsa Patnaik, C P Chandrasekhar, Jayati Ghosh, Balaji Sampath, Madhura Swaminathan, Kalpana Sharma, and others. While that makes it a book for practising media professionals and especially those starting out at this delicate juncture in history, the subject actually appeals to a wider audience, including those consuming the news with any discernment, as well as those with more than a passing interest in understanding deprivation in India. For the last set, the book is, additionally, a sort

Poverty Matters: Covering Deprivation in India
by K Nagaraj (based on lectures)/Nalini Rajan (ed),
Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2017; pp x + 172, price not indicated.

of guidebook on how to take a deeper dive into a range of associated topics ranging from population theory to neo-classical economics, from Amartya Sen to Thomas Piketty.

What to Avoid

Divided neatly into four sections, the book first looks at current trends in how Indian media portrays poverty and affluence today, and includes an early indictment of present-day business journalism in India, delivered as an example of what students of journalism must avoid:

Deprivation involves extremely complex, technical and contentious issues, and as a natural consequence, there are differing perspectives on each one of them. Whether it is about policy issues or the measurement and extent of factors underlying deprivation, the world is divided into different camps. Our perspective is uncommon in large parts of the media and in most academic discourse. Not everyone need accept and adopt this viewpoint, but any adopted perspective must be argued clearly and be open for challenge. Our perspective is hammered all through this volume for the reason that the alternate viewpoints are all around us, particularly in our pink press—i.e., the business newspapers. And all these perspectives tend to be biased towards the corporate sector.

Warning issued, the book goes on to grab the reader by the jugular as soon as it refers, in subsequent pages, to a news headline on “2 am kids,” a news feature on the life and times of affluent youngsters zipping around an information technology hub in the wee hours in search of food and sustenance for the soul. Poverty and affluence, as the book tells young readers of the first chapters, are “two sides of the same coin,” because the 55 Indians who are “dollar billionaires” live cheek by jowl with millions who live on less than a dollar a day, since affluence sadly feeds on growing inequality.

The second section is a galloping study of data and technical matrices, tools for measuring poverty, the dimming relevance of using calorific norms for populations, the direct and indirect methods of assessing poverty levels, the Planning Commission's adjusting of the poverty line upon receiving the Suresh Tendulkar Committee report and, importantly, the possibility of some data in India being doctored.

The third section actually opens the book's dialogue, drawing in anyone with even a passing interest in reportage and writing on the Indian poor, and also those who may consume such reportage. In “Broadening the Concept of Deprivation,” the chapters address the post-1990 world of measuring deprivation, looking at how India has fared on the human development index (HDI) vis-à-vis other countries, how Indian states have performed, how some relatively poor countries may improve on the indices of health and education through appropriate policies, and how some very resource-rich countries remain tragically poor performers on HDI. The individual chapters on health, gender and literacy are solid, using broad brushstrokes but touching on various details. Students especially would find themselves returning to these chapters later, for they can offer a useful trajectory in the midst of a reporting or writing assignment.

It is the three chapters that comprise the final section of the book that breathtakingly tie it all together. A chapter on the theory of comparative advantage studies the idea of trickle-down effects versus inclusive growth, the poverty trap capital-scarce nations face, doubts surrounding trade as an engine of growth, the problematic assumptions of the free trade theory, how the dice is loaded in favour of developed countries, and the multiple internal contradictions of the theory. It sums up its argument against the free-trade champions thus:

What is the reality? In 2001, the International Labour Organization reported that as much as one-third of the world's workforce of 3 billion people is unemployed or underemployed. In the developed world alone, there was 3–25 per cent unemployment between 1993 and 2003. After the global crisis of 2008, the situation has worsened.

A chapter on population and a concluding chapter on various current aspects of policymaking follow.

A careful reading of this final section can enrich the discourse on any major news story of our times. What is the nature of growth that has left millions of forest-dwellers fearing eviction while a law to grant them rights over forestland remains implemented in fits and starts? What are the contradictions in free trade theory for communities in mortal fear of carrying on traditional occupations? As Indian agriculture's absorption of labour falls, what are the big ideas for human capital? Is there specific data for jobs from the Make in India thrust? As fuel for fresh ideas, the final chapters are a gold mine for journalists and non-journalists alike.

Writing about the poor in India sometimes stumbles through the us vs them prism, either ignoring the injustice and multiple laws flouted in their inability to get redress or picking a romanticised, stylised narrative that is shocking and moving without positing their reality in relevant socio-economic data and trends. This straight-talking account of some basic tools is, in that sense, a useful reminder for practising journalists of some vintage as well, that journalism is ultimately making sense of society as it changes, or as it does not, and for that purpose narratives

spliced dutifully with data, context and scientific assessment do the job best.

Perhaps, because the chapters are based on lectures to a student community, the tone and tenor are often didactic, the early chapters clearly meant for students who are assumed to have not consumed any world-class journalism on the Indian growth story. In later chapters, there is sometimes a sense of hurrying along to cover a road map of subjects and issues, without pause for some non-essential but exciting digressions.

Surprisingly, and a little disappointingly, the book does not address the subject of caste in connection with deprivation. The centrality of the caste experience among the landless, the malnourished, those unable to access their rights on gender, nutrition, health and literacy is a common thread running through some of our big under-reported themes. One assumes the subject is omitted deliberately to be tackled exhaustively in a later title in the series. The other subject that was absent was the linkages between deprivation and climate crisis.

Old-fashioned Journalism

In times when journalism in the old-fashioned sense of the term is under attack, not just from the millions wielding a camera and the power to broadcast to

millions, but also from fake news and a post-truth world, the tools the book offers are going to be more, not less, important. Because professional journalists now find they must go increasingly off-camera, where TikTok cannot go. Data journalism, good, old-fashioned storytelling substantiated by rigour and context, investigations, all of these require grounding in technique. But, while the rules of journalism are being rewritten, who's to say that a TikTok video cannot tell an important story of deprivation and loss? Mobile journalists are already publishing very powerful stories and eventually all scholarly work on journalism will have to acknowledge this new form of news story, and assess whether it sets its reportage in scientific matrices too. Social media has ushered in passionate daily debates on everything from Swachha Bharat to smoke-free kitchens to women's literacy.

Arguably, these may not be the most well-informed or nuanced. But, what if they were, what if they could be? Journalists have long carried the cross of educating and re-educating themselves, and now the practitioners of new forms of journalism might find impactful gains from doing so as well. This book is therefore essential reading for them too.

Kavitha Iyer (kav.iyer@gmail.com) is associate editor with the *Indian Express*, Mumbai.

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A Post-Keynesian Approach to Understanding the Black Economy

ALEX M THOMAS

The aftermath of demonetisation witnessed several books engaging with the black economy. However, the seminal work on the black economy in the Indian context is Arun Kumar's *The Black Economy in India* (1999). Saumen Chattopadhyay's *Macroeconomics of the Black Economy* is an extension of his PhD thesis which significantly draws on Kumar (1999).

Chattopadhyay's book is divided into six chapters. After outlining key concepts and definitions in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 undertakes a survey of the empirical literature on black economy. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 examine the effects of the black economy on the real sector, monetary sector, and open economy respectively. Chapter 6 appraises policies such as demonetisation, the goods and services tax (GST), and education. It ends with a discussion on the necessary features of a macro model for the Indian economy, perhaps in lieu of a concluding chapter.

The author favours the post-Keynesian approach to macroeconomics and is critical of the dominant neoclassical approach. In terms of accounting, Chattopadhyay employs the stock-flow consistent modelling proposed by Godley and Lavoie (2007). The core argument is based on the principle of the circular flow of income. In a two-sector economy with just households and firms, the equilibrium condition is given by equality between planned saving and investment and in general, it is given by the equality between injections (investment, exports) and leakages (saving, imports). But, note that the consumption and investment out of black incomes are injections. Indeed, Chattopadhyay is correct in pointing out that "the black economy is not a parallel economy," but is intertwined with the white economy (p 77) and that this fact receives inadequate attention in macroeconomic debates

BOOK REVIEWS

Macroeconomics of the Black Economy by Saumen Chattopadhyay, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2018; pp xx + 276, ₹795.

and policy. To put it differently, black incomes are generated endogenously alongside white incomes (p 96). Moreover, "the leakage of foreign exchange reserves and investment in gold remain trapped in unproductive investment" and consequently having an adverse impact on the expenditure multiplier and therefore on employment (p 160). Chattopadhyay's key point is that in an open economy, the "adverse impact of black investment can outweigh the positive impact of black consumption" and therefore negatively impact output and employment levels (p 170); this is because black investment, unlike white investment, is a leakage from the circular flow of income (also see p 183).

Since the tax is deducted at source (TDS) for wage incomes, Chattopadhyay argues that the main source of black income in India is profits (which evade taxes). He highlights the role of transfer payments in contributing to the black economy because it generates money flows without any corresponding commodity flows. Another chief route of black income generation is via transfer pricing, the "manipulation of prices charged for international transactions between the subsidiaries" (p 33). In the discussion of such illicit capital flows in an open economy (Chapter 5), Gabriel Zucman's (2015) work on tax havens is conspicuously absent.

The author endorses Kumar's estimate of the black economy which is "around 60 per cent of the reported size of the economy, that is, the GDP" (p 68). According to Chattopadhyay, black incomes are "mostly concentrated in businesses and

self-employed tax paying individuals" through the "under-reporting of output" and "over-reporting of costs" (pp 73–74). Other channels of black investment are "informal sector saving," "holdings of gold, silver and gems," "mis-invoicing of exports and imports," "speculation in non-reproducible goods," and "illegal activities such as smuggling and drug trafficking" (pp 86–87). And, illegal activities generate the demand for and supply of foreign exchange (p 150), an estimate of which is important for the management of foreign exchange, thus pointing to the importance of understanding the black economy for monetary policy.

A key point which Chattopadhyay highlights is the frequent conflation of black money, a stock variable with black income, a flow variable by the policy-makers. In an introductory economics class, this would be seen as an elementary mistake. Therefore, the author criticises demonetisation because it only targeted the stock, and that too, unsuccessfully. However, he notes that the move towards GST was in the right direction because it has the capacity to curtail the generation of black income and, therefore, its flow (p 190).

Chattopadhyay points out that a 30%–40% tax on half of the estimated black income would yield 6%–7% of gross domestic product (GDP) as additional tax revenue (p 178). Given the significance of public expenditure on education, health, and the environment, such additional revenues are paramount and this is all the more reason for targeting both black incomes and money. In a way, alongside monetary disincentives to curb black incomes, Chattopadhyay also highlights the importance of good "moral sentiments," to use Adam Smith's term (p 195).

Theoretical Issues

The analysis in the book, according to the author, "is derived from Keynesian and post-Keynesian perspectives of the economy as a whole, i.e., both the white and the black" (p xiv). The key features of this theoretical standpoint are the following: (i) there exists no real-monetary dichotomy, (ii) aggregate demand determines

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aggregate output and employment, and (iii) money is endogenous.

Chattopadhyay is critical of the mainstream approach to macroeconomics, and in the context of analysing the black economy, notes that most of the empirical literature adopts a "micro-theoretic" perspective. Mainstream neoclassical macroeconomics is rightly criticised for its adherence to methodological individualism (where the fundamental unit of analysis is an individual), use of the production function, and belief in Say's law (p 80). And consequently unemployment is explained by recourse to rigidities and imperfections in the system and not treated as a permanent feature of a competitive economy.

Although Chattopadhyay explicitly adopts the Keynesian approach, when he discusses black savings and white investment, he implicitly assumes an anti-Keynesian causation which runs from saving to investment (p 53). This could partly be due to the focus on macroeconomic accounting (or macrobalance) which accounts for the investment-saving gap in terms of sectoral (households, firms, banks, rest of the world) balances (pp 139–46). But, this provides an answer to the what-question and not the why-question, although there are some important pointers: white saving is invested in the illegal sector via chit funds and black profits is invested in the real estate sector via *benami* accounts (pp 144–45). Therefore, it would have been good had there been a section on how black and white saving and investment are brought into equilibrium in the neoclassical and Keynesian approaches. Similarly, a longer discussion on the determination of the rate of interest in both the approaches is warranted. The book contains only half-a-page of discussion on endogenous money (p 133), an aspect which is central to post-Keynesian macroeconomics. The history of endogenous money is much older and begins with the work of Thomas Tooke in the 19th century (see Smith [2014] for a detailed account).

Given Chattopadhyay's dissatisfaction with neoclassical economics, it is very odd to see him taking the assistance of an "educational production function" when discussing corruption in education. In

fact, the inclusion of corruption in education in the final chapter (pp 210–17) appears out of place.

Methodological Considerations

The book has a rich assortment of methodological points which deserve separate mention because they can enrich both economics research as well as teaching. Chattopadhyay rightly notes that "exogenous preferences are better treated as endogenous as people evolve through their experiences in their interaction with the people, the institution and the society" (p 7). He also criticises the Laffer Curve hypothesis since it is based on the neoclassical "microtheoretic framework" (p 187). While discussing the measurement of the black economy, the author points out that although "household production [and] gathering of nature produce for household production ... add to the well-being of the household [they] cannot be valued because of the absence of market" (p 26). The question of valuation is central to economics. However, it is important to debate whether the market is the only institution which is capable of valuation. Given the recent surge of experiments in economics, Chattopadhyay's words of caution are pertinent: "In experiments, social pressure and stigma are absent, and results would vary depending on who is included in the population" (p 49).

With the advent of powerful computing, quantitative data analysis has become easier and this has resulted in the proliferation of empirical papers in economics. The empirical turn in economics has led concepts and definitions to be determined by the available data and methods of estimation. Chattopadhyay argues that the "definitions of the underground economy" should precede the "method of estimation" (p 62). It is true that mainstream macroeconomics is yet to satisfactorily incorporate a stock-flow consistent accounting framework; in assessing the macroeconomics of the black economy, the author calls for analysing the changes in stock and flow together (p 82). Owing to the presence of a significantly large black economy, when employing the quantity theory of money in empirical work, it should be noted that "the transaction velocity may actually be

unstable as well as higher than the income velocity of circulation" (p 119). Moreover, "to capture the true velocity of circulation, the appropriate database should be weekly or monthly" and not annually (p 132). In a way, this underscores the fact that specific demands on data come from theory. While discussing the level of money supply in the presence of black money, Chattopadhyay prefers to focus on the "potential" than the "actual" level (p 121). It is important to point out that while the latter is calculated based on past data, the former is a theoretical position and, therefore, *any* estimation of potential values should be critically assessed.

Attention to Black Economy

While the book explicitly adopts a post-Keynesian framework, a greater theoretical engagement would have been beneficial, especially with respect to the saving-investment dynamics and endogenous money. In terms of macroeconomic accounting, Chattopadhyay's book makes an important contribution not only to the macroeconomic aspects of the Indian economy, but also to the teaching of macroeconomics and Indian economy (especially the tables on pages 91 and 141, and in Chapter 6). The readers obtain a good understanding of the nature of black incomes, especially its sources and uses, in the Indian economy. While most of the policy discussion is around taxation, the last chapter engages briefly with demonetisation and GST. The book has been successful in conveying to us that more attention to the black economy is warranted in macroeconomics teaching and research so that appropriate policies can be formulated.

Alex M Thomas (alex.thomas@apu.edu.in) teaches economics at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru.

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covering all aspects of the full theory-practice spectrum, the book does provide valuable insights into both theoretical and practical aspects of 'the craft of naturalist inquiry'.

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Seyyed-Abdolhamid Mirhosseini

Alzahra University, Iran

✉ mirhosseini@alzahra.ac.ir

Mahdieh Noori

Alzahra University, Iran

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✓ **Practitioner research in early childhood: international issues and perspectives**, edited by L. Newman and C. Woodrow, Thousand Oaks, California, Sage, 2015, 160 pp., £79.00 (Hardback), £25.99 (Paperback) ISBN: 9781446295342, ISBN: 9781446295359

I was pleasantly surprised by my reading of *Practitioner Research in Early Childhood: International Issues and Perspectives* edited by Linda Newman and Christine Woodrow. I expected the book to address practitioner research and early childhood education in international contexts, I was not prepared for such a compelling and nuanced journey. I expected to read about teacher research projects in global locations – descriptions of classrooms, teachers, and lessons learned. I did not expect to encounter novel and rich methodological, cultural, and pedagogical ideas and approaches. The book is not only about what researchers did and what they learned, it is also about the very purposes that underlie practitioner research, the power of collaborative inquiry, and innovative methods for learning about alternative ways of being early childhood educators. Reading this book invoked the experience of travel as I visited early childhood spaces filled with compelling practices and thoughtful perspectives.

Newman and Woodrow explain that their objective was to bring together a 'range of research stories' (p. xiii) and this is precisely what they did. These research stories explore practitioner research in action around the globe. The methodologies emphasize and honor practitioner voices, local knowledge and insights, collaboration, and knowledge in the service of practice, and inquiry to achieve what is often an elusive balance between telling stories that are both situated and inclusive.

In Chile, educators invite readers to consider collaborative *photostory-ing* as a means to stimulate the development of narratives that entail both reflection on both practice and change while simultaneously fostering conversations about community, culture, identity, and learning. In Australia, we encounter the voices of Islamic educators and explore the possibilities for practitioners to produce unique and responsive ways of teaching that honor culturally relevant practices and thoughts. In an Australian Aboriginal community, researchers invite children to photograph their play and invite community members to respond to the photographs while reflecting on the role of play in their own pasts and in their communities. We then travel to Sweden where researchers and teams of teachers use mind mapping to explore – visualize, label, revisit, and improve – their own teaching

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2. Childhood education X

practices. In South Africa, villagers engage with 'appreciative inquiry' to identify and build on communal strengths as they envision possibilities for children and their community. Returning to Australia, we explore curriculum renewal practices that entail reflection, reiterative and participatory practices, and ongoing redesign.

In short, this text is not just methodologically innovative; it is also innovative in terms of the respect it grants to children, their teachers, and members of local communities. Collaboration operates in each study as participants and constituencies acknowledge and share varied expertise from multiple perspectives and potential solutions to early childhood challenges.

Across the chapters, Newman and Woodrow invite authors to tell stories that feature collaborative problem posing as they engage with real challenges and real children. They highlight the importance of 'understanding knowledge and truth as fragile, contested and contingent, encouraging the production of locally situated knowledge and suggesting a place for the application of professional learning methodologies' (p. 3). Thus, the book presents an ethics of possibilities and action research as a journey. *Practitioner Action Research in Early Childhood* offers valuable spaces for reflection and action as educators and researchers are invited to assume lifelong journeys of learning and being.

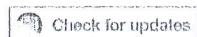
Catherine Compton-Lilly

John C. Hungerpillar, University of South Carolina

 comptonlilly@wisc.edu

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BOOK REVIEW

Design research in education. A practical guide for early career researchers, by Arthur Bakker, London and New York, Routledge (Taylor & Francis), 2018, 290 pp., \$38.95 (Softcover), ISBN: 9781138574489

As befitting a treatise on design research, this volume steers a course between the pragmatics of formulating and conducting design research, on the one hand, and on the other, the ensemble of theories and methods that inform and are themselves informed by this manner of inquiry. The author initiates the volume by inviting readers to consider the essential motivation of design research: “Most educational research describes or evaluates education as it currently *is*. Some educational research analyzes education as it *was*. Design research, however, is about education as it *could be* or even as it *should be*.” (p. 3). The first part of the volume addresses how “could be” and “should be” are transformed by design research from intention into knowledge that is held to epistemic standards of practical importance and theoretical advance. The second part of the volume describes variations on design research through a series of comparatively brief but compelling empirical case studies.

In the opening chapter, Bakker clarifies that design research is neither an algorithmic procedure nor an exercise in free-form; instead, it is guided by intentions to reform and explain in ways that are fruitful for both theory and practice. He suggests that the need to design arises from the fact that both theory and action are required for an adequate characterization of learning. Design serves as the bridge between these often-separated forms of knowing. Of course, the recognition that learning and its means of support should be analyzed together is not new. It did not arise at a singular moment but emerged, often fitfully, over time. Accordingly, the second chapter is devoted to a historical account of the emergence of design research, motivated in part by increasingly wider recognition of the implications of Simon’s (1967) stance that education is a design science. Its development was further driven by researchers’ repeated grappling with issues and ways of knowing that defied Procrustean fit to previously available repertoires of methods and theories. The focus on history also clarifies the political contexts in which design research arose and some of the objections concerning method and legitimate inquiry that it faced and continues to confront.

To further distinguish design research from other forms of inquiry, the rationales of experiment and design research are compared in a fictive dialogue. However, here, experiment is somewhat misleadingly characterized as being primarily about randomization and statistical generalization. In fact, the role of experiment in the production of knowledge traditionally involves much more, including arrangements of material conditions and measures for observation and a dialectic between theory and practice (e.g., Gooding, 1990; Knorr Cetina, 1999). I am not all that comfortable with stark contrasts between experiment and design because they tend to stereotype both. In education, these kinds of comparisons inevitably seem to be sparked by allusions to experiment as a “gold standard” in educational research.

As the book turns to contemporary practices of design research, the third chapter addresses the problem of crafting designs that consider how particular actions framed by particular circumstances interact to produce intended consequences. An important characteristic of the design research craft is that its actionable components and rationales for these components must be understandable to practitioners whose conduct will be guided by the design. These aims lead ineluctably to challenges of inscribing elements and relations among these elements so that they are intelligible to multiple audiences. Three common solutions – design principles, conjecture maps, and hypothetical learning trajectories – are portrayed, and trade-offs among them are explored by analyzing their function in sustaining and modifying design during a common cycle of initial fabrication, implementation in a setting of learning, and retrospective analysis. The role of each of these forms of inscription is

vividly illustrated in the second part of the volume by descriptions of how each functioned in design research related to art education (chapter 18), literacy education (chapter 19), and mathematics education (chapter 21).

The fourth chapter focuses on initiating design research. The chapter articulates prospective pathways from personally meaningful research questions to those that are apt to be tractable in the conduct of design research. It includes practical advice about how to remain faithful to the generative impulse of design research while ensuring that this impulse remains harnessed to questions about characteristics and mechanisms of a learning ecology. As in any research enterprise, honing these questions as the enterprise unfolds marks the quality of the research, and the fifth chapter provides further discussion and exemplification of the aesthetics of quality.

The sixth chapter examines ways of sustaining chains and cycles of inquiry in a manner that respects the necessarily local circumstances of design while simultaneously reaching for prospective generalization of design. In design studies, “generality” involves framing the design so that other designers with local knowledge can adapt it to their circumstances while still anticipating that the same educational goals will be accomplished. This contrasts to the argument structure inherent in other forms of research in which literal reproduction, such as some form of “treatment fidelity” in educational experiments, is required. How to communicate this form of generality is addressed in the seventh chapter, which is replete with sound advice about writing design research for publication. Here the author systematically addresses the intentions and structure of a research article and considers problems of rhetoric that arise when one is faced with the task of condensing an abundance of data to warrant claims about design. Much of the advice is delivered in the guise of entertaining metaphors (e.g., “funnel” vs. “reverse pear” formats for the introduction). The chapter also pays some much-needed attention to ways of generating coherent text. The first part of the book concludes by describing the challenges often encountered by mentors of aspiring design researchers. For example, he reminds readers of the need to remain open to the unexpected during the conduct of design inquiry, to avoid a premature focus on a particular pathway of development or a particular form of mediating means.

The second part of the volume takes up the prospects of mentoring newcomers to design research. In the opening chapter (Chapter 9), Dor Abrahamson explains how he inducts participants into design research by developing a community of practice. He generously shares templates for reporting design-based research and for expanding participants’ views of design through conversation about everyday artifacts. These ideas are then further exemplified by eight reports of design research projects authored by participants in his seminar. These collectively demonstrate the range and versatility of design research for generating and sustaining inquiry about education, including, for instance, designing to improve teaching about vascular dissection, the mathematical meanings of equivalence and derivative, and ways of employing agent-based models to reconcile observations of diffusion with formal expressions of equilibrium and reaction. Designs for children are similarly versatile and include a whimsical account of children’s building blocks to sustain a supporting structure of evidence and a thoughtful examination of tradeoffs for learning about life cycles in organisms engendered by different systems of representations. Although each report is an extreme condensation of a more encompassing design study, collectively, the cases justify optimism that prospective practitioners can be initiated into design research successfully. The remaining case studies in this second part of the volume are developed by Bakker and colleagues. These, as indicated earlier, illuminate the tradeoffs and tensions commonly encountered when inscribing design research as principle, conjecture map, and hypothetical learning trajectory. How to conceive and describe development appear to be particularly vexing across these forms of representation, and design researchers ought to attend more closely to issues and representations of development at multiple levels of analysis and at multiple scales of time (e.g., Saxe, 2015).

In summary, this is a compellingly crafted volume that does much to clarify and organize the wide range of research approaches described as design research. Although the volume was written primarily to guide early career researchers, its thoughtful and occasionally provocative handling of

issues, which all design researchers confront, make it imperative reading for newcomers to design research and more experienced practitioners alike.

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Richard Lehrer
Vanderbilt University, Nashville USA
 rich.lehrer@vanderbilt.edu

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BOOK REVIEWS

Doing qualitative research: the craft of naturalistic inquiry (2nd ed.), by Joost Beuving and Geert de Vries, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015, 224 pp., €29.50 (paperback), ISBN: 9789089647658, € 29.99, E-ISBN: 9789048525522

With 'the craft' as the highlight of its title and the focus of its content, this book tries to illustrate qualitative research as an iterative process of inquiry rather than 'solely a matter of technique' (24). Although the book does not claim to be providing recipes for conducting naturalistic research, it does help beginner researchers tackle the challenges they may face during qualitative studies based on grounded theory perspectives. The book comprises eight chapters standing between an introduction and an epilogue. The first two chapters delve into key issues and concepts of naturalistic inquiry and grounded theory, the next five discuss data collection and analysis, and the last one elaborates on qualitative research writing. Throughout, the authors present an efficient synthesis of concepts and theoretical notions and innovative views of the qualitative research practice in easy-to-understand jargon-light language. Therefore, the book goes a long way in shaping a readable introductory text on qualitative research.

In their introduction, the authors well provide a succinct but perceptive definition of naturalistic inquiry as gaining insights through 'studying people in everyday circumstances by ordinary means' (15) and reporting back to everyday people in an understandable way. Besides, they highlight the unobtrusive strategies in qualitative inquiry used to explore social situations by trying to reflexively understand the society through participation in it. 'The book builds on the idea that naturalistic inquiry is not something special: it is something that we do all the time' (16). In this way, Beuving and de Vries argue, we are researchers by nature and in the process of naturalist inquiry we only attempt to merge our natural understanding with other theoretical understandings of society. This is an intriguing view of research that challenges the bounds of academic frameworks, but it remains to see how the authors conceptualize the technicalities of research based on such a perspective in the rest of the book.

In Chapter one, the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research in terms of their philosophical interpretivist and positivist foundations is discussed. The authors highlight the attempt in qualitative research to describe, interpret, and understand social realities through examining emic perspectives of people's experiences and investigating how human beings *verstehen* (understand) their situation and act upon that. They believe that positivism and interpretivism are not necessarily incommensurable and each can be appropriate in their specific contexts since they look for different types of information through different procedures. Moreover, in explaining the theoretical justifications of the quality and soundness of outcomes in qualitative research, this chapter elaborates on iteration from description and interpretation to explanation through triangulation; note taking and diary keeping to coordinate such iteration; and member checking to guard against extreme subjectivism in naturalistic inquiry.

In the second chapter, grounded theory and its history and philosophical underpinnings as associated with naturalistic inquiry are introduced. Moreover, grounded theory is defined as a social reality which is generalized from and (re)created by peoples' everyday actions and experiences to explain phenomena under study (i.e. thinking with data). More specifically, the

authors propose different phases of inquiry based on grounded theory: the description of an observable phenomenon, interpreting observations in terms of mental categories of *native* members in the society, and relating them to social acts. This might seem too much of a philosophical debate but it can otherwise be indispensable in profoundly understanding qualitative inquiry. After grappling with such philosophical challenges, the next three chapters extend the discussion to the practical scene of collecting data in qualitative inquiry.

The collection of three major types of data are addressed in separate chapters. Observation is introduced as a minimally disturbing data collection procedure that has historically survived from earlier philosophical debates of rationalism and empiricism. The naturalistic inquiry is accordingly argued to go beyond observing stimulus-response relations to truly *verhesten* a response through comprehending the natural meaning of behaviors in attempts at the emic understating of participants' viewpoints and social relations. Interviewing is then presented as another preferred method of social scientists based on a historical account and sketches of different types of interview (nondirective interview, life history interview, creative interviewing, casual conversation, etc.). The *how to do* aspects of interview data collection, though, remain largely untouched.

In addition to observation and interviewing as perhaps the two most widely employed data collection procedures, the book also deals with qualitative data that can be gathered in the form of different types of documents including drawings, paintings, photography, films, advertisements, cultural objects (such as buildings), and 'ego-documents' (like diaries and mobile address books, which represent or replicate people's real lives and interactions). Data collection based on new technological and Internet-based resources are also considered. However, the authors do note that although these data sources can provide emic views of some phenomena, they cannot replace understandings gained through procedures like interviews and participant observations. Relatedly, in Chapter Six, the emerging technology-based naturalistic inquiry method of social network analysis and its different steps is introduced. As a new method, social network analysis much resembles the well-known ethnographic approaches. Hence, it could have been more efficient if the authors compared and contrasted it with the better-known ethnographic methods to define the possible merits and demerits of social network analysis.

The crucial issue of data analysis in qualitative inquiry is then addressed in Chapter Seven. Data analysis is depicted as a continuous work-in-progress embedded in the act of research, since one observation leads into another, through which not only does a researcher analyze vast texts and unconscious meanings but also 'authorial meanings'. The chapter discusses steps in the analysis of qualitative data aimed at uncovering situated meanings: unitizing, open coding, axial coding, comparing categories, and integrating categories. While coding constructs a major data analysis approach in qualitative studies, one would expect at least a quick touch upon other 'modes of thinking' in qualitative data analysis, especially narrative analysis (Freeman 2017).

Finally, in Chapter Eight, the stage of writing and reporting research findings is dealt with as the process of integrating description, interpretation, and explanation by merging coherent narratives and meaningful emic and etic data into a new whole. An admirable note in this chapter is the authors' mention of the unobtrusive immersed presence of naturalistic writers in the field – their glass presence. Also, they well acknowledge the self-critical stance of the naturalistic researcher by inviting peer researchers and participants to member check findings to ensure validity. This is a nice closing to this rich and vibrant work by Beuving and de Vries, which can be confidently recommended as a fruitful reading to beginners and perhaps even those who have passed the beginning in qualitative social science research. Although not equally

covering all aspects of the full theory-practice spectrum, the book does provide valuable insights into both theoretical and practical aspects of 'the craft of naturalist inquiry'.

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Seyyed-Abdolhamid Mirhosseini

Alzahra University, Iran

 mirhosseini@alzahra.ac.ir

Mahdiah Noori

Alzahra University, Iran

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X **Practitioner research in early childhood: international issues and perspectives**, edited by L. Newman and C. Woodrow, Thousand Oaks, California, Sage, 2015, 160 pp., £79.00 (Hardback), £25.99 (Paperback) ISBN: 9781446295342, ISBN: 9781446295359

I was pleasantly surprised by my reading of *Practitioner Research in Early Childhood: International Issues and Perspectives* edited by Linda Newman and Christine Woodrow. I expected the book to address practitioner research and early childhood education in international contexts, I was not prepared for such a compelling and nuanced journey. I expected to read about teacher research projects in global locations – descriptions of classrooms, teachers, and lessons learned. I did not expect to encounter novel and rich methodological, cultural, and pedagogical ideas and approaches. The book is not only about what researchers did and what they learned, it is also about the very purposes that underlie practitioner research, the power of collaborative inquiry, and innovative methods for learning about alternative ways of being early childhood educators. Reading this book invoked the experience of travel as I visited early childhood spaces filled with compelling practices and thoughtful perspectives.

Newman and Woodrow explain that their objective was to bring together a 'range of research stories' (p. xiii) and this is precisely what they did. These research stories explore practitioner research in action around the globe. The methodologies emphasize and honor practitioner voices, local knowledge and insights, collaboration, and knowledge in the service of practice, and inquiry to achieve what is often an elusive balance between telling stories that are both situated and inclusive.

In Chile, educators invite readers to consider collaborative *photostory-ing* as a means to stimulate the development of narratives that entail both reflection on both practice and change while simultaneously fostering conversations about community, culture, identity, and learning. In Australia, we encounter the voices of Islamic educators and explore the possibilities for practitioners to produce unique and responsive ways of teaching that honor culturally relevant practices and thoughts. In an Australian Aboriginal community, researchers invite children to photograph their play and invite community members to respond to the photographs while reflecting on the role of play in their own pasts and in their communities. We then travel to Sweden where researchers and teams of teachers use mind mapping to explore – visualize, label, revisit, and improve – their own teaching

BOOK REVIEWS

Community-based participatory research for health: advancing social and health equity, edited by N. Wallerstein, B. Duran, J. Oetzel and M. Minkler, San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass, 2018, 480 pp., £63.99 (eBook), ISBN 978-1-119-25887-2, £70.00 (Paperback), ISBN 978-1-119-25885-8

This timely book is a welcome addition to the growing literature on participatory approaches to research and its impact. We always live in challenging times, times of political, social and economic upheaval, and the last decade has been no exception. Published a decade after the 2nd edition, the content of this 3rd edition reflects some of the great changes that have taken place in the interim time in relation to the understanding and application of participatory research approaches but also the continuing need, and global challenge, to address *endemic inequality and social injustice found within and across societies. It is not that what was said a decade ago does not still have relevance to the current times but there is so much more to say and reflect upon, and this book does it with great aplomb.*

Clearly set out and illuminated through chapters written by an array of authors from different cultures and life spaces and addressing different challenges, the underpinning practice of Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) is recognised as the need to democratise: to create shifts in power. This power shift is specifically in relation to knowledge creation for action. An essential argument of the book is that for social change to take place that reflects the knowledges of those who are currently oppressed, they have to be active partners in matters 'about which they – not "outsider experts" – know most deeply' (p. 12). Inherent to knowledge democracy is the recognition of multiple ways of knowing, especially the inclusion of those who are find themselves seldom heard or indeed excluded. This book is essentially therefore about knowledge democracy with CBPR as the enactment of a democratic approach to building ways of knowing as a catalyst for social change for a more just society. It reflects the growth and increased visibility of forms of participatory research that engage wider communities in knowledge building and the recognition of its application in advancing social change built on more equitable foundations.

Written in seven parts, with each part speaking to a different element of the overall theme, this book is populated by accounts of the work of people who have researched together in a multiplicity of settings in response to an array of complex social injustices. Each section further illuminates a theory, concept or practice and builds the story. As such, although they can be read individually, they are not stand-alone sections but feed into the developing argument for, and critique of, CBPR.

Under the recurring title of 'Promising Practices', authors from around the globe generously share what they have learnt from the doing of CBPR, the methods they have used, the new tools they have crafted, the theories that have shaped their approach and theories that have developed from the challenges and excitements of being engaged in such an active approach to shared learning. They provide insights into the rationale for using the CBPR approach, how it has been enacted in practice and what might give cause for optimism. Beginning with the theory, history and practice of CBPR, the principles and values that underpin this research approach are made explicit. At the forefront is the ambition to address inequality, not as external experts, but through putting research to work with and within

- (1) Hospitality
- (2) Health educational research ✓

communities, in collaborations. This challenges us to recognise and address both obvious and dominant institutionalised and societal power relations but also to recognise the importance of understanding our own power and its potential impact, however that presents itself. Humility is positioned as a central element to a process that uses the Freirean notion of learners as being the subjects of their own liberation with the centrality of community dialogue is the touchstone for change through shared learning across the wider global sphere. A key purpose of CBPR is positioned as building on the 'strengths and priorities of the community for multi-level strategies to build health and social care' p3.

Whilst this is the ambition, the book is in no way idealistic. In addition to articulating the strengths and benefits of CBPR, it sets out to tackle challenges. These include challenges related to moral and practical issues, particularly issues of inclusion when working with diverse groups who experience daily disadvantage and face negative perceptions of place and community value. It also includes the challenges of institutional ethical frameworks for research and methodological elitisms found in current overarching frameworks for recognising the quality and value of research processes. Liberation from traditional forms of knowledge production and how it is evaluated is recognised by the authors as an under-theorised outcome of CBPR. The wealth of contributions to the book, including those of the editors themselves (see Part 6, Chapter 18 –20), advances this process.

The complexity of moving local agency into wider social and policy change is an ever present thread that runs through the book. The tension between communities of practice and policy-makers is explicitly addressed in Chapter 20 (Cacari-Stone et al). Recognising that whilst few CBPR partnerships, despite their inherent potential to act as a bridge, explicitly target this gap, a conceptual model for CBPR was born out of a long process of engaged research and dialogue. It represents spaces for acting that have a focus on bringing together – bridging. Organised under overarching domains (contexts, partnership processes, intervention and research and outcomes), the model seeks to make the spaces occupied by CBPR explicit as part of the process of revealing the complexities and potentials of CBPR in relation to social justice issues.

As with previous editions, the 3rd edition contains a wealth of resources that both inform and challenge researchers concerned with advancing social and health equity. Given the broad definition of health and community, the book will be of interest to people who are engaged in more participatory forms of enquiry in whatever field. Through its clearly structured, carefully researched and expertly crafted interweaving of theoretical and practical issues, drawing predominantly on real-life experience of engaging in CBPR, this book offers a rich resource for anyone who seeks, through the decolonising of research design, to engage in the process of promoting collaborative research for shared learning and its application in advancing social/health equity. Within its pages can be found the wisdom of experience that offers insights into how CBPR can or might work and the importance of continued critique of that practice for further development. The fundamental motivation of the book is to position CBPR as an approach that has the potential to address power imbalances in societies and effect positive social change.

Tina Cook

Department of Disability and Education, Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool, UK

✉ cookt@hope.ac.uk  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8750-5121>

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Time to clear the air of pollution

Sudhirendar Sharma
letters@hivive.com



Up sheet street: Going to school in smog caused by crop burning

AFP

In a country where corruption coexists with progress, indifference to pollution as a fatal fallout of development is bound to remain at the periphery of social discourse. Four decades since the enactment of the legislative provision to control and prevent air pollution, and despite an estimated million people dying as a result of it, few in India acknowledge air pollution as a serious problem. Why would they when the government has continued to deny that it causes many deaths? Ignorance and denial has transformed the problem from a meek cat into an assertive tiger.

Dean Spears confronts this tiger head-on in his socio-anthropological analysis of air pollution in the country's sprawling urban jungles and degrading rural landscapes. The impact of stubble burning in villages on ambient air quality across urban centres has shown that no one can escape. The author believes India's air pollution is not one problem but a multilayered manifestation of gov-

ernance and market failure. Fixing it poses a formidable public policy challenge. This, he stresses, is a collective problem that needs to be addressed through a policy directive on structural reforms.

Air pollution comes from several sources, many of which are nondescript in an informal economy. Keeping a tab on its nature and extent is as challenging as designing incentives to put a cap on it. The book takes the health route to raise concerns. Spears provides evidence on how exposure to air pollution not only results in babies born with low height but also leads to higher infant mortality rates. While life expectancy has caught up with the developed world, India continues to have one-quarter of the world's neonatal deaths. There are definite



Air: Pollution, Climate Change and India's Choice between Policy and Pretence
Dean Spears
258pp, ₹250
HarperCollins

social and economic reasons to fight air pollution. It is also clear that the polluter cannot keep a safe distance from the impact of pollution, and should play a proactive role in tackling the problem. *Air* provides a nuanced understanding on the country's deep vulnerability to air pollution in an era of impending climate change. Since policymakers have not invested in monitoring pollution and experts have not developed tools to curb it, this book is directed at enlightened voters who are concerned about the health of our society.

The state has an obligation towards its people. If a not-so-free China can cut its particle pollution in Beijing, India with its better democratic credentials should be able to effectively tackle pollution both in urban and rural areas. Spears wonders if the government will pursue a carrot and stick approach of right incentives along with punitive punishment to inculcate

responsive behaviour among municipal managers and law enforcers.

A handy book that provides a social science perspective on the political economy of development (read pollution), *Air* doesn't point out which boiler at a coal-based power plant can reduce pollution. Instead, it shows that coal is not the appropriate source of energy for the country. It adds more dangerous particles to the air than any other source and cutting down on it offers the co-benefits of reducing air pollution and carbon emissions. The book leaves the reader with a set of open-ended recommendations. Spears has lived in India for a while and is aware of the socio-cultural aspects of both rural and urban life. This lends credence to his writing. Politics is a difficult way to improve policies, the book asserts, but citizens can contribute to democratic accountability by influencing politics. Air pollution is too important to ignore; informed citizens need to track it and influence the state to act for the greater good.

Sudhirendar Sharma is an independent writer, researcher and academic

New Delhi

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A Micro-history of a Forgotten Disaster

DEBJANI BHATTACHARYYA

Chennai saw an unprecedented water crisis this year, even as flooding paralysed lives across many parts of South Asia, from Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, to Assam in the North East, and to Mumbai in the west of India. The annual cycle of cyclones, floods and droughts increasingly structures life across the subcontinent. Sunil Amrith (2018) while tracing the imperial history of monsoon management from the latter half of the 19th century proposes monsoon as an analytic to understand the geopolitics of South and South East Asia. These annual cycles of natural calamities are nested in a long history of imperialism and postcolonial state-making. For instance, environmentalist Nityanand Jayaraman (2019) reminds us in context of Chennai's water crisis that the city ran out of water more than a century ago, when the British began centralised water projects in 1876. According to Jayaraman, these projects ushered in a new paradigm that severed any relation between humans, land, and water. As a result, Jayaraman affirms that any solution to these crises must restore "our broken relationship with water and land."

Following the 2005 flooding of Mumbai, landscape architects Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha (2009) urged us to change our visual literacy around land-water relationships, a process which would require us to understand that the sea and monsoon are partners in shaping the grounds of our settlement, rather than looking at these as natural elements that must be managed and kept at bay. Mumbai, they reminded us, is soaked annually by monsoon rains. Their work documented the profound historical shift from "soak" to flood as our systems of living with water transformed over the past centuries. From historians to environmental activists

BOOK REVIEWS

An Imperial Disaster: The Bengal Cyclone of 1876 by Benjamin Kingsbury, *New Delhi: Speaking Tiger Books, 2019; pp xviii + 210, ₹399.*

and landscape architects, all alert us to the long history of disasters, which neither come out of the blue, nor end with the receding flood or the disappearing cyclone.

Recent scholars, especially sociologists, historians, and anthropologists have increasingly turned to disaster as an object of scholarly inquiry as massively disruptive tsunamis, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, and wildfires are decimating landscapes, displacing and drowning scores of people, cattle, and animals, and destroying capital. Disasters, they remind us, are political: they begin before the calamity strikes and persist after the event has disappeared from our immediate phenomenal world. Sociologist Kenneth Hewitt (1983), for instance, tells us that disasters are neither natural, nor spectral, but instead are the texture of everyday life in many parts of the world and the manifestation of a disaster depends on the social hierarchies.

Historical privilege predetermines the losers when cyclones, drought or any other calamity strikes. Thus, instead of studying "natural" calamities as "natural," they should be treated as events embedded in historical dimensions of people's relation to their habitat and the existing sociopolitical landscape (Hewitt 1983). In the post-Katrina moment, scholars have documented how race, poverty, deferred maintenance, and organised ignorance shape disasters and hence must all be central to the study of disaster (Frickle and Vincent 2007; Knowles 2014; Nixon 2011). Amites Mukhopadhyay's (2016) recent ethnography of embankment loss and

reconstruction in Sundarbans explains what it means to live with disasters on an everyday basis. This testifies to an everyday structured through land loss, caused by flood and salination on the one hand, and land acquisition without compensation for the government's embankment projects on the other.

Within this burgeoning literature on monsoon, floods, and cyclones, Benjamin Kingsbury's *An Imperial Disaster: The Bengal Cyclone of 1876* offers us a micro-history of a cyclone that appeared as a storm wave which reached a height of 40 feet, drowning 2,15,000 people and killing another 1,00,000 in the epidemics that followed. He meticulously traces the making of the storm as a "human and historical event," which was shaped by the "patterns of exploitation" endemic to the 19th-century Bengal countryside, nested within larger political and economic disparities of imperial rule (p xiii). Kingsbury places the event-history of the cyclone within a long period of agrarian transformation, deforestation, governance of embankments and post-disaster relief policies. The narrative arc is organised through six chapters about the history of the estuary, the forest, the cyclone, the epidemic that followed, and its aftermath.

The temporality of the cyclone begins with the late-18th-century destruction of the textile and salt industries in eastern Bengal (present Bangladesh). The cyclone affected the Meghna estuary, which had been deforested a mere half-century before it. The "earth-hungry" imperial machinery and their rent-seeking Indian intermediaries satiated their appetite for revenue through mangrove clearance and reclamation of recently formed alluvion (Graham-Sumner 1913). The poor migrants who had moved to these alluvial flats were defenceless against the rising tides of the merciless Bay of Bengal, once their only protection—the mangroves—were turned into agrarian landscape.

Imposed Immiseration

Before the arrival of the British merchants, both Noakhali and Bakarganj, two places devastated by the cyclone of

1876, had a thriving textile production and the province was renowned for cotton and muslins. It was a province where merchants and weavers were not the only prosperous people, but so too were people employed at every stage of production from cotton cultivators to bleachers, including many women spinners who had achieved some degree of economic independence (p 10). The late-18th-century invention of the spinning mule in Britain, coupled with protectionist import policies of the East India Company shut out the Bengal weavers and began a long process of immiseration, where weavers, cultivators and the people employed in various sectors of the textile industry found themselves "thrown onto the land" and were some of the early settlers upon the newly formed alluvial flats (called as "char") close to the mouth of the Bay of Bengal (p 10).

Salt manufacture, the other thriving Mughal trade in the region, reached a similar fate as the British assumed monopoly over salt manufacturing and imposed a salt tax, making the salt department notorious for the exploitation it inflicted upon its workers. From 1832, the salt manufacture was stopped and large quantities of British salt began to enter the country, further immiserating an already impoverished population. Salt makers, much like those employed in the textile industry, turned to cultivation, cattle-keeping and taking herds to pasture on the newly formed chars.

The collapse of both these industries and the resultant immiseration was also followed by the new land settlement policies in this mobile chars. Here, the government "turned the geography of the estuary to its own advantage, using the process of erosion and deposition to increase its land revenue" (p 19). This meant that the weavers, salt workers, boatmen, herdsmen, labourers, and cultivators were pushed to the brink and were doubly exposed to disaster, both by being displaced to the unstable landscape threatened by the seas and under the weight of higher taxes, leaving them with fewer ways of avoiding risks when disasters visited them.

This was compounded by the fact that imperial policies mostly viewed the mangrove forest of the Sundarbans

through the twin lenses of "improvement" (which meant forest clearance) and conversion to revenue-producing lands, in a process which ignored all limits set by nature. What followed in the wake of these clearances were coercive revenue regimes and illegal taxes like *abwabs* in attempts to maximise profits from these small plots of lands cleared in between thickets of forest. The imperial judicial system, much like the railways and telegraph, mostly bypassed this region.

Unevenly Distributed Risks/Relief

What these policies ushered into the forest was nothing less than an "expandable and flexible system of land tenure ... where the land had already been subdivided by the rivers and creeks (creating) economic pressure on those at the bottom of the tenure chain" (p 43). Thus, when the cyclone struck during the month of October in 1876, it was those at the bottom who suffered the most. Overturning the dominant understanding of the randomness of natural events, Kingsbury notes that the victims of the storm were not chosen randomly. If the projects of reclamation distributed risk and profit unevenly, creating divisions based on class, occupation, and gender, then these became the divisions that "separated the living from the dead" after the cyclone (p 77).

For those who did manage to hold onto life during the cyclone, survival did not necessarily signal an end to the ordeal, since the distribution of relief was highly skewed under imperial policies. Crises often clear the way for socially oppressive policies and, as Kingsbury shows us, this was overtly the case in the Bengal countryside under an extractive imperial regime. The government's policies, born out of Richard Temple's fascination with market liberalism, left the victims without adequate food, water or shelter. The absence of railway infrastructure, remoteness, and general imperial indifference meant relief work was slow and haphazard. The fields swelled with decomposing bodies, resulting in the outbreak of a terrifying cholera epidemic. A tepid response from the medical institutions was only symptomatic of a "deeper ambivalence about the state's

responsibility for public health" (p 115), creating a fatal link between "official indifference and the worst cholera epidemic Bengal had ever seen" (p 131).

In a telling final chapter, Kingsbury follows the changes this decimated landscape witnessed to show how the post-disaster policies only strengthened those who were powerful against those who were not. Unpacking the link between disaster and security discourse (a discourse that is increasingly gaining ground in the contemporary moment), Kingsbury documents how new police outposts were established in Bakarganj to aid and abet rent-extraction from these impoverished cultivators.

Even the few government loans provided went solely to the landlords and zamindars, as they were the only people who could offer security against which those loans were provided. The cultivators were not only denied loans, but they were now made to contend with richer landlords, who were sometimes also their moneylenders, and who could now raise rents under the protection of imperial police. In all of this, Richard Temple was recognised for his efforts at reducing the costs of disaster relief, and was entrusted with the higher office of the famine and was delegated to Madras in 1877. Indeed, the official response to disaster was marked by an "absence of any measures aimed at preventing a similar event in the future" (p 164). It was a disaster of imperial proportions.

Kingsbury opened the book by reminding us that this Bengal cyclone is a "forgotten disaster" not for the lack of records, but because "poor people living in remote places are easy to forget" (p xiv). Changing the analytic lens, Kingsbury painstakingly recounts in lucid prose why it was the poverty engendered through decades of imperial greed, and not the cyclone that was the larger disaster. The cyclone, followed by

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मोहम्मद वक्रास

पलब्धि पर इनसान की सबसे सामान्य प्रतिक्रिया संतोष नहीं, बल्कि और ज्यादा की चाहत होती है; या, हम शांतिपूर्ण या समृद्ध जीवन जीकर संतुष्ट नहीं होते. इसके बजाए जब हकीकत हमारी आकांक्षाओं के अनुरूप होती है तभी हम संतुष्ट होते हैं. लेकिन बुरी खबर यह है कि हालात सुधरने के साथ ही हमारी आकांक्षाएं बढ़ जाती हैं; या, फिर असली खुशी हासिल करने के लिए अपने सुखद एहसास की कोशिश कम कर देनी चाहिए, उसे बढ़ाना नहीं चाहिए.” युवा नोआ हरारी ने संतुष्टि, आकांक्षा और खुशी की कोशिश में दुनिया में हो रहे निरंतर बदलावों के मद्देनजर *होमो डेयस: आने वाले कल का संक्षिप्त इतिहास* रच डाला. इसमें वे इतिहास की घटनाओं और मौजूदा दौर में विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में हो रहे बदलाव के आधार पर ऐसी दुनिया की कल्पना-कपोल नहीं-करते हैं जो धीरे-धीरे हमारे सामने उभर रही है.

इससे पहले उन्होंने *सेपियन्स: मानवजाति का संक्षिप्त इतिहास* में पृथ्वी पर इनसानी जीवन को महज एक संयोग बताया, और जिन वजहों से उसकी तरक्की हुई उन्हीं वजहों से उसके खत्म होने का अंदेशा जाता है. उनकी तीसरी किताब *21 लैसंस फॉर 21 सेंचुरी* पिछले साल अंग्रेजी में आ गई. (इसका एक अध्याय आप इस साल की *इंडिया टुडे साहित्य वार्षिकी* में पढ़ सकते हैं.)

बहरहाल, येरुशलम की हिब्रू यूनिवर्सिटी में विश्व इतिहास के प्रोफेसर हरारी *होमो डेयस* में बताते हैं कि तीन वजहों से सबसे ज्यादा

लोग मरते थे: अकाल, महामारी और जंग. अब इन तीनों की वजह से होने वाली मौत काफी कम हो गई है; वे ढेरों मिसालों के जरिए इसे स्पष्ट करते हैं. इनके पीछे कोई दैवीय शक्ति नहीं बल्कि इनसानी चूक दिखती है. फिर बताते हैं कि मौत तो तकनीकी समस्या है और सिद्धांततः इससे पार पाया जा सकता है. जीवन का अधिकार मौलिक अधिकार है और मौत इसका हनन करती है. कोई व्यक्ति महज दिल का दौरा पड़ने या किसी दुर्घटना में नहीं मरता बल्कि धमनियों के संकुचित होने से दिल का दौरा पड़ता है या किसी की गलती से दुर्घटना होती है. इसी तरह सुख तलाशने का भी अधिकार होता है. इन अधिकारों की रक्षा के लिए वैज्ञानिक प्रयोगशालाओं में युक्तियां लगा रहे हैं और इसी का नतीजा है कि इनसान की औसत आयु निरंतर बढ़ती जा रही है. वे दलील देते हैं कि इनसान खुद में सुधार करके *होमो डेयस* या ‘मानव देवता’ या ‘अतिमानव’ बनने की कोशिश करेगा.

वे बताते हैं कि ऐसा तीन तरह से होगा: पहला, बायोलॉजिकल इंजीनियरिंग के तहत शरीर के पुराने और विकृत अंगों को बदल दिया जाएगा या फिर उन्हें जल्दी खराब नहीं होने दिया जाएगा. दूसरा, साइबोर्ग इंजीनियरिंग के तहत शरीर में गैर-जैविक हिस्से जोड़ दिए जाएंगे. तीसरा, गैर-जैविक चीजों की इंजीनियरिंग के तहत इनसानों जैसी सोच वाले आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस को प्रोत्साहन. इन सबका मकसद इनसान को हमेशा के लिए जिंदा रखना है और गुगल की कंपनी कैलिको

इस दिशा में काम कर रही है. वैसे, हरारी यह स्पष्ट कर देते हैं कि विज्ञान और टेक्नोलॉजी में तरक्की के बावजूद अभी इनसान की प्राकृतिक उम्र करीब 90 साल है. लिहाजा, कैलिको निकट भविष्य में गुगल के मालिकान को हमेशा के लिए जीवित रखने में कामयाब न हो, उनकी अगली पीढ़ी कुछ उम्मीद कर सकती है!

हरारी की दलील है कि इनसान और उनकी सोच अंततः रासायनिक प्रक्रियाओं और एल्गोरिद्म में बदल जाएंगे. इन एल्गोरिद्म को आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस में तब्दील किया जा सकता है. मिसाल के तौर पर वे कहते हैं कि हर सोच हमारे दिमाग में चल रही रासायनिक प्रतिक्रिया है, जिसे दिमाग के स्कैन में ऐसा होते देखा जा सकता है. हालांकि हरारी ने इसे महत्वपूर्ण आधार बनाया है लेकिन दिमाग के बारे में अभी बहुत जानकारी नहीं है.

बायोलॉजिकल इंजीनियरिंग के कमाल दिख रहे हैं. इसके जरिए अमीर लोग महंगी से महंगी दवाओं या प्रक्रियाओं का इस्तेमाल करके दूसरे लोगों से अलग हो जाएंगे, एक तरह का एलीट वर्ग तैयार हो जाएगा.

एक दुखद पेशनगोर्द: आने वाले समय में एक वर्ग किसी काम का नहीं होगा. उसे न सिखाया जा सकता है और न ही कहीं रोजगार में लगाया जा सकता है. वह यकीनन भयावह स्थिति होगी. एआई इनसानों की जगह लेंगे. इसी की वजह से आर्थिक रूप से बेकार लोगों का वर्ग तैयार होगा. वाहन उद्योग का ऑटोमेशन इसका जीता-जागता उदाहरण है.

इसी तरह, डेटा युग में बुद्धि और चेतना अलग हो गए हैं. और हम ऐसी मशीनें बना रहे हैं जो हमसे जल्दी और बेहतर ढंग से सोच रही हैं और उसका परिणाम सामने ला रही हैं. इससे चेतना की जरूरत कम होती जा रही है. हमारी आदतों को डेटा के रूप में सिलिकॉन वैली में जुटाया जा रहा है और बहुत मुश्किल समझे जाने वाले मसलों का हल चुटकियों में पेश किया जा रहा है.

किताब में अनगिनत घटनाओं के मद्देनजर ये निष्कर्ष निकाले गए हैं. पाठक इनमें से कुछ से सहमत भले न हों पर हरारी की दलील को नजरअंदाज नहीं कर सकते. अनुवाद अच्छा है पर रीलिंग के लिए बार-बार मजहब और एक जगह ‘शायद एक धर्म के अनुयायी सही हैं’ (पेज-196) में ‘धर्म’ का प्रयोग संभवतः हरारी ने भी नहीं सोचा होगा!

यह किताब उन सब लोगों के लिए पठनीय है, जिनका कोई भविष्य है! इससे उन्हें खुद को वक्त के साथ बदलने और बेहतर दुनिया में योगदान करने की सलाहियत मिल सकती है. ■

Books

THE INDIAN LEGAL SYSTEM: An Enquiry by Mahendra Pal Singh and Niraj Kumar. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2019.

THE book under review is an 'enquiry' that seeks to bring to the fore some salient features of the 'Indian legal system' that remain crucial to understanding its true nature and identity. There are myriad factors and influences to which a legal system owes its identity. Historical antecedents are one of such influential factors that play a crucial role in shaping the content and deciding the nature of any legal system. Many of these historical antecedents are often 'transplanted' from a foreign shore, more so in case of a legal system that has remained under colonial rule for a considerably long period. Given the fact that the past casts its indelible imprint upon the present, it is but axiomatic that the ways to read the legal past sometimes may create an occasion to debate on some of the salient aspects of a legal system.

Tracing the roots of the legal system, therefore, becomes *integral* to the ways one may read the 'legal past'. As regards the Indian legal system, many a scholarly effort has been made to explore the deeper roots and myriad facets that remain operative and alive in India today. The book under review makes certain definite assertions that tend to *deviate* from the well settled and well taken assumptions about the legal system in India and thus, adds to the rich corpus of scholarly efforts made over the years. It offers new insights and perspectives that may make the reader feel askance as to the true essence of the Indian legal system when it is seen as a confluence of many legal systems or traditions that have remained alive and thriving apparently or imperceptibly.

The book comprises of four chapters along with richly informational appendices on 'judicial engagement with customary law in India' and 'state profiles indicating reliance on traditional non-state legal systems' respectively. The book makes a prefatory assertion in the Preface to the effect that 'India having an unbroken history of over 4,000 years during which the country was governed by several empires', must have had legal systems that left behind an 'impact', a fact

that cannot be brushed aside or forgotten given the fact that the British 'ruled India effectively for less than a century.' Doing so will be like turning a Nelson's eye to a crucial historical fact of great legal implication.

The book begins with a 'summary of arguments' which sets the tone, followed by an Introduction that provides the backdrop for the ensuing chapters. It gives a brief overview of the chapters along with a well articulated research design and an introductory account of how common law 'garnered its roots in India.' It seems to persuasively suggest that all this could be possible in that 'common law-trained judges, lawyers of the Privy Council, and the higher judiciary in India were brought to bear the imprint of the English outlook and techniques upon the judicial administration of India', and it was natural that they would look to the legal tradition that they have been 'accustomed for a lifetime.' Moreover, the doctrine of *stare decisis* did play an important role in helping the common law firmly spread its roots in India. It is a well settled fact that 'principles of English law infiltrated the jurisprudence administered by the courts in the guise of rules of 'justice, equity and good conscience.' The authors argue that in addition to the aforesaid, 'a planned effort was made, beginning in 1833, to introduce English law in India through Codification.'

Having set the stage in the Introduction, chapter one traces the history of the legal system in India. The foundational premise of this chapter is reflected in the opening sentences where the authors assert that 'there exists an amalgamation of different understandings of the legalities that have existed in the subcontinent over the years.' 'Dominant legal systems' pre-existed the East India Company, which brought about 'colonial legal change.' This had far reaching impacts. The Indian legal order was compelled, by changing circumstances, to move from a 'plural system' that had place for 'indigenous legal authorities' to a type of state law that relied upon English legal texts, sources and procedures. This signified, in the years to come, an 'absorption of an indigenous legal system by a European legal order.' The process of absorption and the consequent transformation of the then existing legal practices is one such aspect of the Indian legal system that remains significant.

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There are few examples or historical instances that the authors discuss to bring home the point that such existing or ancient legal systems had their own framework that differed significantly from the colonial legal order that brought about a transformation of the existing legal system to such an extent and of such nature that was epochal and of great consequence. One such transformation took place when Warren Hastings initiated a metamorphosis that the then existing Hindu legal tradition had to undergo, and it sounds ironical that proclamations were made to the effect that the British had taken upon themselves 'to give Indians their own law.' The metamorphosis resulted in an 'Anglo-Hindu legal hybrid.'

Moreover, as the authors point out, prior to the British, there was another legal system, known as the Sultanate System, which was carried forward and modified by the Mughals. It is interesting that the judicial administration under these two systems 'brought into India models of judicial administration from Persia, Arabia, Egypt and Syria, and effected changes in order to fit Indian needs.' Besides the major and well known legal orders, there did exist 'sophisticated and crystallised state legal systems in southern parts of India.' The Maratha Empire and Vijayanagara kingdom glaringly exemplify such legal systems. We cannot ignore the unique system of judicial administration that the Wodeyar and Travancore kingdoms had developed.

The authors make a succinct yet significant survey of different legal systems at the beginning of the colonial era, and it may impel one to think that Indian legal history reflects a plurality that was palpable 'with contrasting sets of people' in a legal set up marked by the 'prevalence of customary informal bodies at the village and tribal levels.' Harmony prevailed at all levels of the state. Therefore, the legal 'chaos' and 'vacuum' that the British talked about while justifying the transplantation of English Common Law in India, seems not so well placed in view of the fact that there existed 'a highly evolved and complex legal system' that was deeply rooted in and connected with the 'socio-cultural needs and aspirations of the Indian populace.' The Indian legal landscape was 'diverse' and 'pluralistic'. However, as the authors conclude, that though efforts were made by the British to superimpose their laws upon the existing legal systems, it would be 'illogical' to assume they 'could have penetrated deeply or profoundly into Indian society.'

Chapter two explores the historical and contemporary deviations from the state legal system in India. These deviations are reflective of the existence of non-

state legal systems that were in existence during the colonial as well as post-colonial period. The multiplicity of legal systems amid legal pluralism is one such aspect of the prevailing legal system that the dominant and 'superimposed' state-legal system can ill-afford to ignore. However, there is no denying the fact that this duality of state and non-state legal systems occasions an exploration of the twin processes of transplantation (of 'English law') and metamorphosis (of indigenous laws). The process was instrumental in ensuring that the state law was successful to seep through the corpus of 'unwritten' and customary laws, aided by multiple factors.

The authors in this chapter endeavour to showcase the dynamics of the process through which state law slowly yet steadily gained prevalence and dominance *vis-à-vis* multiplicity of other indigenous legal orders that pre-dated the state law. For instance, diffusion of common law tradition into Indian society, that was to be the dominant legal tradition in the years to come, was possible owing to three noteworthy developments: establishment of English modelled legal institutions, legislative transplants and codification.

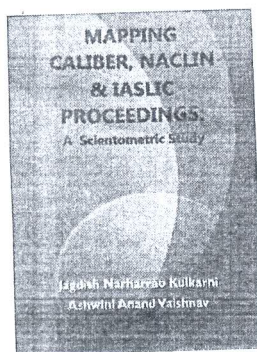
Colonization entailed 'massive legal transplant of western law into India' which, as the authors put it, was 'designed to facilitate transactions of British colonies and traders, and thereby maintain its imperial dominance over India. The implementation of these laws along with the establishment of British legal institutions, were efforts in the furtherance of the omniscience of the state legal system over all other legal cultures.' Be that as it may, there were laws that enjoyed 'non-interference' by the British. Personal laws were one such set of laws which the British found to be 'chaotic and confusing.'

These laws mark a prominent deviation from the state legal systems. Such deviations are indicative of the fact that there is space for laws other than state law. One comes across other prominent deviations in the post-constitutional period as well, so notably recognized under Article 13(3) of the Constitution that includes 'customs and usages' within the ambit of 'law' in force in India. The authors remind the readers of 'constitutional provisions that allow for the protection of customary' through a 'system of protection of tribal communities and their customs through Articles 244, 244-A, 342, 371-A, the Fifth and Sixth Schedules, and so on.' Constitutional recognition of customary laws and usages is also a recognition of deviations that exist in the form alternative legal systems.

All told, chapter two concludes that engagement of the state legal system with other legal systems and

Book Review

MAPPING CALIBER, NACLIN & IASLIC PROCEEDINGS: A SCIENTOMETRIC STUDY/ Jagdish Narharrao and A A Vaishnav. Delhi : R P Publications, 2018. 289p. ISBN 987-93-82398-72-1 (hard Cover). Language: English. Price: ₹ 1595



Scientometric study is the buzz word in the methodological approach of information, in which the scientific literature becomes the subject of analysis. This is science of science, which involves measuring and analysing information, the growth, structure, interrelationships and productivity. The mapping procedure envisaged in the scientometric study gives a clear guidance as to the citations, co-citations, authorship pattern, author productivity, citation analysis, publication density, impact factor, author ranking etc. All these are essential features in any modern study related to journals, articles or conference proceedings. Not much attempt has been made on the mapping of the conference proceedings so far. This book is a very good initiative in this aspect. Moreover when the conferences covered are of the stature of CALIBER, NACLIN & IASLIC, the work becomes much more important and stupendous. No one has earlier taken the initiative to map the proceedings of these. So in that way, this work is a commendable one.

The book is conceptually well defined too. There are seven chapters in this book – chapter 1 – Introduction: where the concepts of scientometrics are clearly explained. Therefore to a novice, the concepts like author productivity, authorship pattern, citation metrics, bibliographic coupling, co-citations all becomes

clear. The 36 conclusions in this chapter are well drawn and are a reflection of the outcome of the conferences conducted by these organization.; chapter 2 - a review of the scientometric literature. In this chapter, not only the reviews of the literature on Scientometrics have been covered, but also the different scientometric laws, models and indices have been discussed. The details of citation analysis, author productivity, degree of collaboration have all been well defined; chapter 3 – a view of CALIBER, NACLIN & IASLIC. In this chapter, the objectives and activities of these Associations have been also focused; chapter 4 – an overview of these conferences. This chapter is well supplemented by 12 tables depicting the chronology of conferences, hosting institution, places of conferences, state wise distribution of conferences, chief editors of proceedings, ranking of editors, themes of conferences, number of papers and abstracts in these conferences; chapter 5 – scientometric analysis of the papers in conference proceedings. This chapter is the main focus of this publication, and through this chapter, the best productive author, and the most cited author has been portrayed; chapter 6 – citation analysis of the conference proceedings. In this chapter, the details of the citations have been explained – year wise citation distribution, ranking of cited titles, language wise distribution of citation, collaboration year wise, etc. statistical tests have been applied. Conclusions and implications are discussed in chapter 7. The author productivity, the

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authorship pattern, citation metrics of key authors, publishers and publications, websites, all have been studied very well in relation to citation. Therefore many prolific results could be obtained, like most common editor, most prolific author, most favourite subject, maximum publication density, the most cited author, maximum cited websites etc. The gamut of the study of all these three conferences have been well documented in these 7 chapters. The scientometric analysis of the papers of the conference proceedings and the citation analysis of the conference proceedings form a very

important part of this book. The study is well supplemented by tables, and figures, and mathematical figures and formulae; and various permutations and combinations, leading to various types of results. Statistical methods have also been employed, leading to pinpointed results. References at the end are ample, ranging from books to various journal articles.

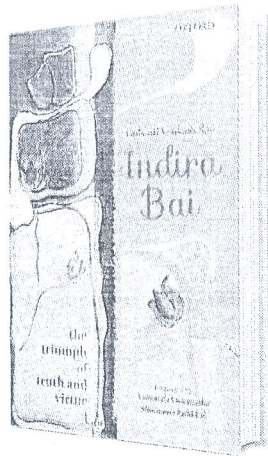
Prof Swapna Banerjee
Dept of Library and Information Science
University of Calcutta

Guidelines to the Reviewer of Books

The under mentioned guidelines are not to curtail the freedom of the Reviewer of a book. They merely suggest the essential parameters of the review. The Review is expected to contain the following:

1. A brief introduction to the field, or, as the case may be, the area of a field, to which the book under review belongs. The introduction will lay emphasis on the status of development in the field/area of a field, and indicate the link of the book to the stated development.
2. The purpose/aim of the book as stated in the Preface/Introduction, and assessment as to how far the purpose/aim is evident in the text.
3. A gist of the contents of the book; the specific subject-matter/topics dealt with; assessment as to the extent and coverage, and noticeable lacunae in the contents.
4. An account of the treatment and exposition of the subject-matter/topics and assessment as to how far the treatment aims at an extensive study or an in depth study, or both. Comments on the exposition.
5. Besides assessments specifically in respect of items 2, 3 and 4 mentioned above, a general assessment of the merits and limitations of the book as a whole.
6. The assessments/comments should be, as far as possible, objective that is, based on the evidence of the text of the book under review.

Dwelling on the Past



INDIRA BAI: THE TRIUMPH OF TRUTH AND VIRTUE

GULVADI VENKATA RAO; Translated by VANAMALA VISWANATHA & SHIVARAMA PADIKKAL

Oxford
232 pages
₹ 695

THE SIGNIFICANCE of reading *Indira Bai* — published in the 19th century and one of the earliest Kannada texts on social history and dealing with widow education and remarriage — in our times is to understand the evolution of the novel over the years as a literary genre. It also helps analyse the evolution of local cultures in the face of modernity, through a fictionalised account that takes you back in time. Of course, there is also the added advantage of scrutinising a social reform movement through its nascent stages, peering into a tiny plot of history, and feeling relieved at how far (relatively) we have come in the 21st century.

Indira Bai, written by Gulvadi Venkata Rao and translated into English by Vanamala Viswanatha and Shivarama Padikkal, is born to Bhima Raya and Amba Bai, well-off Saraswat Brahmins living in the

south Canara region in Karnataka. An ambitious Amba Bai instigates Bhima Raya to covertly murder his assistant, Sundara Raya, for “peddling obnoxious rumours” to tarnish their reputation. By virtue of his financial and social status, Bhima manages to get away with the murder. A few years later Indira, now a girl, is married off to a rich man, Vittala Raya. It is when Vittala dies of a disease contracted through multiple sexual engagements with other women, that Indira is forced into observing the austerities meant for a widow. But Indira, well-read and strong-headed, often derides them, much to the vexation of her parents. Consequently, someone is brought home to “mend Indira” through religious discourses. Indira runs away from home and a lawyer takes her under her tutelage, helping her complete her education. It is the same lawyer who had helped Bhaskara Rao, the son of the murdered Sundara Raya, by sending him abroad. Indira and Bhaskara marry, thereby completing the cycle of life with gender and social justice.

Indira Bai is a noteworthy read for its feminist intent and content. The novel helps us to critically question the socio-cultural practices of today against the backdrop of a new pan-Indian consciousness ushered in by the reform movement centuries ago.

The reach of Gulvadi's *Indira Bai*, compounded with a refashioned sense of modernity among Saraswat Brahmins, helped to cast the community in a progressive mould, but not without creating ideological and religious discord among families. The text serves not only as a mirror to a community's social reality, but also as a means to look within itself to write, and rewrite, perspectives. After all, even two centuries later, literature stands strong as a tool to recast identities.

ANSHIKARAVI

A Very Long Journey

Salman Rushdie's Booker Prize-shortlisted new novel concerns the interpenetrability of reality and fiction in the era of true lies. But it sure takes its time getting to the point



QUICHOTTE
SALMAN RUSHDIE
Penguin
390 pages
₹ 699

PRATIK KANJILAL

SALMAN RUSHDIE'S new novel reached the Booker shortlist this week, though English and American critics have more or less closed ranks to pan it as his worst ever. They are mistaken, of course. Parts of it are excellent, as in the observation that the broken families which people the book offer the most accurate lens through which to see our fractured times. Or where a victim of trolling thinks: "Character, narrative, history, were all dead. Only the flat caricature of the present remained, and that was what one was judged by." It is a novel of the times, and for the times: the "age of kangaroo courts of instant opinion", of a wilful and fabulist American president who golfs, of trigger-happy anti-immigrant sentiment, of Brexit atavism in the UK, and of a man named Sad-Faced Older Painter, who is hounded out of India. It is a picaresque novel (Quichotte is Don Quixote, via opera), concerning a 70-year-old travelling salesman (debt to Arthur Miller acknowledged) who has suffered an "Internal Event" of a vascular nature, acquired a dragging leg, lost parts of his memory, surrendered reality in favour of cable TV binge-watched in motel rooms, and conjured up an imaginary teenaged son named Sancho. Together, the two set out across America in a gunmetal Chevy Cruze in search of the salesman's love fixation, an Indian-American TV star named Salma.

But Quichotte appears in an age when everyone is on the move, and the picaresque is no longer the man who strikes out and stands apart. Now, someone who stubbornly sits still, perchance under a Bodhi tree, would be deemed to be unusual and insightful. Maybe Rushdie chose the form because, as Joseph Campbell noted, journey stories jack into the collective unconscious and are easier to tell. But Quichotte's trail is muddied by a multiplicity of back stories reaching back to Mumbai neighbourhoods and Notting Hill, apart from numerous American locations. All of this is encapsulated within a frame tale whose border with the core tale is so porous that if it were on a geographical map, it would be the illegal migrant's delight. While Sancho is a product of the fictional Quichotte's imagination, Quichotte is the product of a real, narcissistic, paranoid and

counterphobic B-grade spy fiction writer identified as Brother (*nom de plume* Sam DuChamp). And Salma, the goal of the fictional Quichotte's journey, is a real film and TV star who gains fame playing the CIA chief in a web series based on Brother's books, and is pursued by the fictional Quichotte.

Rushdie's theme is the interpenetrability of reality and fiction in our uncertain times, in which the line between truth and falsehood has been wilfully blurred by a new kind of politics, made possible by a new medium. Or, perhaps, it is the oldest politics, and the beast had only lurked impatiently under the veneer of modernity and liberalism, waiting for a new medium to give it voice. "Anything can happen," thinks Sancho. "Here can be there, then can be now, up can be down... I'm beginning to understand why people get religion. Just to have something solid that doesn't change into a slippery snake without a word of warning."

The new medium is the internet, which made convergence possible, turning discrete information streams into a deluge of digital pap where formal media and social media, truth and lies, dreams and nightmares, flow down the same pipe, and no perceptible difference remains between them. Quichotte is the work of a writer who has consumed too much, like Quichotte himself. In the course of three pages, Sancho examines his father through about a dozen cultural lenses — Jules Verne, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Ray Bradbury, Kurt Vonnegut, Arthur C Clarke, the Arthurian cycle, O Soglow, Jason aboard the Argo, Super Mario Brothers, Farid-ud-din Attar and Dante. Elsewhere, there are references to Paul Simon's *Graceland*, Hitchcock, L Sprague de Camp, Guccifer 2.0, *Terminator*, Elon Musk, phone phreaking, Anonymous, the Legion of Doom and a whole section on the American right, residents of the town of Berenger who have transmogrified into mastodons (Eugene Ionescu is duly credited). The reference range here is roughly from Lester Del Rey to Lana Del Rey.

In *The Trotter Nama*, Allan Sealy had written of a confection so rich that it could not be eaten. "It could only be embezzled." In Quichotte, the density of allusions to popular and high culture — and memes from internet culture and streaming video — is high enough to give the reader intellectual hyper-



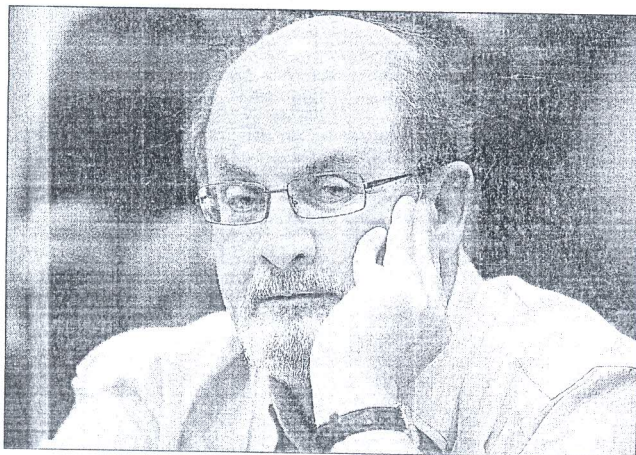
Wikimedia Commons

glycaemia. Over 40 different registers of snoring are catalogued at one point, and the debut of a character with a moustache immediately calls forth references to both Rumpelstiltskin and Yosemite Sam. But Rushdie has always laid it on thick. On the first page of *Midnight's Children*, Saleem Sinai

was supplied with six different aliases. On the second, he declared: "I have been a swallower of lives; and to know me, just the one of me, you'll have to swallow the lot as well. Consumed multitudes are jostling and shoving inside me..."

But there is a difference. Saleem Sinai's journey was of subcontinental and historic scale, while Quichotte only drives a Chevrolet in search of love. Too much icing on a very simple cake can offend the senses, and readers will find themselves speeding impatiently through tediously elaborate sections of the novel. They might miss minor plot elements, but would eventually find that it doesn't matter. Like *Shalimar the Clown*, Quichotte is written satisfactorily lean towards the end, where all illusions collapse into reality, like Schrödinger's cat. Here, though, Schrödinger is a teleporting dog on a long leash.

So, is this Rushdie's worst novel, as advertised in the Western press? Of course not. *Fury* holds unassailable claim to that dishonour. Then, is this the one modern retelling of Cervantes that you must read? Again, no. Contemporary picaresque literature may never produce an image more memorable than Graham Greene's parish priest Monsignor Quixote, perplexingly elevated by the Pope, driving his Seat 600 in search of his fictitious ancestor, with the Sierra de Guadarrama shimmering in the distance.



(Top) Don Quixote by Honoré Daumier (1868); Salman Rushdie Express Archive

Indian Express 7/9/19, page 23

Written on the Body

An intriguing debut novel on the connections between the cerebral and the physical

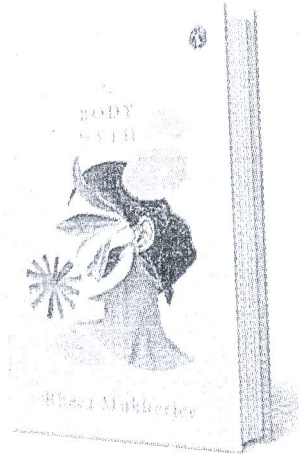
POOJA PILLAI

THE BODY MYTH is a novel full of potential. Reading it, one can almost see the ideas jostling each other in the writer's head. Ideas about existentialism and sufism, questions about the connection between the mind and the body, and the ways in which we use intellectualism — books, conversations, work — as a bulwark against the world with all its real and imagined threats to our internal stability. Names of philosophers and writers pop out at you as you read — Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir, Aristotle, Doris Lessing — and you know that there is so much that the writer is trying to convey to you within the space of a novel.

It's not as if Rheea Mukherjee fails at this completely. There are frequent points at which an observation made by her narrator, Mira, startles you and you pause to fully absorb the import of what you've just read. For example, somewhere towards the end of the book, at a point where Mira has surrendered herself to the stormy realities of her emotional life, she admits that she has forgotten who she was before. She no longer recalls, in the granularity of facts and figures, much of the knowledge that she had accumulated by way of propping up her notion of herself. "I could no longer recall inferences, contextual references, or pedagogy. Knowledge was no longer my anchor. Instead it was the simplicity of nothingness."

This would resonate with anyone who has sought distraction from the anxiety and pain of uncertainty by seeking firmer ground in the knowledge found in books or the illusion of conviviality that social media serves up. There are other parts in the book which reveal Mukherjee as an astute and compassionate observer of human nature. In the scene where Mira is asking her father some difficult questions about her long-dead mother, the writer has beautifully portrayed the moment in which a parent stands revealed in all his vulnerability before his child: "Appa spent too much time telling me about this fight, leading me to wonder if it was just a white lie. The more details he went into, the more it seemed like a desperate cry for validation. I wanted to tell Appa that his younger self didn't have to match the progressive mind of the present, but instead I just nodded my head, wanting him to go on."

There are many such moments, but unfortunately, they do not always make up for the flaws in the storytelling. The elisions in the plot make it difficult to fully understand why we should be invested in Mira's story in the first place. Recently widowed Mira is only just beginning to find herself on stable ground when she meets Sara and Rahil,



THE BODY MYTH
RHEEA MUKHERJEE
Penguin Random House
231 pages
₹ 499

an intriguing couple, of whom she is soon enamoured. Sara is fragile and suffering from a mysterious ailment, and Rahil's world revolves around taking care of her. As the *menage-a-trois* progresses, we begin to catch glimpses of the secrets that lie beneath everyone's carefully cultivated facade — we understand that Sara may be faking her symptoms, and we begin to suspect that Rahil is simply playing along for his own reasons.

Yet, despite all its promise, the novel fails to take off for the simple reason that we are not convincingly told how it is that Mira falls so deeply in love with this couple. We are left to guess that it is because her husband's death has left her too vulnerable to resist. Then there's that strange fruit *rasagura* which only grows in this fictitious city of Suryam. We're treated to quite a bit of detail about this fruit and we are told how much pride the residents of Suryam take in this fruit that only thrives in their city's microclimate. There's also one portion later in the book where some people are lynched because they are accused of not treating the *rasagura* with enough respect. Reading this, one senses there's a deeper reason for this fantastical fruit to find a place in an otherwise realistic novel, but what that deeper reason could be is hard to understand.

And yet, it's not possible to be entirely dismissive of this book. That Mukherjee has the writing chops is undeniable, as is the fact that she is brimming with the kind of big, philosophical questions that are often the driving force behind first-rate novels. *The Body Myth* leaves one dissatisfied but, at the same time, also curious about what the writer will produce next.



God's Eye View On Untouchability

Uneven as a group of articles must be, Pillai crowds his canvas with all the main types that make history, with a thread of iconoclasm running through it

BY P. A. KRISHNAN

I am one of those who believe that the idea of India having always been a kaleidoscope of contesting ideas, religion and people hardly needs any emphasis. Of late, however, I am frequently assailed by the fear that our tribe may soon be reduced to a hopeless minority. Manu Pillai's *Tales from Indian History* assures me that India has seen worse days and has come out of it looking the better for wear.

His book is thus a beacon of hope. It covers a period about 700 years and speaks about some remarkable Indians. Kings, queens, concubines, saints, villains, gods, goddesses, poets, musicians, and soldiers spill out as soon as you open the book. It will be quite a task to house them in your memory. Even if you don't, it has many stories which you can read and savour at leisure. This is certainly not a serious work of history. It, however, has a unity which is as bewildering as that of our country—real yet indescribable. The author himself says, "...in the end each reader must draw her own conclusions—the book seeks only to light the way." In its light, we meet several characters and works, some well-known and some hardly known and freshly liberated from dusty records.

Take, for instance, the story of a Brahmin who falls instantly in love with an untouchable woman. This was written by Shahuji (or Shahaji), the king of Thanjavur who ruled between 1684 and 1712. It is a rip-roaring parody conveying that Brahmins who consider themselves superior to all others are quite capable of making asses of themselves and it requires Lord Shiva himself to intervene and un-ass them. The dialogues of Sati Dana Suramu are an absolute delight: "We eat beef, we eat liquor ... don't talk to me," she says.... "We drink cow's milk," he replies, 'but

you eat the whole cow. You must be more pure.'" Incidentally, the original anthology in which this story finds a place has another lovely story of a Brahmin widow feeding Shiva's devotees who are considered untouchables. The Brahmins of the village are aghast but, in this story too, Shiva appears in person as an untouchable and makes them say that the real untouchables are they, the Brahmins.

Consider the Mappilas. Pillai tells us that their language developed into a unique blend of Malayalam sound and Arabic script, influenced over time by Persian as well as by Tamil and Kannada. Their festivals resemble the Hindu ones. There is even a Mappila Ramayana, featuring Ravana as a sultan. Surpanakha's proposition to Rama in this version seeks a sanction from the Sharia.



Pillai shows how Victoria was more humane than those around her. In her proclamation she wanted a statement of equality, but was overruled. She added other generous promises.

Pillai speaks of Muddupalani, a courtesan in the kingdom of Thanjavur and of her Radha, who is not timid: "She turned the convention on its head and claimed her right to bodily pleasure. For the first time in compositions of this type appeared a woman determined to quench her desire." The author, I am afraid, is not right. Tamil tradition has the glorious Andal, whose poems bristle with sexual longings and who predates Muddupalani by at least 1,000 years.

The essay I loved is the one on Queen Victoria. She was much more sensible and humane than the officials surrounding her. She wanted to insert in her proclamation a firm statement that Indians would be placed on an equality with all other subjects of the British crown, but couldn't succeed. However, it was she who managed to add in the document promises of 'peaceful industry', 'works of public utility' and a government 'for the benefit of all Our subjects'.

I have a suspicion, which may be unfounded, that Pillai has this "oh, yes, they got us freedom... but then" attitude towards our freedom fighters. As a historian, he is entitled to have his doubts. Even then, I found his 'What if...' essay on Gandhi overdone. He, a professional, must surely know that the imponderables are close to infinity and it is futile to pick a few and present them as possibilities.

The problem with a collection of pieces written for a news magazine is that its quality is usually uneven. This book is no exception. It has both gems and pebbles—fortunately more gems than pebbles. In any case, 'bits and pieces' have become more than acceptable to Indians since the adventure of Ravindra Jadeja in the recently concluded World Cup semi-finals. I am sure Manu Pillai's bits and pieces too will be received well by his fast-growing number of admirers. □

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मुझको खबर नहीं मेरी मिट्टी कहाँ की है

जय कौशल

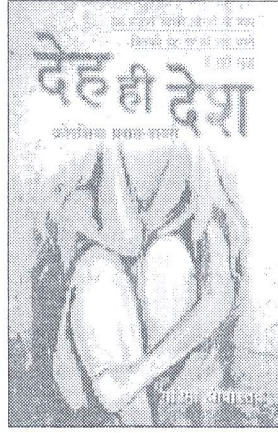
परख

हमारे साहित्य में युद्ध एवं उसके प्रभाव से संबंधित लेखन प्रचुर मात्रा में मौजूद है। संस्कृत में रामायण और महाभारत तथा हिंदी में रासो ग्रंथों से लेकर जायसी का 'पद्मावत', रीतिकालीन लेखकों यथा भूषण आदि के साथ-साथ आधुनिक काल में 'राम की शक्ति-पूजा', 'संशय की एक रात', 'कुरुक्षेत्र', 'जलसागर', 'अंधायुग', 'उसने कहा था' आदि। कुछ और रचनाएं भी हैं, यथा देवेश दास का 'रक्तराग' जो कि दूसरे विश्वयुद्ध के बाद लिखा गया था। 1965 के युद्ध पर मनहर चौहान का उपन्यास 'सीमाएं' प्रकाशित हुआ। आगे चलकर जगदीश चंद्र ने सैन्य अधिकारियों के जीवन पर केंद्रित दो उपन्यास लिखे 'आधा पुल' और 'टुंडा लाट'। तोलस्तोय के जगत-प्रसिद्ध उपन्यास 'युद्ध और शांति' से हर कोई परिचित है ही। इधर कुछ साल पहले बांग्लादेश के मुक्ति संग्राम पर महुआ मांझी के उपन्यास 'मैं बोरिशाइल्ला' की भी काफी चर्चा हुई थी। इसी क्रम में अभी राजपाल एंड संज, दिल्ली से 'देह ही देश' शीर्षक से प्रो. गरिमा श्रीवास्तव की योरप-यात्रा के दौरान लिखी गई डायरी के रूप में एक बेहद महत्वपूर्ण पुस्तक आई है। पुस्तक आने से पूर्व यह 'हंस' पत्रिका में प्रवास डायरी कॉलम के अंतर्गत 'अपराजिताओं के देश में' शीर्षक से धारावाहिक छप रही थी। यह पुस्तक अपने आप में कई रूपों में विशिष्ट है। इसमें क्रोएशिया-प्रवास के समय उस क्षेत्र में हुए युद्धों के दौरान अनेक प्रकार की क्रूरतम

हिंसा की शिकार हुई स्त्रियों के दहला देने वाले दस्तावेजी संस्मरण दर्ज हैं।

मुझे इन्हें पढ़ते हुए युद्ध-उत्पीड़न संबंधी लेखन के संदर्भ में ऐनी फ्रैंक की 'द डायरी ऑफ ए यंग गर्ल' याद आई, जिसे नताशा वाल्टर जैसी लेखिका ने 'शताब्दी की महानतम पुस्तकों में से एक' माना है, लेकिन ऐनी फ्रैंक की डायरी असल में सिर्फ एक लेखिका का 'निजी और अपना कोना' है, जिसमें वह अपने दैनिक जीवन के पर्सनल और आसपास के अनुभवों का ब्योरा देते हुए अपनी निजी राय भी व्यक्त करती गई है, अपने अनुभवों पर किसी के फैसला सुनाए जाने, उन्हें अस्वीकार किए जाने या राय बनाने के खतरे अथवा किसी अन्य कसौटी पर कसे जाने के भय के बिना। पर गरिमा श्रीवास्तव की डायरी सिर्फ एक लेखिका का उस अर्थ में 'निजी और अपना कोना' नहीं है, जहां हम किसी और को शेर नहीं कर पाने वाली मन की व्यथा लिखा करते हैं और सबसे छिपाकर यदा-कदा चुपचाप पढ़कर अतीत की स्मृतियों में गोते लगाकर या तो मन हल्का कर लिया करते हैं या उससे कुछ सीख लेकर आगे डायरी फिर छिपाकर रख देते हैं। हां, गरिमा श्रीवास्तव की यह डायरी युद्ध की शिकार रही और उस दौरान मिली यातनाओं को खुद से भी छिपाती आई उन अनेक स्त्रियों का 'निजी और अपना कोना' जरूर है, जिनके संस्मरण लेखिका ने अपनी डायरी में दर्ज किए हैं। बहरहाल,

यह डायरी हम जैसे पाठकों की इस



आम समझ को दुरुस्त करती है कि तथाकथित एटीट्यूड में गर्क सफेद चमड़ी वाले सभी लोग बड़े पैसे वाले होते हैं। दूसरा, ये कि हिंदी में सिर्फ 'फसाना' ही नहीं लिखा जा रहा, ऐसी 'हकीकत' भी लिखी जा रही है, जिसे ढेर सारे लोग सामने लाने से बचते रहे हैं। रामचंद्र शुक्ल ने अपने 'हिंदी साहित्य का इतिहास'

में वीरगाथा काल में साहित्य-रचना की विशेषताओं के प्रसंग में लिखा था, 'जैसे योरप में वीरगाथाओं का प्रसंग 'युद्ध और प्रेम' रहा, वैसे ही यहां भी था। किसी राजा की कन्या के रूप का संवाद पाकर दलबल के साथ चढ़ाई करना और प्रतिपक्षियों को पराजित कर उस कन्या को हरकर लाना वीरों के गौरव और अभिमान का काम माना जाता था। इस प्रकार इन काव्यों में शृंगार का भी थोड़ा मिश्रण रहता था, पर गौण रूप में; प्रधान रस वीर ही रहता था। शृंगार केवल सहायक के रूप में रहता था। जहां राजनीतिक कारणों से भी युद्ध होता था, वहां भी उन कारणों का उल्लेख न कर कोई रूपवती स्त्री ही कारण कल्पित करके रचना की जाती थी। पर गरिमा के ये संस्मरण न तो वीर-योद्धाओं के गौरव और अभिमान की गाथा हैं, न ही इनमें कोई काल्पनिक रूपवती स्त्री है और उससे 'प्रेम' तो कहीं है ही नहीं। अगर कुछ है तो सैनिकों के वेश में युद्ध-अपराधियों द्वारा विरोधी देश की निरपराध स्त्रियों के प्रति वहशीपन और दरिंदगी के ढेरों उदाहरण, जिन्हें पढ़कर रूह कांप उठती है। 1939-1945 के दौरान ही द्वितीय विश्वयुद्ध के

दूरगामी परिणामों ने सर्व-क्रोआती बोस्नियाई संघर्ष की नींव रख दी थी। इसी क्रम में आगे चलकर 1992 से 1995 के मध्य चले युद्ध और झड़पों में संयुक्त युगोस्लाविया से टूटकर बने छोटे-छोटे देशों को बहुत कुछ झेलना पड़ा। न केवल नागरिक अधिकारों का हनन हुआ, वरन् बड़ी मात्रा में विस्थापन हुए और 1992-95 के दौरान क्रोएशिया, बोस्निया-हर्जेगोविना में सर्व सेनाओं के दमन का सबसे ज्यादा स्त्रियां शिकार हुईं—लिली, दुष्का, एनीसा, यांद्राका, नीसा, सेदा ब्रानिच जैसे नाम इसके उदाहरण हैं। युद्ध के दौरान बलात्कार, यौन हिंसा के हजारों मामले आए, कुछ मामले सरकारी फाइलों में दब गए, कुछ भुला दिए गए और कुछ शिकायतें वापस ले ली गईं। कुछ स्त्रियां मार दी गईं। कुछ अवसाद और अन्य रोगों का शिकार हो गईं।

“बोस्निया की ही एनीसा, जिसे सितंबर, 1992 में 16 वर्ष की उम्र में अपनी आंखों के सामने बूढ़े दादा और पिता का कत्ल देखना पड़ा, छुपने और भागने की कोशिश की, सब व्यर्थ। सर्व सैनिक घर में घुसकर नकदी, आभूषण, महंगी वस्तुएं खोजते और जो स्त्री जिसको पसंद आ जाती वही हथिये चढ़ जाती। ये सैनिक अपने प्रतिवेशियों के शांत स्वभाव से अच्छी तरह परिचित थे। सुंदर, कोमल, पाकीजा धर्म भीरु मासूम लड़कियां, जो युद्ध छिड़ने के ठीक पहले तक कल्पना भी नहीं कर सकती थीं स्त्री शरीर धारण करना अभिशाप है। इसलिए तो उन्हें डरा-धमकाकर गहने, नकदी छीनने के बाद अस्मिता हीन, पहचान हीन करने की साजिश रची गई। अब एनीसा सैंतीस वर्ष की है लेकिन दुर्दिन चलचित्र जैसे उसके सामने ताजा हैं—भूली कहां कुछ, कहती है, “उसके धमकाने पर मैं निर्वस्त्र हो गई। डर से हाथ-पैर थरथरा रहे थे, त्वचा के भीतर एक अजीब अहसास रेंग रहा था लगा मैं धीरे-धीरे मर रही हूँ। मैंने अभी तक देखा ही क्या था, बोस्निया में अपने शहर को भी कहां पूरा देख पाई थी।

मेरी आंखें बंद थीं, उसने मुझे धक्का देकर गिरा दिया और अकथनीय प्रताड़ना का सिलसिला शुरू हुआ। मेरी शुचिता नष्ट हुई, रोने-चीखने- चिल्लाने का कोई असर नहीं। वह बाहर जाकर और दो सैनिकों को बुला लाया। उन दोनों ने पहले वाले का अनुकरण किया। मैं अचेत हो गई, पंता नहीं वे मेरे शरीर के साथ क्या-क्या करते रहे...पंता नहीं मैं कब तक वहां अकेली रक्त के तालाब में लेटी रही। ऐसा लग रहा था कि अतीत, वर्तमान और भविष्य का ज्ञान खो चुकी हूँ, मैं जिंदा हूँ या मुर्दा मालूम नहीं। धरती पर हूँ या आकाश में, स्वप्न में हूँ या चेतना में। मेरे साथ क्या सचमुच अघटनीय घटा था, या मैं दुःस्वप्न देख रही हूँ। मालूम नहीं, मां कब आई दूढ़ती हुई याद नहीं। मेरे शरीर पर कोई वस्त्र नहीं। वह मुझे देखकर दहाड़े मारकर रोने लगी—मैं निर्वस्त्र निःसहाय, घायल और अपमानित। मां ने कपड़े पहनाए, सहारा दिया, उन्होंने योनि को काट-कूट दिया था, मां गर्म पानी से मुझे धोती जाती और कहती जाती ‘जास्तो सी रोदेन काओ जेना! दा उमरिएती दा उमरिएती’ (तू लड़की होकर क्यों पैदा हुई! मर जा, तू मर जा) मां की घुटन भरी रुलाई ने मुझे सच के सामने ला खड़ा किया था। अब मैं एक बर्बाद मुर्दा शरीर मात्र थी, अब मुझे कौन अपनाएगा। कौन देगा प्रेम इस क्षत-विक्षत भग्न शरीर को। मेरे सारे सपने अधूरे और चूर-चूर हो गए। हमने ट्रानो पोल्जेतक का सफर कैसे तय किया इसकी याद बहुत धुंधली है, मवाद चोटों में भर चुका था, मन कहीं एक जगह टिकता न था, सोचती ये सब मेरे साथ ही क्यों हुआ? मां की देखभाल और स्नेह के बावजूद मुझे खांसी और बुखार रहने लगा, गले में सूजन रहने लगी। मुझे बच्चे बहुत अच्छे लगते उनकी हंसी, खिलखिलाहट, बोलना सब कुछ! पर मैं कभी मां नहीं बन पाई। डॉक्टर कहते हैं मेरे शरीर में अब भी संक्रमण है, वजन लगातार घटता जा रहा है और शरीर की

प्रतिरोधक क्षमता जवाब दे रही है। मां जा चुकी है। कभी न आने के लिए, मैं संगीहीन, मित्रहीन हूँ मेरी दुनिया में पुरुष, हिंसा और घृणित अनुभवों का प्रतीक है। मुझे पुरुष मात्र से घृणा है और उनसे मुझे भय लगता है। इस घृणा पर मेरा कोई नियंत्रण नहीं।”

गरिमा श्रीवास्तव द्वारा चुना गया एक भी पात्र न तो वीसलदेव है, न पृथ्वीराज चौहान और न ही उनकी कोई स्त्री संयोगिता और पद्मिनी है। इनके पात्रों में एक ओर कूड़ेदान से आलू के चिप्स बीनकर खाते बच्चे हैं, पांच दिन यूनिवर्सिटी में पढ़ने और सप्ताहांत के दो दिन खर्च निकालने के लिए दुकानों में काम करने वाले छात्र हैं, दिन के समय लोगों को दिखाने के लिए अमीरी का स्वांग भरती और शाम के धुंधलके में कूड़ेदानों से लोगों द्वारा फेंके गए जूते, बर्तन, कपड़े, छाते आदि बटोरती स्त्रियां हैं और समारोहों में जाकर चुपके से अपनी जेबों में बिस्किट चुराते बुजुर्ग हैं। तो दूसरी ओर दुष्का, लिलियाना और हासेसिस जैसी हजारों वे ‘अभागी’ स्त्रियां हैं, जोक्रोएशिया और सर्बिया के युद्ध में सैनिकों द्वारा परिस्थितियों की निरपराध शिकार बना दी गईं। उनके साथ सिर्फ बलात्कार नहीं हुए, उनके साथ हिंसा के सार्वजनिक प्रदर्शन किए गए। उनके अंगों को जब-तब सिगरेट से दागा जाता, सैनिक उन्हें निर्वस्त्र रहकर खाना बनाने को मजबूर करते, स्तन काटे जाते, बार-बार सामूहिक पाशविक बलात्कार किया जाता। “गोराजाद की मेलिसा के मन पर 1992 के अप्रैल का रक्तरंजित अंतिम सप्ताह ताजा घटना-सा अंकित है, जब दस-बारह औरतें घर के तहखाने में छोटे-छोटे बच्चों के साथ भूखी-प्यासी छिपी हुई थीं, सर्व टुकड़ियां गुजर जाएं तो वे बाहर निकलें। मंद मोमबत्ती का प्रकाश, कुनमुनाते बच्चों के मुंह दुपट्टों से बांध देती। कोई आहट न हो, किसी को अंदेशा न हो कि जान-प्राण लेकर छुपी हैं इस अतल तहखाने में...भूखी और निरीह।



बच पाई क्या, पड़ोसी सर्व ने खबर कर दी और दस नकाबपोश आ पहुंचे गालियां, चीखें-चिल्लाहटें, जवान मांओं की गोद से दुधमुहें बच्चे खींचकर अलग करते थे थे इन्हीं के पड़ोसी, जिनका चेहरा ढका भले हो, आवाजें पहचानी थीं. तीस वर्षीया सेम्सा यू: को कमरे में धकेला, ड्रेगन के. और बोटा जे. को तो मेलिसा अच्छी तरह जानती थी, लेकिन ये अंदाजा कहां था कि जो 'दोबर यूत्रों' (सुप्रभात) कहकर आंखें झुका लेते थे वे चाकू की नोक पर निर्वस्त्र करेंगे. क्या पुरुष को सिर्फ एक अवसर मिलने की देर होती है? पड़ोसी की सदाशयता का मुखौटा मेलिसा के सामने उतरा और उसके मुंह में कुछ ठूस दिया गया, वे कृत्रिम उत्तेजना चाहते थे. मेलिसा के मुंह में तेजाबी खारा स्वाद भर गया, होंठों के किनारे फट गए, दूसरा पड़ोसी सैनिक वेश में कमर पर लातों से वार कर रहा था, ज्यों घोड़े को एड़ लगाई जाती है मार खाने के बाद उसने अपनी बहन के पास जाग्रेब पहुंचने की कोशिश की. राजधानी है, पुलिस-प्रशासन होगा. शायद बच जाऊं, लेकिन युद्ध कहां नहीं था खेतों में, गांवों में, रास्तों में...छुपती-छुपाती फिरती रही, कभी भूखी कभी कुछ पत्ते चबा लिया करती. उल्टी आई तो लगा गर्भ ठहर गया है. पेड़ की टहनी तोड़कर गर्भाशय में घुसाकर घृणित भ्रूण खत्म करने की कोशिश की. दिसंबर 1992 में जाग्रेब अस्पताल में मृत बच्चे को जन्म दिया. बहन के घर रही, पति को कभी आपबीती जानने नहीं दी, डर था वह त्याग देगा, चरित्रहीन कहेगा."

सब जानते हैं कि युद्ध में यौन-हिंसा एक तरह की अधोषित रणनीति होती है, जिसके खिलाफ प्रायः आवाज नहीं उठाई जाती और न ही कोई हौस मुनबाई होती है. हजारों मामले सामने आते हैं और फाइलों में दब जाते हैं. सदियों से युद्ध में इस बलात्कार रूपी हथियार का इस्तेमाल होता रहा है और स्त्रियां किसी भी जाति, धर्म या वर्ग की हों, हमेशा से इसकी प्रमुख

शिकार रही हैं. सर्बियाई सैनिकों ने हजारों क्रोएशियाई महिलाओं पर कितने जुल्म ढाए, इसे एम्सटर्डम में निर्वासित जीवन बिता रही उस इलाके की एक लेखिका दुबराव का उग्रोसिक ने अपनी किताब 'कल्वर आफलाइज' (झूठ की संस्कृति) में लिखा है, 'युगोस्लाविया का युद्ध मर्दाना युद्ध है. इस युद्ध में महिलाओं को पोस्ट बॉक्स के तौर पर इस्तेमाल करते हुए दूसरे पुरुषों यानी दुश्मनों को संदेश भेजा जाता है. दुश्मन वे लोग हैं जो थोड़े समय पहले ऐसा करने वालों के भाई होने का दम भरते थे.' गरिमा जी के अनुसार, 'प्रथम और द्वितीय दोनों विश्वयुद्धों में कई देशों में सैन्य और अर्ध-सैन्य बलों ने सामूहिक बलात्कार की अनगिनत घटनाओं को अंजाम दिया. प्रथम विश्वयुद्ध के दौरान बेल्जियम और रशिया औरतों के लिए सामूहिक मरणस्थली बने, वहीं दूसरे विश्वयुद्ध के दौरान रूस, जापान, इटली, कोरिया, चीन, फिलीपींस और जर्मनी में बड़े पैमाने पर स्त्रियों को घर्षित किया गया. आपसी छोटी-बड़ी मुठभेड़ों में अफगानिस्तान, अल्जीरिया, अर्जेंटीना, बांग्लादेश, ब्राजील, बोस्निया, कंबोडिया, क्रोएशिया, साइप्रस, अलसल्वाडोर, हैती, इंडोनेशिया, कुवैत, कोलंबो, लाइबेरिया, पेरू, वियतनाम, टर्की, पाकिस्तान, सोमालिया, रवांडा, जिम्बाब्वे, कांगो और भारत सहित एक लंबी सूची है, जहां यौन-हिंसा और स्त्री-घर्षण की घटनाएं हुई हैं. कांगो में चले गृह-युद्ध को रोकने के लिए संयुक्त राष्ट्र की शांति सेना के 17000 सैनिक लगाए गए, लेकिन वहां यथासमय शांति स्थापित न हो सकी. एक ताजा सर्वेक्षण के अनुसार कांगो में हर चार वयस्क में एक व्यक्ति इस तरह की हिंसा का चश्मदीद रहा है और हर छह में एक भुक्तभोगी. दरअसल हमले में स्त्रियां और बच्चे न केवल कमजोर शिकार होते हैं, वरन् दुश्मन की कमजोरी भी. इसलिए हमलावरों को अपनी बान मनवाने और

दुश्मन को हमेशा के लिए खामोश कर देने का सबसे असरदार तरीका यही लगता है. छोटी-मोटी लड़ाइयों और दंगों तक में इसे देखा जा सकता है. पिछले दिनों उड़ीसा में भी ईसाइयों के खिलाफ युद्ध चला रहे लोगों ने यही तरीका अपनाया. उन्होंने ईसाइयों के घर जलाने, पादरी सहित लोगों को पीटने और चर्च फूंकने के अलावा उस नन से सामूहिक बलात्कार करने का फैसला किया, जिसने चर्च की सेवा का संकल्प ले रखा था. लेकिन वह नन, लिलियाना, दुष्का और हासेसिस जैसी हजारों औरतों की तरह खुद को रोज मृत्यु से भी बदतर स्थितियों में जीने के लिए अभिशप्त मानकर चुप नहीं बैठ गई, बल्कि अपने पर हुई हिंसा के खिलाफ न्याय के लिए लड़ी. ऐसे उदाहरण कम ही होते हैं. आम तौर पर औरतें ऐसी घटनाओं के बाद या तो अवसाद में चली जाती हैं, सामाजिक जीवन और रिश्तों से स्वयं को काट लेती हैं या फिर आत्महत्या का रास्ता अपना लेती हैं.

जेनेवा कन्वेंशन से लेकर युद्ध के दौरान यौन हिंसा की डॉक्यूमेंटिंग और जांच करने के बारे में विलियम हेग और एंजेलीनाजोली द्वारा शुरू किए गए अंतरराष्ट्रीय प्रोटोकॉल, जिसमें दुनिया के तीन-चौथाई से अधिक देशों ने युद्ध के दौरान यौन हिंसा को खत्म करने की प्रतिबद्धता के घोषणापत्र (डेक्लरेशन ऑफ कमिटमेंट टू एंड सेक्सुअल वायलेंस इन कॉन्फ्लिक्ट) की पुष्टि की है, के बावजूद अभी भी स्त्रियों के प्रति ये अपराध थमे नहीं हैं. गौरतलब है कि मातृभूमि के लिए लड़ने वाले वीर-योद्धाओं की शौर्य-गाथाएं लिखी जानी जितनी जरूरी हैं, उससे कतई कम महत्त्व युद्ध-अपराधियों के वधशीपन को रोकने और उसे सामने लाने की गाथाओं का नहीं है.

प्रसिद्ध व्यंग्यकार हरिशंकर परसाई ने एक जगह लिखा है, "बंधुवर, कहीं यह न समझ लेना कि कहीं इस संदर्भ में कुछ

ठोस लिखा ही नहीं गया. कुछ रचनाएं बहुत ठोस हुई हैं, पर अधिकांश घर से अखबार के दफ्तर जाते हुए रास्ते में लिखी गई हैं. हमें जल्दी ही गोलीबारी, ग्लानि और विरक्ति से आगे बढ़ जाना चाहिए, वरना युद्ध-साहित्य की रचना सिखाने के लिए भी कहीं कोई अमरीकी या ब्रिटिश मिशन भारत न बुलाना पड़े. " हंस पत्रिका में प्रकाशित इस प्रवास-डायरी में दर्ज संस्मरण युद्ध-साहित्य के संदर्भ में 'गोलीबारी', 'ग्लानि' और 'विरक्ति' से बेहद आगे बढ़े हुए तथा 'काल्पनिकता' और 'प्रशंसा' से पूरी तरह मुक्त दुर्लभ किस्म के लेखन का उदाहरण हैं. वैसे भी अधिकतर लोग प्रायः घूमने-फिरने और मौज मनाने के लिए विदेश-यात्राएं करते हैं. अगर उन्हें यात्रा-संस्मरण या प्रवास-डायरी लिखने को कहा जाए तो वे अमूमन विदेशों की हरी-भरी वादियों, आलीशान इमारतों, साफ-सफाई, पबों-क्लबों और थोड़ा-बहुत साहित्य, संस्कृति या समाज का जिक्र करके अपने कर्तव्य की इतिश्री समझ लेंगे. गरिमा श्रीवास्तव की तरह कोई विदेश जाकर वहां की लोमहर्षक घटनाओं, इतिहास, समाज और कानून की खामियों की ऐसी गहरी पड़ताल नहीं करेगा. इन्होंने अपनी भूमिका में लिखा भी है—'बहुत आसान था आंखें मूंदकर, सारी प्राकृतिक और भौगोलिक सुंदरता को अपने भीतर समो, सरकारी दायित्व का निर्वाह कर लौट आना, तब फिर ऐसे वृत्तांत की जरूरत ही न पड़ती.'

इनकी भाषा और कहन-शैली का तो कहना ही क्या! पाठक ज्यों-ज्यों आगे बढ़ता है, लगता है कोई तेज नश्टर उसके सीने पर रख दिया गया है और पृष्ठ-दर-पृष्ठ उसे भीतर उतारा जा रहा है. गहन पीड़ा, जुगुप्सा और वितृष्णा के रह-रहकर झटके लगते हैं. हिंदी में 'देह ही देश' जैसे लेखन और ऐसी यात्राओं का जितना स्वागत किया जाए, कम है. सीएसडीएस, नई दिल्ली में भारतीय भाषा कार्यक्रम के निदेशक प्रो. अभय कुमार दुबे ने इस पुस्तक पर

बात करते हुए बिल्कुल ठीक कहा है, 'ये सिर्फ डायरी नहीं, यात्रा भी है, बाहर से भीतर और देह से देश की, जो बताती है कि देह पर ही सारी लड़ाइयां लड़ी जाती हैं और सरहदें तय होती हैं.'



पुस्तक : देह ही देश
लेखिका : गरिमा श्रीवास्तव
प्रकाशक : राजपाल एंड संज, दिल्ली
मूल्य : 285 रुपए

संपर्क : हिंदी विभाग, त्रिपुरा विश्वविद्यालय, अगरतला


मो. : 9612091397

ईमेल : jaikaushal81@gmail.com

सुप्रसिद्ध नाटककार

डॉ. कुमार संजय

की चचित नाट्य पुस्तकें



- हवा रोको
- एक करोड़
- कैंपस प्लेज
- पीच रंग नाटक
- मग्मा मुझे बचा लो
- ये है इंडिया मेरी जान
- द एंड ऑफ अ लव स्टोरी
- आइला, क्या लड़की है
- कुकड़ू कू एवं अन्य रंग नाटक
- प्रेमचंद की श्रेष्ठ कहानियों का नाट्य रूपांतर
- कॉन्ट्रैक्ट मैट्रिज
- किडनेपिंग और अन्य रंग एकांकी
- मगरमच्छ की पूँछ और अन्य रंग नाटक
- हर एक प्रॉड जरूरी होता है और अन्य रंग नाटक
- विश्वप्रसिद्ध कहानियों के नाट्य रूपांतर
- मंच पर उत्तरी विश्वप्रसिद्ध कहानियाँ

संपर्क

स्पेनिन, हेसल,
रांची-834005 (झारखंड)
मो. : 9939361988
ईमेल : spenin@rediffmail.com

दीपक शर्मा की गजलें

हमारी जान तुम ऐसा करोगी
हमारी जान का सौदा करोगी
तभी ये दिल तुम्हें दंगे बताओ
ज़रा सी बात पर रूठ करोगी
चलो तकिया तुम्हारे ही सिरहाने
वगरना रात-भर झगड़ा करोगी
हमें बद-मआ'श कह कर मार दोगी
कहेंगे हम अगर बोसा करोगी
अजी हम जानते हैं के मिरी जां
करोगी जो बहुत अच्छा करोगी
निगाहों से निगाहों को पकड़ कर
लबों से हाए उफ़ तौबा करोगी

सब मुहब्बत पे दिल लुटाते थे
हम मुसीबत पे दिल लुटाते थे
तब ग़नीमत ने फ़ासिला रक्खा
जब ग़नीमत पे दिल लुटाते थे
कुछ अकीदत से आशना थे और
कुछ अदावत पे दिल लुटाते थे
जिस हकीकत ने रौंद डाला था
उस हकीकत पे दिल लुटाते थे
वो तो हमको ख़बर हुई कल ही
हम कयामत पे दिल लुटाते थे
बारिशें दम-ब-दम हैं दोज़ख़ की
तुम! इनायत पे दिल लुटाते थे?
उस हुकूमत का ज़िक्र मत कीजे
जिस हुकूमत पे दिल लुटाते थे
कुछ का धंधा था शाइरी का और
कुछ निज़ामत पे दिल लुटाते थे
हथ तब का है याद कुछ-कुछ क्या?
जब शराफ़त पे दिल लुटाते थे!



संपर्क : मकान संख्या-343

पेटिक सिटी कॉलोनी

सोहावल-485441 सतना (म.प्र.)

मेल : deepaksharma434@gmail.com



समकालीन विमर्श में साहित्यिक संदर्भ

महेश कटारे

परम

“इतिहास में धर्म और राजसत्ता का तो बाकायदे युद्ध चला था, लेकिन इतिहास यह भी बताता है कि आत्मा को आदमी से तुम पूर्णतः निकाल बाहर नहीं कर सकते. बहुत हुआ तो आत्मा सो जाती है; शायद पूरी तरह सोती भी नहीं, श्वान निद्रा की तरह जग-सी कुरेद...कि वह एकदम उचककर बैठ जाती है.” (‘संवाद अनायास’ से)

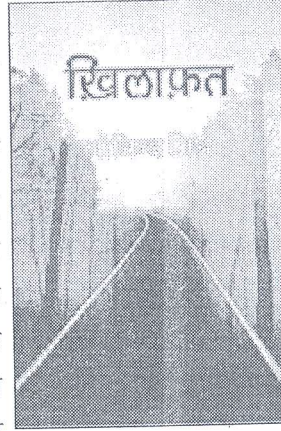
गोविंद मिश्र का नया उपन्यास ‘खिलाफत’ कुछ इसी तरह के साहित्यिक उनींदपन के बीच से उठकर खड़ा हुआ है. कुछ ऐसे प्रश्न जो दिमाग को कुरेदते हैं...सवाल जो अपनी आकुल-अपेक्षा के साथ पुनि-पुनि राह में आंखों के आगे आ ठहरता है और रचनात्मकता बचती हुई निकल जाती है. सवाल चूंकि भारत के सबसे बड़े अल्पसंख्यक समुदाय से जुड़ा है...उसकी धार्मिक भावनाओं से जुड़ा है और सत्तागत राजनीतिक हित, अहित से जोड़ लिया गया है अतः चुप रहिए. दर्द उनका है, इलाज वे जानें...पर अंग में व्रण का संगर शरीर में फैल उठे तब...? तब पड़ताल जरूरी है कि व्रण का उत्स कहा है...लक्षण क्या हैं...उपचार क्या है? अबूबकर बगदादी की खिलाफत को केंद्र में रखकर सामने आने वाली यह कृति उस रचनात्मक बेचैनी से जन्मी है जो समकालीनता की धावनपट्टी पर ‘हरित भूमि तृण संकुल समुझि परे नहिं पंथ’ की

सितंबर, 2019

ऊहापोह में आविष्ट समझ को दिशा ज्ञान का उपक्रम रचती है.

उपन्यास आलिया और यूनुस के बीच पनपते प्यार एवं उस प्यार को तपते झंझावात की ओर धकेलते कश्मीर घाटी के माहौल की पृष्ठभूमि पर खड़ा किया गया है. कश्मीर का माहौल उन दिनों सुकून भरा था. दोनों हमउम्र...बचपन से साथ पढ़े-बढ़े. दोनों के पास सपना—जिंदगी में कुछ होने, किसी के लिए कुछ होने का. दोनों के दो खुशहाल परिवार कि यूनुस के एक भाई को मजहब का बुलावा सुनाई देने लगता है. नौजवानों की ओर आवाजें लपकने लगती हैं—जिहाद. ..जिहाद. इन आवाजों के घेरे में आ जाता है—कश्मीर से लेकर, पाकिस्तान, अफगानिस्तान, इराक, ईरान, सीरिया, अरब तक का वर्तमान और मुस्तकबिल. पहले अध्याय में अपनी दुनिया बसाने की आलिया-यूनुस की चर्चा में ही स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि हमारी छोटी-सी दुनिया की छोटी-छोटी बातों, छोटी-छोटी खुशियों तथा उनसे पैदा होने वाले छोटे से सुकून के बीच कोई चीज है जो दरार पैदा करती है. जिस दुनिया के बीच, जिसके साथ हमारा घरोदा बना है—उससे अलगगती है और वह चीज है—मजहबी आग्रह. आग्रह जो नई तालीम के बाद भी हमें क्रिटिकल नहीं होने देता.

आग्रह-दुराग्रह में बदलता है तो



पाकिस्तान में स्कूल जा रही लड़की के सिर में गोली मारी जाती है. नई तालीम के हिमायती बूढ़ों की जान पर भी वन आती है—बेग साहब! आपकी जान को भी खतरा हो सकता है—क्योंकि वह अपनी बेटियों को तालीम दिला रहे हैं, क्योंकि बेग साहब मजहबी होकर भी अपने

दिलोदिमाग की खिड़कियां खोले हुए हैं वह आलिया जैसी तीन बेटियों के पिता पर उन्हें आश्वस्ति है—“हम कश्मीर में हैं पाकिस्तान में नहीं.” बेग साहब को दूसरे मजहब के लोगों से परहेज भी नहीं है—और न ही यह कट्टरपन कि नमाज का वक्त हो गया तो दफ्तर का जरूरी काम छोड़कर वहीं नमाज के लिए बैठ जाएं... यह करना है तो दफ्तर के लिए जाते ही क्यों हो, जाते हो तो काम ही तुम्हारी इबादत है. दफ्तर के घंटों में नौकरी ही तुम्हारा मजहब है, वहां के कायदे-कानून मानने होंगे, उनके हिसाब से चलना होगा. ..वर्ना दफ्तर चलेंगे कैसे? (पृ. 13)

गोविंद मिश्र कश्मीर में व्याप्त असुरक्षा के तनाव को गहराई से पकड़ते हैं. एक अजीब-सी दहशत है जो आदमी को मजहब की खोल में और भी ज्यादा घुसती जाती है. भय बहुत संक्रामक होता है जो बाढ़ के पानी की तरह चारों ओर फैलता जाता है. पर कश्मीर में तो वैसा भय भी नहीं कि कोई विधर्मी चढ़ दौड़ेगा फिर? ...भय बाहर से थोपा जाता है ताकि सत्ता के लिए धर्म

का जयघोष संभव हो सके. नई नस्लें समय-विशेष के लिए लागू की गई फिर सदा के लिए मान्य घोषित रिवायतों, रूढ़ियों को तार्किक कसौटी पर कसने लगी हैं, “शरीअत! कैसे कहा जाए कि वह आदमी का बनाया नहीं. दरअसल सभी धर्मों—इस्लाम, हिंदू, ईसाई, सिख...इनके जो रूप हम पर थोपे जाते हैं वे ज्यादातर उनके प्रचारकों...पादरियों, पंडितों, मुल्लाओं के बनाए हुए हैं. उन्हें मतलब प्रपोगण्डा, अपने धर्म को फैलाने, इस तरह अपनी हैसियत बनाए रखने/बढ़ाने से होता है.” (पृ. 156)

दो प्रेमी युवाओं के बीच सामान्य जीवन के लिए सहज-सी बातचीत से शुरू होकर उपन्यास स्थानीय, राष्ट्रीय तथा उससे भी आगे अंतर्राष्ट्रीय स्थितियों तक अपना विस्तार करता है—आलिया अच्छी नौकरी पाकर दिल्ली में अरविंद, कुमकुम, ज्योति से जुड़ती है तो यूनुस का भाई अशरफ जिहाद के नाम पर आई.एस. से जा जुड़ता है जो उन संजीदा मौलवियों की मलामत करता है जो “इस्लाम को अमन का मजहब कहते हैं.” आई.एस. के वीडियो में कहा गया है कि, “इस्लाम हमेशा से जंग का मजहब रहा है. पैगंबर का हुक्म है कि जब तक सब जगह अल्लाह का मजहब कायम नहीं हो जाता, जंग जारी रहनी चाहिए, इस्लाम की जंग लड़ना उम्मत का फर्ज है...तमाम उस तरह की बातें...” (पृ. 171)

अशरफ के आई.एस. से जुड़ने के साथ ही कथानक अंतर्राष्ट्रीय आतंकवाद से जा जुड़ता है, अर्थात् कश्मीर के दो खाते-पीते परिवारों के साथ कश्मीर, भारत और दुनिया के अनेक देश उस दहशत और आंच के घेरे में आ जाते हैं फिर स्वयमेव ही एक विमर्श उमगने लगता है कि आप जीवन किसी भी स्थान, किसी भी

समुदाय के बीच आरंभ करें, यदि उसे निद्रा, भय, मैथुन, आहार से आगे ले जाना चाहते हैं तो आपके होने, हो सकने में हस्तक्षेप करती चीजों, स्थितियों, रिश्तों को मनुष्य के अनुरूप, अनुकूल बनाने का प्रयास करना ही होगा...विलगाने, अलगाने वाले अवरोध तोड़ने अथवा कम से कम काटने छांटने तो पड़ेंगे ही. ताजी हवा के लिए बंद पड़ी खिड़कियां खोलनी पड़ेंगी और जीवन को समय की मुख्यधारा से जोड़ना ही होगा. यूनुस यही कोशिश करता है...संघर्ष करता है. समाज और देश की दशा बदलने के लिए अपना उत्सर्ग करने को तत्पर है तो धीरे-धीरे राह खुलती भी है...शायद यही इस उपन्यास का हासिल भी है.

अपने ऐतिहासिक संदर्भ में ‘खिलाफत’ इस्लाम की उस सत्ता-शृंखला का नाम है जो अनुयायियों को मजहब के नाम और आधार पर नियंत्रित, पुरस्कृत तथा दंडित करती है, “सियासती चालें हमेशा ही चली जाती रही हैं...वे शुरू हो गई थीं मोहम्मद साहब के सुपुर्देखाक होने से पहले ही. अबूबकर पहले खलीफा बन गए...” (पृ. 48) इस्लाम में सत्ता संघर्ष की शुरुआत कदाचित् यहीं से होती है—“अबूबकर से सुन्नी और अली से शिया संप्रदाय चलें.” (पृ. 48) सियासत और सत्ता की बात आई तो नियम-कानून (शरीअत) की बात चली—“शरीअत पैगंबर का ईजाद किया नहीं था...सब मुल्लाओं के बनाए हुए हैं, कुरान की आयतों को इधर-उधर से उठाकर...उनकी सपोर्ट लेकर.” (पृ. 53)

लगता है कि लेखक ने इस जमीन पर उपन्यास लिखते हुए जोखिम मोल लिया है. हल्ला बोल दस्ते की ओर से पूछा जा सकता है कि लेखक चूंकि खिलाफती समुदाय से नहीं है तो उसने इस पृष्ठभूमि पर क्यों लिखा?...कैसे, किस अधिकार

से? हमारे यहां एक अलिखित नियम-सा है कि पराए मजहब पर कलम नहीं चलाई जानी चाहिए...हां, अहो-अहो जैसा कुछ कर सकते हैं.... उधर कुछ कूड़ा-करकट दिखे तो वहीं की कालीन के नीचे ढांप दीजिए. उघाड़ने से बचिए. ‘उनकी वे जानें...हमें क्या’ वाले भाव से. पर पड़ोसी के घर आग लगी हो तो आंच से बचा जा सकता है क्या. यह भी क्या गारंटी कि आग आपके घर को चपेट में नहीं लेगी. उधर कुछ सुलग रहा है तो हमें सावधान नहीं करना चाहिए? इस बहुत सीधे से सवाल पर पाया जाता है कि लेखक पॉलिमिकल हो जाता है...किंतु-परंतु-अगर इत्यादि खंगालने लगता है. ऐसा नहीं कि गोविंद मिश्र जैसा सुपरिचित वरिष्ठ लेखक ऐसे तेवर, हाय-हल्ला नावाकिफ हो पर स्पष्ट है कि इस उपन्यास के लिए उन्होंने बहुत तैयारी की है. पहली बात तो भाषा की ही लीजिए—उपन्यास में उर्दू के शब्दों का प्रचुरता से इस्तेमाल है ताकि पाठक उस परिवेश का अहसास करे, जिसकी कथा कही जा रही है. साथ ही उस सामाजिक सच्चाई को विषय के गहन अध्ययन एवं वस्तुगत तार्किकता के साथ पूरी सांप्रदायिक तटस्थता में प्रस्तुत किया है. उपन्यास में कदम-कदम पर बहस है—आलिया यूनुस के बीच, आलिया और अरविंद की बातचीत में, बेग साहब, असलम, यूनुस तथा उसके वालिद आफताब, आलिया-कुमकुम, आलिया-वहीदा, ज्योति और रवि.... उपन्यास एक बहस के साथ ही आगे बढ़ता है. बहस अपने अस्तित्व के लिए...समाज के लिए, कश्मीर के लिए, देश और दुनिया के लिए. चूंकि कथा-भूमि कश्मीर की है तो वहां की समस्याएं, जिंदगी और जद्दोजहद की रोशनी में ही चीजों को रखना होगा. कश्मीर में 95 प्रतिशत से अधिक इस्लाम के अनुयायी

हैं और चूंकि उसमें धर्मगुरु प्रतिपग मार्ग इंगित हैं, निर्धारित करते हैं, आई.एस. जैसी संस्थाओं ने तो हिस्बा कमेटियां कायम कर रखी हैं जो मुस्लिम देशों में भी देखते हैं कि किसी ने सिगरेट तो नहीं पी (महक छिपाने के लिए लोग सेंट छिड़ककर चलते हैं) औरत ने कहीं ऊंची ऐड़ी की सैंडल तो नहीं पहन ली. इबादत के वक्त कोई दुकान तो नहीं खुली रह गई? हुकूमत की हवस में उतावले लीडर...तालिबान, आई.एस., बोकोहरम की जल्लादी पलटनें. कश्मीर में ये सब अपने लिए संभावना देख रहे हैं. वहां प्रवेश कर आधार बनाने का वही सूत्र-धर्म का भाईचारा...मुस्लिम ब्रदरहुड. इसलिए मजहब का जेरे बहस आना लाजिमी है कि इसके प्रसार हेतु जंग को क्यों जरूरी बताया जाता है. निश्चय ही इसके लिए मौलाना फखरुद्दीन जैसे बुजुर्ग भी जिम्मेदार हैं जो मानते और कहते हैं, "मुसलमानों की बदहाली कमोबेश सभी जगह है. आप-हम महसूस नहीं करते लेकिन नौजवानों का खून गरम होता है. वे उबल पड़ते हैं. उनकी उम्र ख्वाब देखने की भी है तो ख्वाब उन्हें खींचते हैं, जैसे सुन्नी सलतनत का ख्वाब, गए वक्त की अपनी इस्लामी शानोशौकत वापस लाने का ख्वाब..." (पृ. 98) ऐसे ही लोग ऐसी गलत व्याख्याएं करते हैं, "कुरान में कहा गया है कि जो पैगंबर के मैसेज पर यकीन न करें उनके साथ बुरा सुलूक करो क्योंकि वे काफिर हैं. यह भी कहा गया है कि गैर-इस्लामी जमीन पर जिहाद जरूरी है... दार-उल-हर्ब..." (पृ. 99)

ऐसी मानसिकता पर किनारा किए जाने से बात बिगड़ी ही है...और भी बिगड़ेगी. इस पके फोड़े पर नशतर छुआना और बहस में लाना साहित्य की जिम्मेदारी है. कहते हैं, "गद्य सच को सही नाम से पुकारने की कला है." तथा "यथार्थ उस

घाव की तरह है जिसकी स्थिति उस समय और भी अधिक शोचनीय हो जाती है जब उसका मुंह बंद हो जाए." गोविंद मिश्र ने इतना तो किया ही है कि घाव का मुंह खोल दिया है.

यह अचानक नहीं कि कश्मीर घाटी में पाकिस्तानी झंडे लहराए जाते हैं. आई.एस. के काले झंडे भी वहां देखे जाने लगे हैं. "आई.एस. ने अफगानिस्तान के एक इलाके—नामनगन—जो पाकिस्तान से सटे बॉर्डर पर है—वहां अपना सेंटर खोला है. उसका एक मकसद हिंदुस्तानी मुसलमानों को हिंदुओं के चंगुल से छुड़ाना भी है... जिसका रास्ता पाकिस्तान से होकर जाता है, जिससे गुजरना ही है." (पृ. 119)

कश्मीर का पढ़ा-लिखा युवा तथा बेग साहब जैसे बुजुर्ग तालिबानी, आई.एस. इस्लाम की वास्तविकता समझने लगे हैं (किंतु वहकाने, वहकने वाले इनमें भी हैं)—"जिहादी जंग के नीचे कहीं-कहीं ड्रग्स का कारोबार, लड़के-लड़कियों की तिजारत, चोरी-डकैती ये भी चल रहे हैं." (पृ. 18) "यहां लड़कियां भी रिक्लूट होती हैं जो जिहादी दुल्हन बनाई जाने के लिए आई.एस. तक पहुंचाई जाती हैं, जिहादियों के लिए तोहफा." (पृ. 73)

इस हवस, हत्या, निर्दयता के लिए नारा भी गढ़ा गया है—'इस्लाम विल रूल द वर्ल्ड'. हां, इसके पोस्टर लगाए जाते हैं...बामियान में बुद्ध की वैश्विक धरोहरें तोप से उड़ा दी जाती हैं...दहशतगर्द कश्मीरियत की अलामत चरारे शरीफ को फूंक देते हैं क्योंकि वह सूफी-संत नंदरिखी की जियारतगाह थी. सऊदी अरब में शिया नेता निम्न को चौराहे पर खड़ा करके सिर कलम किया गया. ये सामने आ रहा है. डरते, झिझकते ही सही बेग साहब, यूनुस, आलिया, अरविंद जैसे लोग मुंह भी खोलने लगे हैं, "जिन्हें हम ईश्वर मानकर

पूजते हैं...चाहे राम, बुद्ध, यीशु या तुम्हारे पैगंबर...ये कभी जीते-जागते मनुष्य थे. उनमें बहुत अच्छी चीजें थीं तो हम उन्हें ईश्वर मानकर पूजने लगे. कोई हर्ज नहीं... पर उनकी गलत बातों या गलत आचरण को क्यों अपनाया जाए." (पृ. 155)

मजहब की खूबियों और मजहब के नाम पर खामियों को मात्र मुस्लिम समुदाय तक सीमित करके नहीं देखा जा सकता. भारत में हर नागरिक का वर्तमान और भविष्य एक-दूसरे के साथ जुड़ा है. कोई अलगाववादी भी भारत छोड़कर पाकिस्तान में नहीं बसना चाहता क्योंकि वहां जाने वालों की दुर्गति पीढ़ियां देख चुकी हैं. बड़े-बड़े नामी-गिरामी लोग पछताते हुए रो-रोकर मरे. उनकी संतानें तीन पीढ़ियों के बाद भी मुहाजिर हैं.

यूनुस जानता है कि कश्मीर की आजादी की मांग हुकूमत पर कब्जे की चाल है. यही जब चुनकर सिंहासन पर आ बैठते हैं तो हुक्मरानों से गलबहियां खेलते हैं तथा सत्ता से दूर होते ही आजादी के सुर बजाने लगते हैं. वही दोगली सियासत...इनके लड़के-लड़की लंदन, अमेरिका, बेंगलोर, दिल्ली जैसी जगहों पर तालीम हासिल कर नेता, अफसर, उद्योगपति बनते हैं और आम कश्मीरी बच्चों के हाथों पत्थर, हथगोले, बंदूक थमा देते हैं कि मारो और मरो. "कश्मीर से बाहर का मुसलमान कश्मीर की इस जंग से नहीं जुड़ता. उसके लिए यह मकामी मुआमला है, वह अपनी जंग हिंदुस्तानी सियासत चुनाव वगैरह में देखता है." (पृ. 195)

हिंदुओं में चार वर्ण और सैकड़ों जातियां हैं तो मुस्लिमों में भी फिरकों की कमी नहीं—शिया, सुन्नी, इस्माइली, अहमदिया, सूफी, वहाबी वगैरह-वगैरह. अरबी तो सबसे ऊपर हैं ही. फिरकों के अपने-अपने धर्मगुरु

हैं. हदीस और सुन्नत की व्याख्या के भेद हैं. 'खिलाफत' उपन्यास इनकी आपसी और दूसरों से जंग की वजह जानने तथा उससे भारतीय मुसलमानों को अलग रखकर देखता है.

औपन्यासिक गठन की बात करें तो हिंदुस्तानी भाषा के साथ गतिशील चरित्र इसकी रीढ़ हैं, जिनके माध्यम से लेखक कथानक को विश्वसनीय विस्तार देता हुआ उस तर्क-भूमि पर खड़ा करता है कि मजहबी/धार्मिक पुराकथनों, मान्यताओं को भी तार्किक क्रम में देखा-समझा जाना चाहिए अन्यथा ये सत्ता-लोलुप चालाक व्याख्याओं के रूप में इस्तेमाल हो जाते हैं. प्रचलित है कि सबसे ज्यादा युद्ध धर्म के नाम पर हुए हैं पर यह भी सच है कि सत्ता की राजनीति ने धर्म को अपने बचाव के लिए ढाल तथा हमले के लिए हथियार की तरह इस्तेमाल किया है. धर्मांध व्यक्ति और समुदाय अंधे के साथ बहरा भी हो जाता है, उसे न चेतावनी सुनाई देती है न चीत्कार. तभी तो यूनुस आलिया से कहता है, "फजा खराब कर दी गई है. आई.एस. की वजह से सारी दुनिया में मुसलमान जमात बदनाम हो गई है. हम कहीं भी जाएं...मुसलमान होने का ठप्पा हमारा पीछा नहीं छोड़ेगा, हमें शककी निगाहों से ही देखा जाएगा." (पृ. 112)

उपन्यास में एक पात्र के मुंह से कहलवाई गई ये पंक्तियां उस सचाई की बानगी है जिसे सामान्य मुस्लिम वर्ग अनेक वर्षों से झेल रहा है. रोज ही हजारों भारतीय विदेशों में इस जिल्लत से गुजरते हैं. मजहब को बदनामी की ओर ले जाने वाली शक्तियां सबसे पहले सोच को खत्म करती हैं—आप सवाल नहीं उठा सकते. सवाल उठाने वाला दीन और देश का दुश्मन घोषित हो जाता है—कौम और धर्म का गद्दार. किसी कथन या विचार को

ईश्वरीय और अंतिम घोषित करना मनुष्य के 'विजन' को छीन लेता है. जनता जलाल करने के लिए पाली जाने वाली भेड़ों का समूह मान ली जाती है. यह उपन्यास इसलिए उल्लेखनीय है कि वर्जित गुहा में प्रवेश करता है...लेखन के उस भय और भ्रम को तोड़ता है कि धर्म का सतीत्व छूने भर से खंडित हो जाता है. यूं कश्मीर पर और भी कुछ उपन्यास आए हैं, कश्मीर के नाम पर कुछ किताबें आई हैं पर उनमें मजहब को तार्किक नजरिए से नहीं देखा गया है. 'खिलाफत' एक सधे हुए विमर्श की अपेक्षा रखता है. ऐसे संवाद की मांग करता है जो खुले दिल और खुले दिमाग से हो. संवाद जैसा कि यूनुस और अरविंद के बीच होता है कि "कश्मीर फिर भी एक स्थानीय मसला है जबकि इस्लाम हमारे समय में दुनिया के सामने सबसे बड़ी चुनौती के रूप में देखा जा रहा है." तो यूनुस कहता है, "सही है, लेकिन चुनौती दरअसल इस्लाम नहीं...उसका यह जो हर छोटा-बड़ा फिरका, कोई गैर जिम्मेदार जमावड़ा इस्लाम का कोई भी रंग पेश करता चला आता है, उसके नाम पर दहशतगर्दी, मारकाट...कुछ भी जायज ठहराता है...चुनौती वह है." (पृ. 213) इस चुनौती का सामना करने के लिए यूनुस जिस इस्लाम पर आकर ठहरता है वह सऊदी इस्लाम नहीं, "उसकी जगह हिंदुस्तानी इस्लाम...जो यहां तवारीख ने कुदरतन ईजाद किया है—सब मजहबों, उनके फिरकों के साथ रहने वाला इस्लाम." (पृ. 214)

इस्लाम और उसके मानने वाले अब इस देश की सचाई हैं—सिर्फ कश्मीर ही नहीं पूरे देश की. हम लेखक की स्थापनाओं से सहमत हों या असहमत, इस उपन्यास पर चर्चा-बहस होनी चाहिए.



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लघुकथा. कॉम

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देश : लव कुमार सिंह, हरीशचन्द्र बर्णवाल,
रविन्द्र बतरा, पूरन सिंह, विजय 'विभोर',
हरदीप सबरवाल, अनिता मण्डा, इला सिंह

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नागदा, 'तैरती हैं पत्तियां' (बलराम

अग्रवाल) पर डॉ. पुरुषोत्तम दुबे

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प्रक्रिया महाविशेषांक

laghukatha89@gmail.com

संपादक : सुकेश साहनी

रामेश्वर काम्बोज 'हिमांशु'

प्रकाशक : रीता साहनी

185, उत्सव, महानगर पार्ट-2

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अभिकल्प—सुशान्त काम्बोज

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परख

हिंदी कथा जगत् में गाहे-बगाहे यह बात सुनाई देती है कि हिंदी में लिखा तो बहुत जा रहा है पर नए प्रयोग कम हो रहे हैं। या उनका सर्वथा अभाव है। उसका एक कारण लेखक का अपनी सीमाओं में बंधा होना तो हो ही सकता है पर इससे इतर आलोचकों का हर रचना को एक ही तराजू पर तोलना और प्रयोगों की अपेक्षा रखना, पर उन प्रयोगों के लिए खुद अपने औजार न बदलना भी हो सकता है, जिससे यहां पहली नजर में नए को नकार देने का एक चलन-सा हो गया है। जाहिर है इस प्रवृत्ति का वर्तमान समय के रचनाकारों पर भी असर पड़ता है और आने वाली रचनाओं पर भी। पर इस सब के बाद भी कुछ रचनाकार लगातार नए प्रयोग करने का जोखिम उठाते हैं। और निवर्तमान कथा समय की ऐसी ही एक कथाकार हैं मनीषा कुलश्रेष्ठ। उनके शिगाफ, शालभजिका, पंचकन्या और स्वप्नपाश जैसे चारों उपन्यास न केवल अपनी कथा भूमि में एक-दूसरे से बिलकुल अलग हैं बल्कि समय, देशकाल, परिस्थितियों के अलावा उनकी भाषा और शिल्प को भी कथाकार ने बिलकुल नए तरीके से गढ़ा है। और शायद मनीषा कुलश्रेष्ठ की इसी प्रयोगधर्मिता का प्रतिफल है, अपने समय में उपेक्षित रही और आज लगभग बिसरा दी गई एक नायिका को केंद्र में रखकर लिखा गया उनका उपन्यास 'मल्लिका'।

ऐतिहासिक चरित्रों को केंद्र में रखकर

उपन्यास लिखना तलवार की धार पर चलने जैसा है। और यदि वह चरित्र साहित्य में किंवदंती बन चुके भारतेंदु हरिश्चंद्र की प्रेमिका 'मल्लिका' का हो तो लेखक के लिए चुनौती और बढ़ जाती है। क्योंकि हिंदी साहित्य के नायक भारतेंदु हरिश्चंद्र पर तो बहुत सामग्री उपलब्ध है पर

मल्लिका पर बहुत कम जानकारी मिलती है। ऐतिहासिक चरित्रों को केंद्र में रखकर कथा कहने का एक तरीका है कि कथाकार अतीत का उत्खनन करे, विभिन्न स्रोतों के सहारे वह उस परिवेश का निर्माण करे, पर यह उन विषयों के लिए ही कारगर होता है जहां बात केवल तथ्यात्मक तरीके से कही जानी हो, पर जहां बात भावनात्मक रिश्तों की हो, एक कवि की रचना प्रक्रिया की हो वहां केवल तथ्यों से काम नहीं चलता, वहां के लिए दूसरा तरीका है, और वो ये कि कथाकार चरित्र, उसकी परिस्थितियों, उसकी भावनाओं से इस तरह एकमेक हो कि वह उसे जीते हुए, उन्हें अपनी कल्पना से पुनर्जीवित करे। और मनीषा अपने इस उपन्यास में शोध से ज्यादा इस दूसरे तरीके का, यानी कल्पनाशील सृजन का सहारा लेती हैं जिससे मल्लिका का निजी, भावनात्मक और रचनात्मक संसार और उसकी निर्मित बहुत जीवंत रूप में सामने आती है। आपको लगता है आप अतीत की नहीं वर्तमान की कथा से रूबरू हो रहे हैं। और यही बात एक इतने पुराने बिसरा दिए गए चरित्र



को प्रासंगिक भी बनाती है। क्योंकि एक कथाकार के लिए यह आवश्यक है कि वह कथा को ऐसे कहे कि वह अतीत की होकर भी प्रासंगिक लगे। क्योंकि कथा अतीत की हो या भविष्य की, कही तो वर्तमान में ही जाती है।

इस उपन्यास में गहन कल्पनाशीलता से रची गई मनीषा की मल्लिका को

समझने के लिए, पहले उनके अपने चरित्रों के साथ रहे आए जुड़ाव को समझना होगा। देखना होगा वह कैसे 'पंचकन्या' में मिथकीय चरित्रों को जीवित कर उन्हें आज के समय से जोड़कर स्त्रियों के सतत चले आ रहे संघर्ष की कथा कहती हैं। अपने चरित्रों से ये जुड़ाव और कहन में ऐसी कल्पनाशीलता, जो हमें मनीषा के उपन्यासों में मिलती है, को समझे बिना इस उपन्यास की नायिका मल्लिका को समझना, किसी बहती नदी में, बिना जाल के मछली पकड़ना ही होगा। इस बात को और स्पष्ट करने के लिए मैं उनके ही पिछले उपन्यास 'स्वप्नपाश' की मुख्य किरदार गुलनाज फरीबा के एक काल्पनिक चरित्र आर्टिमीजिया के साथ के अंतरंग जुड़ाव का उदाहरण देना चाहता हूं जहां आर्टिमीजिया एक अवास्तविक किरदार होकर भी कथा की नायिका गुलनाज के जीवन में असली किरदारों से ज्यादा महत्वपूर्ण हो जाती है। इसी तरह यहां कथाकार किसी ऐतिहासिक चरित्र और उसकी पृष्ठभूमि को लेकर उसके जीवन के किसी चर्चित प्रसंग को प्रस्थानबिंदु बनाकर

कथा प्रारंभ करता है और कथा के बिसराए जा चुके, या अनुपलब्ध तथ्यों और प्रसंगों को अपनी कल्पनाशीलता से भरता हुआ उसे पूरा करता है क्योंकि वह उपन्यास लिख रहा है इतिहास नहीं। जिसमें हम देखते हैं कि कैसे कोई चरित्र रीयल या अनरीयल, अपनी वास्तविक सीमाओं का अतिक्रमण करके अपने देश-काल से निकल कर आज के समय में आपसे बातें करने लगता है। यह एक कारगर तरीका है लकीर का पीछा करने के बजाय नई लकीर खींचने का।

मनीषा कुलश्रेष्ठ का यह उपन्यास 'मल्लिका' न सिर्फ अपने कथ्य में मल्लिका के किरदार को मात्र भारतेन्दु हरिश्चंद्र की प्रेमिका की छवि से बाहर, उनके अपने जीवन, उनकी रचनात्मक यात्रा पर रोशनी डालता है बल्कि उस समय की साहित्यिक, सामाजिक और पारिवारिक परिस्थितियों को भी पाठक के सामने रखता है। इसमें मल्लिका का बंगाल में बिताया बचपन, उनकी किशोरावस्था, किशोरवय में ही हुआ विवाह और पहले प्रणय की हल्की-सी स्मृति, उसके बाद वैधव्य और उस समय के समाज में विधवा की स्थिति को दिखाता है जिसमें स्त्री का शत्रु कहीं बाहर नहीं है बल्कि उसके अपने ही उसके स्वाभिमान को कदम-कदम पर आहत करते हैं। चाहे वह उसकी बहिन शेफालिका हो या, उसके सुसंस्कृत चंद्र भैया की पत्नी राजलक्ष्मी-उसकी भाभी हो, या स्वयं उसके पिता मिताई बाबू हों, उन सबके लिए उसका विधवा हो जाना उसके सुखी जीवन का अंत होना है।

इस उपन्यास में हम बनारस और बंगाल के बीच जुड़ा एक ऐसा तार देख पाते हैं जो केवल धर्म और परम्परा का नहीं है बल्कि यह साहित्य, संस्कृति, शिक्षा और नवजागरण का है। यहां चरित्रों के बीच की दूरी को पाटने के लिए प्रयोग में लाए गए पत्रों के माध्यम से हम उस

कालखंड का बंगाल और बनारस न केवल देख पाते हैं बल्कि नवजागरण की अनुगूँज भी सुन पाते हैं और उस बदलाव में साहित्य कैसे अपनी भूमिका निभा रहा था, यह भी देख पाते हैं। चन्द्र भैया, बंकिम बाबू, भारतेन्दु सब के सृजन में बदलाव के लिए एक छटपटाहट है। कथानक में आई घटनाओं में उस समय की राजनीति कहीं-कहीं झलकती है। पर वह किसी बड़े स्टेटमेंट में नहीं बदलती, क्योंकि वहां यथार्थ उतना ही आ रहा है जितना मल्लिका अपने निजी संघर्षों से जूझते हुए देख, पढ़ और समझ पा रही है।

उपन्यास भारतेन्दु के जीवन के कई चर्चित प्रसंग भी छूकर निकलता है जहां से गुजरते हुए पाठक में उस समय में थोड़ा और झांक पाने की चाह बनी रह जाती है। लगता यहां उपन्यास थोड़ा ठहरकर विस्तार में गया होता तो और समृद्ध हुआ होता। क्योंकि उस समय एक तरह से पूरी संस्कृति, भाषा और साहित्य, जैसे एक संधिकाल पर खड़ा है। हालांकि उपन्यास अपने कई दृश्यों में नए-पुराने के बीच की यह ऊहापोह बहुत अच्छे से चित्रित करता है।

उपन्यास में उस समय की संस्कृतियों के आपसी समन्वय और संघर्ष कई स्थानों पर स्पष्ट दिखाई देते हैं, और यह बात सबसे ज्यादा उस समय प्रयोग में लाई जा रही भाषा में लक्षित होती है। यह वह समय है जब खड़ीबोली अपना रूप ले रही है, उसका व्याकरण आकार ले रहा है, उर्दू अपने चलन के उठान पर है, बोलचाल में अंग्रेजी धीरे-धीरे आभिजात्य वर्ग में अपनी पैठ बना चुकी है। बंगला अपने साहित्यिक चरमोत्कर्ष पर है ऐसे समय में लेखक किस भाषा का सहारा लेकर वर्तमान में अपनी बात कहे, यह सबसे बड़ी चुनौती इस उपन्यास को लिखते समय कथाकार के सामने रही होगी। यहां मनीषा कुलश्रेष्ठ का शिल्पगत प्रयोगों से आगे उस कालखंड

के लिए अपनी एक अलग और अनूठी भाषा का सृजन इस उपन्यास में उनकी बड़ी सफलता कहा जा सकता है।

उपन्यास का कथानक बाहर की घटनाओं से ज्यादा, एक नारी मन के उदास कोनों में धीरे-धीरे पकता है। जहां एक विधवा स्त्री अपने आसपास के समय और समाज का सीधा विरोध न करके अपने चारों ओर बड़ी सहजता से अपना संसार रचती है। रूढ़ियों को दरकिनार कर अपने लिए, अपने सृजन के लिए एक स्पेस तैयार करना ही उस समय में उसका प्रतिरोध है, एक विधवा स्त्री में जीने की, प्रेम करने की और रचने की इच्छा ही उसका प्रतिरोध है। इसीलिए उपन्यास में मल्लिका के सहज पर वृद्ध निर्णयों के सामने भारतेन्दु एक कवि, नाटककार, भाषाविद् से इतर एक भावुक प्रेमी, लाचार पति, हर मोड़ पे ठगे गए मित्र, साहित्य की राजनीति और वैमनस्य के शिकार होते लेखक, हारे हुए उद्यमी और अपने ही लिखे को नकारते और नए वैचारिक सृजन को छटपटाते विचारक के रूप में ज्यादा दिखाई देते हैं।

उपन्यास में भारतेन्दु की महानता से इतर उनका मानवीय पक्ष सामने आता है, ...और उपन्यास में भारतेन्दु के हिंदी साहित्य के एक छबीले, चमकदार सितारे से इतर एक ढलते सूरज की यह छवि ही मल्लिका के एक सजग, स्वतंत्रचेता, सतत अपने संघर्ष से स्वयं को भीतर-बाहर रचती और बिखरने से बचाती, भारतेन्दु की साहित्यिक थाती को समेटती, संजोती एक मुखर स्त्री की छवि के निर्माण में एक कंट्रास्ट का काम करती है। यहां मल्लिका अपने प्रेमी की छाया मात्र नहीं है बल्कि वह भारतेन्दु के प्रेम में होकर भी अपना एक अस्तित्व बनाए रखती है, इसी तरह साहित्य में वह भारतेन्दु से प्रभावित होने के बाद भी अपनी एक अलग साहित्यिक समझ भी बनाए रहती है जिससे वह उनकी रचनाओं की

समय-समय पर आलोचना भी करती है.

उपन्यास के कई आत्मीय प्रसंग प्रेम को न केवल नए ढंग से परिभाषित करते हैं बल्कि मानवीय संबंधों को सतही स्त्री विमर्श के दायरे से बिलकुल बाहर ला खड़ा करते हैं. पर फिर भी यह कथा एक प्रेम कथा भर नहीं है बल्कि एक संवेदनशील स्त्रीमन की सृजन यात्रा की संघर्ष गाथा भी है. उपन्यास में कई स्थानों पर पत्र कथानक को आगे बढ़ाते हैं. तो कहीं उस समय की कृतियां दोनों रचनाकारों की रचनात्मकता और मल्लिका व भारतेन्दु के एक-दूसरे के सृजन में अटूट विश्वास को भी सामने लाते हैं.

उपन्यास पढ़ते हुए बार-बार लगता है कि समय कोई भी हो, रचनाकार की सामाजिक हैसियत कुछ भी हो पर जब वह अपने समय से आगे का व्यक्ति होता है और यथास्थिति को बदलने की कोशिश करता है. तो जहां उसका लिखा लोगों को उसका कायल बनाता है, वहीं उसका जीवन

लोगों की आंख की किरकिरी बन जाता है. भारतेन्दु जहां अपनी भाषा, संस्कृति और साहित्य की सेवा के लिए समादृत हुए वहीं उनके निजी जीवन की आलोचना भी हुई और उस पर छिद्रान्वेषण भी बहुत हुआ. हिंदी में भारतेन्दु पर कुछ नाटक उपलब्ध हैं, उनकी जीवनी भी है पर उनमें मल्लिका का जिक्र एक क्षेपक की तरह आता है और कई स्थानों पर यह प्रसंग नकारात्मक स्मृति की तरह वर्णित है. पर यहां ऐसा नहीं है कथाकार ने अपने नैरेटिव में उनके आपसी संबंध को सही-गलत की बहस से अलग रखकर बहुत तटस्थता से लिखा है. यहां भारतेन्दु और मल्लिका के पारस्परिक संबंधों की पर्तों में जीवन के मामूली दिनों की छोटी-छोटी घटनाओं से गुजरते हुए हम यह भाव बहुत गहराई से अनुभव कर पाते हैं कि एक रचनाकार की निर्मित में कोई एक व्यक्ति जीवन के सारे रिश्तों, और कोई एक पल सारी उम्र से ज्यादा महत्वपूर्ण बन जाता है. फिर

चाहे समय, समाज, परिवार और स्वयं वह व्यक्ति इसे माने या न माने. मल्लिका ऐसा ही एक किरदार है जो भारतेन्दु के लिए एक समय में अपने गुणों के कारण बहुत महत्वपूर्ण बन जाता है और उसके साथ के क्षण उनके जीवन के वे क्षण बन जाते हैं जो उनकी कई रचनाओं के प्रस्थान बिंदु बनते हैं. इसलिए यह उपन्यास उस छूटे हुए पहलू को छूकर मल्लिका की कहानी तो कहता ही है भारतेन्दु की कहानी को एक पूर्णता देता है.

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लेखक : मनीषा कुलश्रेष्ठ

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मूल्य : 235 रुपए (पेपरबैक)

संपर्क : 123-सी, पॉकेट-सी, मयूर विहार फेस-2, दिल्ली-91,

मो. : 9810853128

ईमेल : vivek-space@yahoo.com

लघुकथा

हत्या दर हत्या

ज्ञानदेव मुकेश

विपक्षी दल द्वारा विधान सभा में सरकार के विरोध में अविश्वास प्रस्ताव लाया गया था. अविश्वास प्रस्ताव तो ला दिया गया, मगर विपक्ष बड़ा परेशान था. अविश्वास प्रस्ताव पारित कराने के लिए उसके पास चार विधायक कम पड़ रहे थे. फौरन निर्दलीय विधायकों को तलाशा गया. उनसे लेन-देन की बात चली और भारी-मोटी रकम पर उनमें चार चार विधायक खरीदे गए. उन चार विधायकों ने अविश्वास प्रस्ताव के पक्ष में मत गिराए. अविश्वास प्रस्ताव पास हो गया और दो माह पुरानी सरकार गिर गई.

इस तरह लोकतंत्र की हत्या हुई.

एक निर्दलीय विधायक का पैसा उनके निजी सहायक ने प्राप्त किया था. बाद में निजी सहायक की नीयत खराब हो गई. उनसे आधे पैसे दबा लिए और आधे पैसे देते हुए विधायक से साफ कहा, "बस, इतने ही पैसे मिले थे."

और वह विधायक को उतने ही पैसे देकर चलता बना.

इस तरह किसी के विश्वास का खून हुआ.

सच मालूम होने पर विधायक को काफी गुस्सा आ गया. एक दिन निजी सहायक के साथ उनका भारी झगड़ा हुआ. मगर निजी सहायक बाकी पैसे वापस करने पर कतई तैयार न हुआ.

कुछ दिन बाद एक खेत में निजी सहायक की लाश मिली.

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संपर्क : फ्लैट संख्या-301, साई हॉरमनी अपार्टमेंट, अल्पना मार्केट के पास, न्यू पाटलिपुत्र कॉलोनी, पटना-800013 (बिहार)

मो. : 9470200491 ईमेल : gyandevam@rediffmail.com

किसान की त्रासदी का जीवंत आख्यान

राम विनय शर्मा

परख

बीसवीं शताब्दी के अंतिम दशक में उदारीकरण की जो नीतियां लागू हुई थीं, कुछ ही वर्षों बाद उनका प्रभाव जीवन के विविध क्षेत्रों में दिखने लगा था। पिछले दो दशक में शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, कृषि, उद्योग और अर्थव्यवस्था के क्षेत्र में अभूतपूर्व परिवर्तन घटित हुआ है। मानवीय संबंधों को भी उदारीकरण की प्रक्रिया ने काफी कुछ बदलकर रख दिया है। इस कालखंड में जो कुछ घटित हुआ अथवा आज भी हो रहा है वह 'उदारीकरण' शब्द के सामान्य अर्थ के अनुरूप नहीं लगता। यहां तो एक तरह की अनुदारता एवं संवेदनहीनता की प्रवृत्ति तेजी से विकसित हुई है जिसकी अभिव्यक्ति तनाव और हिंसा के रूप में देखने को मिलती है। भारत एक कृषि प्रधान देश है, इस वाक्य को मंत्र की तरह बार-बार दुहराया जाता है। दुर्भाग्य से स्वातंत्र्योत्तर भारत की सरकारों ने कृषि और किसान को केंद्र में रखकर कोई दीर्घकालिक नीति नहीं बनाई जिससे कृषि को एक लाभकारी व्यवसाय बनाया जा सके और उस पर आश्रित किसान अपनी न्यूनतम आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति करते हुए सम्मानजनक जीवन जी सके। इसके विपरीत पिछले तीन दशक में लगभग तीन लाख किसान आत्महत्या कर चुके हैं। भारतीय किसान तो अंग्रेजी राज में भी आत्महत्या नहीं करता था, चाहे उसका कितना भी शोषण-दमन क्यों न हुआ हो? ऐसे में आज का किसान आत्महत्या करने के लिए विवश क्यों है? इसके गहरे

राजनीतिक-आर्थिक कारण हैं जिनका स्रोत वर्तमान व्यवस्था में ही निहित है। कृषि क्षेत्र पर संकट गहरा है। इसने किसानों के जीवन को त्रासद बना दिया है। इस समस्या की अभिव्यक्ति साहित्य में भी हो रही है। वरिष्ठ कथाकार मिथिलेश्वर का उपन्यास 'तेरा संगी कोई नहीं' भारतीय किसान की त्रासदी को गंभीरता से प्रस्तुत करता है। इसमें सामान्यतया अनुद्घाटित रह जाने वाले उस पक्ष को भी उभारा गया है जो शिक्षा और रोजगार के लिए शहरी बन जाने वाली नई पीढ़ी की आवश्यकता, विवशता एवं महत्वाकांक्षा के चलते किसान को गांव में अकेला किए जा रही है। यह समस्या खाद, पानी, दहेज और ऋण के अतिरिक्त है। उपन्यास में इसके प्रमुख पात्र बलेसर के माध्यम से इस समस्या को विन्यस्त किया गया है। बलेसर के तीन बेटे हैं। तीनों पढ़ाई के लिए शहर जाते हैं। बड़े बेटे कुलराखन को मुख्यमंत्री सचिवालय में सहायक की नौकरी मिल जाती है और वह वहीं बलेसर की अनिच्छा के बावजूद अपनी पसंद की लड़की से शादी कर लेता है। तीनों बेटे बलेसर पर खेत बेचकर शहर चलने के लिए दबाव बनाते हैं जिसे बलेसर अस्वीकार कर देते हैं। यहां मिथिलेश्वर ने गांव, वहां की मिट्टी और अपनी जमीन से किसान के अतिशय लगाव को ही नहीं, बल्कि उसके स्वाभिमानी चरित्र को भी रेखांकित किया है जिसके कारण वह दूसरों पर आश्रित बनने के लिए कभी तैयार नहीं हो पाता, चाहे वह



उसकी अपनी ही संतान क्यों न हो? बलेसर का चरित्र भी बहुत कुछ परंपरावादी ही है। 'उत्तम खेती, मध्यम बान, निषिध चाकरी भीख निदान' की धारणा पर बलेसर का पूरा विश्वास है। वे आत्मीय संबंधों को निबाहने के पक्षधर हैं और कभी मजदूरों का शोषण-दमन नहीं करते। जबसे खेती-किसानी घाटे का सौदा हुई, सामाजिक संबंधों में बदलाव आया, तबसे रोजगार और सुखमय जीवन की तलाश में खेतिहर मजदूर भी शहर की ओर पलायन करने लगे। इससे गांव में मजदूरों का अभाव हो गया है, जबकि खेती के लिए मजदूर जरूरी हैं। कृषि संकट का सामना कर रहे किसानों में आक्रोश और प्रतिरोध की चेतना का भी उपन्यास में उल्लेख हुआ है, किंतु इसकी तीव्रता सीमित है। खेती-किसानी के साथ ग्रामीणों के पारस्परिक ईर्ष्या-द्वेष, छल-कपट, परिवार के विघटन और जमीन पर कब्जा करने के लिए हत्या जैसे प्रसंग ग्रामीण परिवेश के यथार्थ को उद्घाटित करते हैं। उपन्यासकार कृषि संकट के साथ अन्य सामाजिक समस्याओं पर भी दृष्टि डालता है। जगहरण जैसे पाखंडी साधु का चरित्र रचकर लेखक ने धर्म के आवरण में छिपे अधर्म के कुत्सित रूप तथा उसकी हिंसक प्रवृत्ति को उजागर करके अपने 'रचनात्मक' दायित्व को निभाया है। उपन्यास में भाषा के प्रति अतिरिक्त सजगता दिखती है। इस आशंका से कि कहीं रचना पर आंचलिक होने का ठप्पा न लग जाए, तत्सम शब्दावली का बहुधा और बीच-बीच में कुछ देशज शब्दों



के प्रयोग से कथानक को विकसित किया गया है। फिर भी उपन्यास में पर्याप्त पठनीयता और आत्मीयता है जो मिथिलेश्वर के लेखन की खास पहचान है।

मिथिलेश्वर का उपन्यास यह बताता है कि आज के समय में व्यक्ति के लिए किसान का जीवन जीना अत्यंत कष्टप्रद हो गया है। वह उपेक्षित और अभावग्रस्त रहने के लिए अभिशप्त है। एक तरफ बीज-खाद-पानी की समस्या, तो दूसरी तरफ मजदूरों का अभाव। इक्कीसवीं सदी के बदलावों के संदर्भ में देखें तो युवा पीढ़ी किसान का जीवन नहीं अपनाना चाहती, क्योंकि खेती उसकी इच्छा-आकांक्षाओं को पूरा करने में विफल हो गई है। उसे लगता है कि किसान होना जीवन को नष्ट करने जैसा है। यही कारण है कि बलेसर के लाख चाहने के बावजूद उनकी एक भी संतान खेती से नहीं जुड़ती। इसके बरअक्स बलेसर का किसान मन अपने गांव की जमीन से विलग होने के विचार से ही खिन्न हो उठता है। वे किसान के पारंपरिक मोह से मुक्त नहीं हो पाता। किसान जीवन में सान्निध्य एवं साहचर्य का अभाव हो गया है। वह अकेला होता जा रहा है। उसका अकेलापन त्रास देता है। राजनीति, राज्य, प्रशासन, अर्थव्यवस्था और सामाजिक परिवेश-सभी मिलकर उसके जीवन को सशक्त, अनिश्चित और भयग्रस्त बना रहे हैं। इस उपन्यास में बलेसर को किसान का प्रतिनिधि पात्र बनाकर प्रस्तुत किया गया है। बलेसर की चिंता और चुनौतियां समूचे भारत के किसानों की साझा समस्या है। इस अर्थ में उपन्यास का फलक विस्तृत कहा जा सकता है। गांव में गरीबी है। भूत-प्रेत की धारणाएं हैं। स्वास्थ्य सुविधाएं नहीं हैं जिसका एक विकल्प ओझाई है। यह भी प्राणघातक है। इसे आधुनिकता और वैज्ञानिक चेतना का प्रतिपक्ष कहा जा सकता है। गौरतलब है कि नई कृषि व्यवस्था किसान हितों के अनुकूल नहीं है। भारतीय किसान जब आंदोलन करता है

तो समझना चाहिए कि वह कोई सामान्य स्थिति नहीं, उसके जीवन-मरण का प्रश्न होता है। उपन्यास का तर्क है कि नक्सलवादी आंदोलन के कारण भी किसान-मजदूरों के बीच दूरी बढ़ी है। उपन्यास में नक्सलवाद को शोषण की प्रतिक्रिया और राजनीतिक-सामाजिक परिवर्तन की लहर के रूप में चिह्नित किया गया है। जाति सेनाओं का गठन और सामूहिक हिंसा इसके सहउत्पाद हैं। पंचायती राज व्यवस्था ने ग्रामीण समाज में नए सिरे से गोलबंदी, तिकड़म, वैमनस्य, भ्रष्टाचार और हिंसा को बढ़ावा दिया है। यह व्यवस्था अपने उद्देश्य में विफल सिद्ध हुई है। मनरेगा जैसी जनहित की योजनाएं भी कारगर नहीं हो पा रही हैं। उसमें भी घोर भ्रष्टाचार है। दायित्वहीनता, अकर्मण्यता और घूसखोरी सरकारी योजनाओं की विफलता के प्रमुख कारण हैं। किसानों में बंटाईदारों को लेकर संशय का भाव है। उन्नत और विकसित खेती निश्चित आय के बिना संभव नहीं है। इसलिए युवा पीढ़ी कृषि कार्य से ही विमुख होती जा रही है।

इस उपन्यास के वृत्तांत में कई स्थानों पर ग्रामीण समाज की परंपराओं और मान्यताओं का संदर्भ आया है। इसमें किसानों के साहचर्य और पारस्परिक सहयोग की भावना, कृषि को स्थायी संपदा मानने की अवधारणा और तज्जनिता स्वाभिमान सुख-संतोष और स्वतंत्रता के विचार को प्रमुखता से उभारा गया है। लेखक भी इसके प्रति सहानुभूतिशील दिखता है। युवा पीढ़ी इस सोच को महत्त्व नहीं देती। उसकी मान्यताएं बदल गई हैं। इसी कारण बलेसर और उनके बेटों के बीच द्वंद्व चलता है। वाचक की टिप्पणी उचित कि 'अपने परिजनों से प्राप्त उपेक्षा और अपमान की जिंदगी चाहे छोटी हो या बड़ी, वह अत्यंत पीड़ादायक होती है। बलेसर इसी असहनीय पीड़ा से छटपटाते हुए प्राण त्यागते हैं। जिस मनोदशा एवं परिस्थिति में उनकी मृत्यु होती है उसे आत्महत्या के सिवाय और क्या कहा जा सकता है? इक्कीसवीं

सदी में स्वाभिमान का कोई मूल्य नहीं बचा है। मूल्यों का ध्वंस हो गया है। परिवार बिखर गए हैं। उसको जोड़ने वाली आत्मीयता समाप्त हो गई है। उसका स्थान उपयोगितावाद ने ले लिया है। परिवार में वृद्धजनों की उपेक्षा, अपमान एवं अकेलेपन का एक बड़ा कारण यह भी है। तीन बेटों के रहते आखिर बलेसर अकेलेपन का शिकार होने से कहां बच पाते हैं? उन्हें लगा, समस्या की मुख्य वजह उनका अकेलापन ही है। अपनी कृषि की विरासत की चिंता में वे इतने तनावग्रस्त एवं विवश हो जाते हैं कि जीवन भयावह लगने लगता है। अपनों द्वारा दिए गए दुःख, लकवाग्रस्त पत्नी की विवशता से उत्पन्न वेदना, एकरसता, अपरिचय और दुःस्वप्न से पीड़ित बलेसर अंततः मृत्यु की शरण में चले जाते हैं। 'गोदान' के होरी से लेकर 'तेरा संगी कोई नहीं' के बलेसर तक की परंपरा को देखते हुए यह कहना असंगत न होगा कि अस्वाभाविक मृत्यु ही किसान की नियति है। यह उपन्यास समाधानमूलक नहीं, समस्यापरक है।

'तेरा संगी कोई नहीं' किसान जीवन पर लिखे अन्य उपन्यासों से इस मायने में अलग है कि इसमें ऋण, बाढ़, सूखा, खाद, पानी, ओलावृष्टि, कीटनाशक और उपज के उचित मूल्य न मिलने जैसी समस्याओं के स्थान पर गांव से नई पीढ़ी के पलायन, किसान के अकेलेपन तथा उसकी अनिच्छा के बावजूद खेती की जमीन को बेचने की विवशता से उत्पन्न संत्रास के कारण आत्महत्या को कृषि संकट के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया गया है। खेतों से किसान का भावनात्मक जुड़ाव इस उपन्यास के कथ्य का उल्लेखनीय पहलू है। जुड़ाव के समाप्त होते ही इसके प्रमुख पात्र बलेसर अपने बिके हुए बत्तीस बिगहवा खेत में मृत पाए जाते हैं। बलेसर को अपने बत्तीस बिगहवा से इतना मोह है कि वे उससे अलगाव को सहन नहीं कर पाते। मिथिलेश्वर यही कहना चाहते हैं कि राजनीति, समाज एवं

अर्थव्यवस्था में कितना भी बदलाव क्यों न आ गया हो, लेकिन अपनी तरुणाई से ही खेतों की मिट्टी में रचे-बसे किसान का उस मिट्टी और गांव के परिवेश से मोह आज भी बना हुआ है। खेतों को वह अपने अस्तित्व एवं अस्मिता से जोड़कर देखता है। खेत की मिट्टी उसे जीवनी-शक्ति देती है। किसान जीवन के इसी यथार्थ को 'तेरा संगी कोई नहीं' के वृत्तांत में विन्यस्त किया गया है। उपन्यासकार की दृष्टि में आज की किसान समस्या का यह एक महत्त्वपूर्ण पक्ष है। इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं कि युवा पीढ़ी अपनी महत्वाकांक्षाओं को साकार करने के लिए लगातार शहर की तरफ बढ़ रही है। इस प्रवृत्ति में विवशता और अनिवार्यता दोनों स्थितियां निहित हैं। दो पीढ़ियों के बीच तालमेल की समस्या तो बीसवीं शती के उत्तरार्द्ध में सघनता के साथ चित्रित होने लगी थी। यहां उसे मुख्य समस्या के रूप में प्रस्तुत नहीं किया गया है। समस्या किसान के अकेलेपन, विच्छिन्नता और विस्थापन की है। उसकी जातीय मनोभूमि से उसे बलपूर्वक विच्छिन्न करने की है। कहने की आवश्यकता नहीं कि आज भी कृषि क्षेत्र आधारभूत सुविधाओं से वंचित है जिसके स्थायी समाधान के लिए कोई गंभीर प्रयास होता नहीं दिखता। जो भी प्रयास किए जाते हैं वे तात्कालिक होते हैं। कृषि पर संकट का अर्थ है किसान की आजीविका पर संकट। यह उपन्यास जहां समाप्त हुआ है वहां वह ऐसा प्रश्न छोड़ गया है जिसका उत्तर मिलना वर्तमान व्यवस्था में बहुत कठिन लगता है।



पुस्तक : तेरा संगी कोई नहीं (उपन्यास)

लेखक : मिथिलेश्वर

प्रकाशक : लोकभारती प्रकाशन, इलाहाबाद

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न्यू माधो नगर, सहारनपुर-247001

(उ.प्र.)

लघुकथा

हाथ का पत्थर

राघवेन्द्र प्रपन्न

ट्रिन-ट्रिन! "हेलो! नमस्ते! पहचाना नहीं नन्हे पंडित जी! मैं मुस्तफकिन! अभी भी ध्यान नहीं आया? दसियों दफा तो आप गुरुआइन जी के साथ हमारी दुकान पर आए हैं। गुरुआइन जी को मैंने एक प्याली चाय पिलाए बगैर कभी भी जाने नहीं दिया। आज तक का रिकॉर्ड है।" उसने एक सांस में ही सारी बातें झोंक दी ताकि सामने वाले बच्चे की आंख में तैरते हुए शक का गुबार बड़ा होने से पहले ही दबा दिया जाए। बच्चे के चेहरे से उसकी पहचान की पुष्टि न होती देख उसने आगे जारी रखा, "अरे! स्टेशन रोड पर हमारी बी.ए.सी. जूते-चप्पलों की दुकान है। चलिए! साइकिल पर बैठ जाइए।"

पैसेंजर ट्रेन से तो एक घंटा लगता है। साइकिल से भला वह कैसे जाएगा। साइकिल सहित तो रेल में घुसा भी नहीं जा सकता...मुस्तफकिन, रेल और साइकिल। साइकिल रेल और मुस्तफकिन। उसका दिमाग चक्करचिन्नी-सा नाचने लगा। कहीं यह...! पक्का...! ऐसा ही लगता है। "अरे! बैठिए ना पंडित जी! खामखा तकल्लुफ कर रहे हैं। पैसेंजर छूट जाएगी। आपको तो पता ही है।" सोचने के कुछ पल खींच लाने की गरज से उसने कहा, "अच्छा ठीक है! जरा पेशाब करके आते हैं। चल रे!" अपने छोटे भाई को लेकर वह पोखर के किनारे झूठ-मूठ का पैंत खोलकर बैठ गया। सामने कुछ मजबूत छोटे-बड़े चुभिले, मजबूत और काटेदार पत्थर बिखरे पड़े थे। एक पत्थर अनायास ही उसके हाथ लग गया। साथ जाएं? नहीं जाएं? लगा पत्थर से लकीर पारने और काटने। जाएं तो मुसीबत। न जाएं तो अलग तरह की मुसीबत। चलना ही ठीक रहेगा। बीच रास्ते में कोई उपाय भी निकाल लूंगा। अगर मना किया तो अभी का अभी हिसाब-किताब कर देगा। अचानक उसे कुछ कौंध-सी आई। उसने दो सबसे मजबूत और चुभिले पत्थर उठाकर जेब में रख लिए।

"चाचा! मैं पीछे और भाई हैंडल पर।"

"अरे! कैसी बातें कर रहे हैं। आपको तो पता ही है पीछे ज्यादा वजन से आगे का चक्का उठ जाएगा।" बच्चे को राजी न होता देख वह बच्चे की ही बात मान गया। पीछे बैठा वह लगातार मुस्तफकिन के पलकों के उठने-गिरने, आंखों की पुतलियों के फैलने-सिकुड़ने, हैंडल पर हाथ के कसाव और पेंडल पर पैर की बढ़त-घटत के कई मायने निकालता और उन्हें खारिज करता रहा। फिर नए मायने करता। इसी पठन के साथ ताल में ताल मिलाते हुए दोनों तरफ की जेब में पड़े पत्थर पर उसकी मुट्टियों की पकड़ कभी कसती तो कभी ढीली होती।

"लीजिए! आ गया स्टेशन। मैं यहीं चाय वाले के पास अपनी साइकिल छोड़ देता हूं शहर से जब आता हूं तो साइकिल से गांव चला जाता हूं और गांव से लौटते हुए साइकिल से स्टेशन। एक मिनट रुकिए..." जरा सी देर में वह लौट आया, "यह लीजिए! सफर के लिए कुछ। बेचुवा छेने की मिठाई बनाता है तो क्यामत बनाता है...और यह रहा एक टिकट। छोटे मियां का तो लगेगा नहीं सो एक कटवा लाया। कहां लंबी लाइन में धक्के खाते फिरते। अपना तो सीधा टिकट कलेक्टर से लेन-देन है।" उसने एक ढोंगा और एक टिकट थमा दिया।

ट्रेन में सेटल होते ही छोटका बोला, "मिठाई तो दो भैया," उसने जेब से ढोंगा निकाला। ढोंग के साथ ही पत्थर भी मुट्टी में सरक आए। वह कभी मिठाई देखता तो कभी पत्थर। ट्रेन से आवाज आनी शुरू हो गई थी—ठकर ठक्-ठकर-ठक् ट्रेन पुल पर आ चुकी थी। "भैया यह देखो नदी।" ध्यान लौटते ही उसने अचानक पत्थर को मुट्टी में जोर से भींचा और अपने जाने पत्थर को वहां पहुंचा दिया जहां सूरज रोज डूबता है।



संपर्क : असिस्टेंट प्रोफेसर महर्षि वाल्मीकि कॉलेज ऑफ एजुकेशन
दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय, दिल्ली ईमेल : r.prapanna@gmail.com



स्वप्न और यथार्थ के बीच

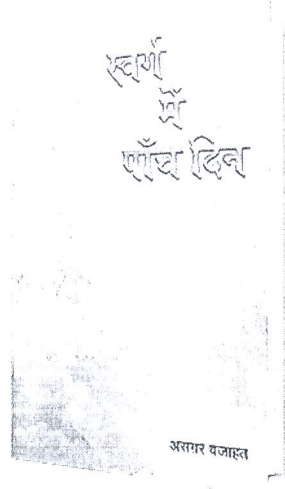
सुरेश सलिल

हाकवि नाज़िम हिकमत की एक कविता में कुछ पंक्तियां इस तरह हैं: “मेरे पास एक छोटी-सी पेंसिल थी/जिसे मैंने एक हफ्ते में घिस डाला/अगर तुम पेंसिल से पूछो, वह कहेगी, ‘मेरी समूची जिंदगी / अगर तुम मुझसे पूछो, मैं कहूंगा/ ‘कहां?...सिर्फ एक हफ्ता.’” जिंदगी के बारे में भी ऐसा ही एक मुहावरा है—चार दिन की जिंदगी. इस निगाह से देखें, तभी हमारे दौर के हर-दिल अजीज अदीब असगर वजाहत के नए सफरनामे *स्वर्ग में पांच दिन* को सही अर्थों में समझा और सराहा जा सकता है.

असगर बहुत उर्वर रचनाकार हैं. उन्होंने सात *आसमान* जैसी श्रेष्ठ कथाकृति हिंदी को दी, जिन लाहौर नहीं देखी...जैसे कालजयी नाटक से समकालीन रंगमंच को समृद्ध किया, फिल्मों बनाई और *शाहआलम कैंप* की रूहें जैसी विचारोत्तेजक कहानी लिखी. वे राहुल सांकृत्यायन, नागार्जुन की घुमक्कड़ी को वर्तमान तक लाने वाले अविराम सैलानी भी हैं और ईरान, जॉर्डन आदि देशों के बहुत रोचक और ज्ञानवर्धक सफरनामे हमें दिए हैं. समीक्ष्य कृति भी एक सफरनामा ही है और इसके केंद्र में है पूर्वी यूरोप का देश हंगरी.

असगर 1989 से मुतवातिर हंगरी की यात्राएं करते रहे हैं और 1992-97 तक, पूरे पांच साल विजिटिंग प्रोफेसर के बतौर वहां रहे हैं. उन्होंने वहां के कोने-कोने को, रोएं-रेशे को एक जिज्ञासु और हार्दिक की दृष्टि से देखा और एक इतिहासान्वेषी, एक समाजशास्त्री की भांति उस सबको अपनी स्मृति में दर्ज कर कागज पर उतारा है. लेकिन हंगरी की जिस खूबी ने उन्हें गहरे तक प्रभावित किया वह है वहां की प्राकृतिक सुंदरता. कहते हैं, “यदि मुगल सम्राट शाहजहां हंगरी आए होते तो निश्चित रूप से कहते कि *गर बहिश्त बर रू-ज़र्मी अस्त/ हमी अस्तो हमी अस्तो हमी अस्त*. ऐसे स्वर्गोपम देश में अगर किसी दिलनवाज को पांच साल का अरसा महज पांच दिन जितना लगे तो हैरत क्या!

खुद लेखक के शब्दों में *स्वर्ग में पांच दिन*



स्वर्ग में पांच दिन

निगाह अजीज अदीब
प्रकाशक: राजपाल एंड संस,
कश्मीरी गेट, दिल्ली
कीमत: 395 रु.

में “हंगमी प्रवास के संस्मरण ही नहीं हैं, न वहां का इतिहास, न सामाजिक-राजनैतिक अध्ययन, न हंगेरियन साहित्य और कलाओं का कोई विशद विश्लेषण”, लेकिन एक पाठक की नजर से देखें तो इसमें वह सब है, और भी बहुत कुछ है, जो हंगरी को जिज्ञासु पाठकों के करीब लाता है, इतना करीब कि वह हंगरी को चाहने लगे, वहां के ख्वाब देखने लगे.

इस यात्रा पुस्तक के शुरू में ही एक ‘अनजाना इतिहासकार’ हमारे सामने आ खड़ा होता है. “इस अनजाने इतिहासकार ने सन् 1200 से 1230 के बीच अपना इतिहास लिखा था, जिसे *गेस्ता हुंगारोरुम* कहा जाता है. अनजाने इतिहासकार की यह काल्पनिक मूर्ति हंगरी के *कैसेल ऑफ वय्यदाहुन्यद* के बाहर लगी हुई है.” मूर्ति में वह अनजाना इतिहासकार एक लंबा हुडकोट पहने है, जिसने उसके पूरे सिर और चेहरे को ढक रखा है. बस उसकी लंबी नाक ही नजर आती है. वह अनजाना इतिहासकार यूराल पहाड़ों और कैस्पियन सागर के पास बसे एक कबीले के सरदार प्रिंस ओनैदवैलिया की खूबसूरत शहजादी एमैशै और एक कबीले के सरदार के स्वयंवर की दिलकश दास्तान लेखक को सुनाता है और यह भी बताता है कि उन दोनों के संयोग से पैदा हुए आलमोशे ने अलग-अलग सात कबीलों के सरदारों को एकजुट किया और कहा, “हमारे शरीर में अलग-अलग खून दौड़ रहा है...हम सबका खून अलग है...हम अलग हैं...हमें एक होना चाहिए...जब तक हम एक नहीं होंगे, तब तक मैं तुम सबको लेकर आगे नहीं बढ़ूंगा... हमारा खून मिल जाना चाहिए, तब हम सात

नहीं रहेंगे, एक हो जाएंगे.” नौवीं सदी के एकता के इस संदेश के साथ जहां हंगरी का इतिहास आगे बढ़ता है, वहीं लेखक का सफरनामा भी रफ्तार पकड़ता है.

इस दास्तान के हवाले से अरसे से चली आ रही एक गलतफहमी भी दूर होती है. हंगरी को प्रायः हूणों से जोड़ा जाता रहा है और यह हंगरी नाम हूणों से पड़ा. लेखक के अनुसार, आठवीं-नौवीं सदी के आसपास मध्य यूरोप के इस भूभाग में बस गई जनजाति का नाम मज्यरा था. उन्हीं से जुड़कर हंगेरियन भाषा में हंगरी का नाम ‘मज्यरा सांग’ पड़ा. तुर्की जबान में भी हंगरी को मज्यरिस्तान कहा जाता है.

हंगरी की जिन खूबियों के कारण लेखक ने उसे स्वर्ग कहा है, उनमें किसिम-किसिम की वारुणियां हैं—सम्राटों की वाइन से लेकर आम लोगों की शराब तक—एशिया और यूरोप के सम्मिश्रण से पैदा हुई हूँ हैं, जिनकी “सुंदरता आक्रामक सुंदरता नहीं है. उनमें सहजता और सरलता है.” आम लोगों की जेब से चाबी का गुच्छा उड़ा लेने वाली जिप्सी वारांगनाएँ हैं, कला संग्रहालय हैं, रचनाकारों के नाम से जुड़ी इमारतें हैं, खूबसूरत औरतों से दोस्ती करने में मददगार सुंदर कुत्ते हैं और है बर्फ, तरह-तरह के पैटर्न बनाती, तरह-तरह के रंगाभास देती बर्फ, धरती को आसमान से जोड़ती बर्फ. बर्फ के अनेक रंगारंग संस्मरण हैं इस बेहद पठनीय सफरनामों में.

स्वर्ग में पांच दिन में असगर वजाहत ने एक ऐसा हंगरी हमारे सामने उजागर किया है, जो जिंदगी जैसा जीता-जागता हुआ है और सपने जैसा सुंदर. ■

Gandhi in the Company of Western Philosophers

A RAGHURAMARAJU

The main task that Shaj Mohan and Divya Dwivedi set for themselves in writing this book was to outline a system for gathering together both “Gandhi’s writings and practices” and presenting them within a “corpus” in which his “precise conception of nature, truth, violence, resistance and the end is classified” (p 1). These multiple tasks are undertaken against the background of Gandhi’s alleged opposition to philosophy, which the authors claim, he considered “satanic.” Notwithstanding this view, they do point out that philosophers, including Martin Buber, Maurice Blanchot, Hannah Arendt, Etienne Balibar and Slavoj Zizek “found it necessary to engage with him” (p 10).

Having juxtaposed this peculiar relation between Gandhi and the philosophers they turn towards another concept, namely “hypophysical.” They find this term within a parenthesis in a passage from Immanuel Kant’s *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. They make an adventurous move to elevate it to the level of one of central ideas in Gandhian thought. Making an exact connection between Immanuel Kant and Gandhi, they go on to affirm that this Kantian concept “finds a highly developed articulation in Gandhi’s theory of nature where nature is value, the moral is the natural” (p 2). Gandhi, they claim, held that anything that conforms to nature is a virtue and that which does not is a deviation from “nature’s moral course.” These deviations consist of “the syndrome of civilisation, the perils of speed, and the desire for progenies” (p 1). It is this idea of nature as a value, as hypophysics, they claim, can explain a long list of Gandhi’s activities, many of them controversial and some experimental, including: his “sexual experiments; his resistance to democracy and women’s liberation movements; his racism towards the Africans and the untouchables

Gandhi and Philosophy: On Theological Anti-Politics by Shaj Mohan and Divya Dwivedi, Foreword by Jean-Luc Nancy, New Delhi: Bloomsbury, 2019; pp i-x, 1-272, ₹9,341 (hardcover).

of the subcontinent; his startling political positions with respect to great events of the early 20th century such as Nazi Camps and the atomic bomb”; and his experimental attempts to “determine Truth” (p 2). So, in their reading this concept of the “hypophysical” holds a central position for understanding the “systematic unity and uniqueness of his thought.”

To bridge the huge chasm between “hypophysics” as a term in parenthesis and its transformation into a central concept, the authors undertake, in Chapter 1, titled, “Hypophysics,” to build a larger scaffold around the term. In this context they take support from a long list of philosophers from the West, including Edward Tiryakian, Hippocrates, Plato, Rene Guenon, Stoa, Aristotle, Anaxagoras, Xenophanes, Marcus Aurelius, the Stoics, Diogenes Laertius, Hume, James Lovelock, Fritjof Capra and Rupert Sheldrake (pp 17-18). They go on to claim that “Gandhian hypophysics, however, obtains a precision which distinguishes it from both the precursors and successors, including some inheritors, of the synonymisation of nature and value” (p 18). Having made this claim regarding the precision, the authors do not actually state who these precursors, successors and inheritors are. More importantly, they do not state what is the distinctive nature of Gandhian hypophysics that distinguishes it from them.

The other theme that this chapter discusses is how to read Gandhi. After referring briefly to writers like Partha Chatterjee and Akeel Bilgrami on Gandhi, the authors land the discussion in front of John Alter who, they claim,

brought “in an explicit manner, the union of nature and value in Gandhi’s political theory, nature cure, sexual experimentation, and hypophysics” (p 20). The discussion continues by the authors recalling another long list of philosophers from the West, including Spinoza, Wittgenstein, Luc Nancy, and Stuart Kauffman (pp 23-26).

This method of entangling Gandhi with Western philosophy forms the common link across the chapters of this book. This approach becomes obvious when the authors, while discussing Gandhi’s attempt at associating the earthquake in Bihar with the practice of untouchability, do not refer to or discuss Ramchandra Gandhi’s important and focused paper on this same theme (“Earthquake in Bihar: The Transfiguration of Karma,” *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, 1983, pp 125-51). Other papers by K J Shah and Amita Chatterjee that subsequently engaged with Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore on this theme too elude the attention of the authors.

Discussion on Speed

The next chapter discusses yet another important philosophical theme, namely speed. Measured by time and an important aspect in history, speed is the pulse of the universe. Moving, yet not moving away to the extent of derailment, is the characteristic feature of the universe. This moving yet not moving away and retaining equilibrium, it looks to me, is symbolically presented in the dance of Nataraja. This equilibrium, the authors claim, according to Gandhi, is however thrown out of gear with the advent of civilisation and subsequently by modernity which promotes speed. The continuous and habitual promotion of speed impacts equilibrium in a way that further dissociates nature from value. This fundamental philosophical concept, speed, is extensively discussed in this chapter. They again turn towards Western philosophers like Charles Bonnet, Jacques Monod, Hannah Arendt (p 33), Aristotle (p 35), Kant (p 36), Heidegger (p 36) Paul Virilio (p 37), Nietzsche (p 37), Milton (p 38) and especially towards Thomas Taylor who wrote

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The Fallacy of Speed, to show the contrast between modern life and village life (p 39).

Having discussed two fundamental ideas, namely nature and value on the one hand and speed on the other, the third chapter discusses the concept of body. Rejecting the claim that Gandhi follows the middle path between mind and body, the authors claim that for Gandhi, "the body aggregates under the essence of good and evil which is not the same as the distinction of healthy and unhealthy" (p 68). The next chapter discusses the relation between mind and soul. Highlighting the "inverse relation" between the "powers of body and the soul" the authors quote Gandhi who said, "It is my firm belief that the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh." Taking the lead from this view they go on to claim that the "soul is defined as a distance between the body and the mind ..." (p 71). Again continuing their habitual style of argument, they relate Gandhi's stand on the relation between the mind and the soul by bringing into the discussion another long list of philosophers from the West. In this chapter they go one step further when they claim that it is Gandhi's "studies of Plato" that made him to establish "a certain relation between Truth and the soul, that is, soul is the faculty that has the power invested in it to recognise Truth" (p 84). This claim about Gandhi's study of Plato is not substantiated by evidence.

Chapter 5, "Dynamics: Active and Passive," identifies active force with history that is "dis-essentialising of man" and identifies passive force with "nature which is value" (p 90). As an illustration they suggest that going to a temple on foot is practising passive force whereas travelling by train to go there would be employing active force. The next chapter discusses "The Laws of the Maker," about how Gandhi distinguished man-made laws from the laws of the maker. The laws of the maker are unbreakable; and all "illness is the result of the violation of the laws of nature" (p 116). Man-made laws are legitimate only if they are grounded in Maker's Laws (p 127). Gandhi said that "if all of us regulate our

lives by this eternal law of satya and ahimsa, there will be no occasion for civil or other resistance" (p 130). The next two chapters discuss "Truth and Will" and "Violence and Resistance," respectively. The summary of these chapters is aptly captured when they quote Gandhi who equates salvation of all the "exploited people of the earth and, therefore, of the world" with strictly adhering to the "reliance" on "truth" and "non-violence" (p 164). Thus, for Gandhi, truth and non-violence are both universal and absolute concepts.

Age of Critique

The chapter on "Critical Nation" discusses Gandhi's views of caste, untouchability and racism (pp 189-90); politics as a necessary evil (p 191); history as a disruption of passive force (p 194); and absolutising the virtues of non-violence and cleansing it of any shades of violence. The conclusion embarks on summarising the discussion in the preceding chapters through the broad categories of the "age of critique" that begins from the 18th century that "refers to the investigation

into the internal milieu of a system" (p 209); "age of criticism" that is interested "in the criteria, or ratio" (p 210) and the "age of criticalisation" that looks into what "happens to systems when their elements reach their limits, such as the heat of combustion, and heat tolerance of an engine" (p 211). The authors find "Gandhi's efforts ... towards discovering the limits of politics to the point of criticalisation of the human animal itself" (p 212).

At one level one finds both: relating Gandhi with a word in parenthesis, namely hypophysics, and making it one of the central concepts in his thought both challenging and problematic; and relating Gandhi with Kant too is equally problematic. The problem with the former is with regard to the disproportion in the extend of concept in parenthesis and the philosophy of Gandhi. Regarding the latter, Kant is the major philosopher within the project of modernity and Gandhi is a strong critic of modernity, in fact he terms it as satanic. This difference, nay, antagonism, is not referred to. It looks as if both Kant and

EXPANSION

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Gandhi belong to the same schools of thought. Yet another problem is, though the book is about Gandhi, there is less of him and far more of Western philosophy in it.

At a more scholarly level, there are ideas that are attributed to Gandhi without giving exact references. For instance, the authors maintain that he was "familiar with the theories of the mind discussed by his contemporaries, including the Darwinian theories of mind." And that "he avoided a lengthy discussion of the subcontinental theories of the mind in the religious texts while giving discourses on them" (p 73). The evidence in support of this claim is not given. This ambiguity and not giving exact references to what is attributed to Gandhi is there when they maintain that there are "thinkers of speed before Gandhi and after him. But it is Gandhi's resistance to speeding, which alone is resistance, which sets him apart" (pp 38-39). This indeed is a big claim and one needs to know who those

thinkers about speed, before and after him, are.

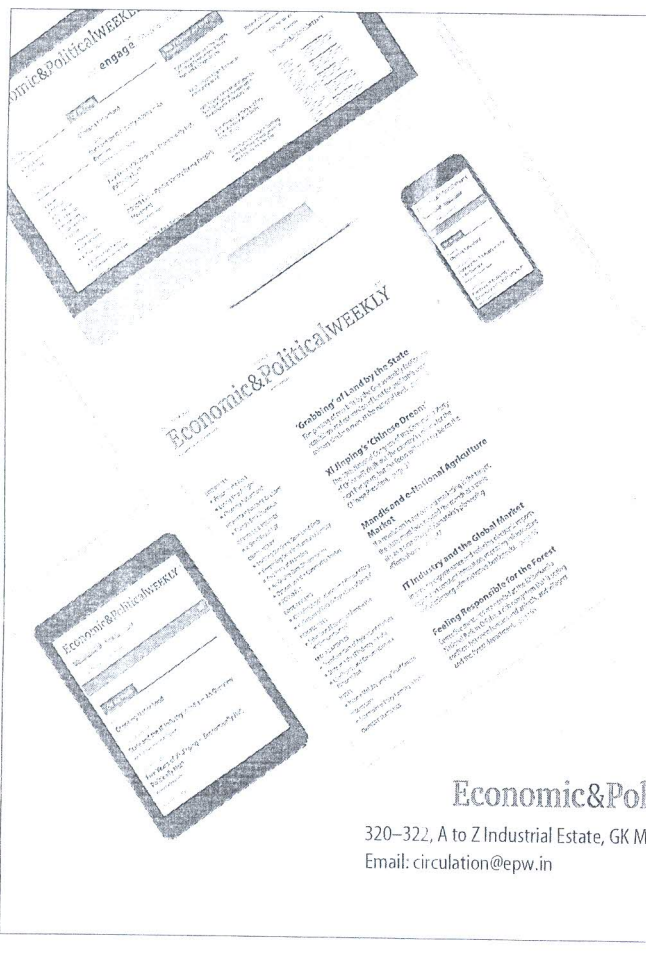
Similarly, the text does not set out those existing interpretations of nature, truth, violence, resistance of Gandhi with which the present book differs. This scholarly practice of clearly stating the view with which a paper or a book goes on to differ is the virtue of modern Western scholarship. This practice has intriguingly not been adhered to in the text. The inevitable outcome is that the text under review lacks scholarly presentation of its *purvapaksha*. For instance, there are Marxists who alleged that his politics either wittingly or otherwise promoted bourgeoisie interests; liberals who found him non-progressive; feminists who criticised his views on sex and women; and those like B R Ambedkar who found his views on Dalits less revolutionary or even promoting orthodoxy. This leaves the text merely to accumulate without cumulating. The development of thought through cumulative ideas is the dominant practice

in Western scholarship. The Western philosophers that are discussed overcrowd Gandhi. One wonders what are the new insights the book gives about him apart from several claims made about him.

Welcome Addition

Notwithstanding these, from another level the book is interesting and is well written; the philosophical prose is tight and is of high quality. In this respect the book is in the company of Ajay Skaria on relating Gandhi with Derrida; and Aishwary Kumar on relating Ambedkar and Walter Benjamin. A book of this nature on Gandhi is a welcome addition to the existing literature. It makes good reading for those who are already familiar with, and or want to be familiar with Western philosophers and or want to see Gandhi in their company.

A Raghuramaraju (raghurama9@gmail.com) is on deputation to Indian Institute of Technology Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh from University of Hyderabad. He teaches philosophy.



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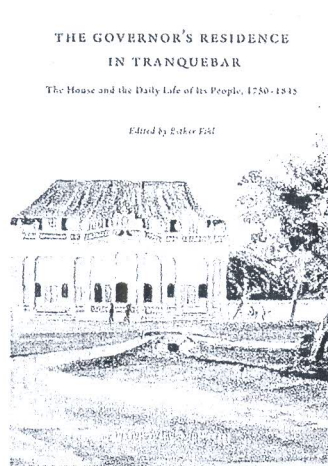
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House by the sea

A skilfully crafted book that paints a vivid portrait of the past as it unfolded in the life of the Governor's house in Tranquebar and its people. BY JOHN THOMAS

IN 2008, the Tamil Nadu Tourism Department and the Tranquebar Initiative of the National Museum of Denmark launched a joint project to restore a dilapidated and abandoned house in the erstwhile Tranquebar (now called Tharangampadi). Among other things, the house was once the official residence of the Danish Governor who administered Tranquebar. Given the growing scholarly interest in the history of Tranquebar and the plans of the Tourism Department to promote the town as a destination for heritage tourism, it was only befitting that the house was restored.

Meanwhile, a host of historians, architects, restorers and conservators who became involved in the project meticulously gathered and examined a variety of archival material so that the social and architectural history of the house could be traced and understood. This was significant as it not only determined the character and course of the restoration but also paved the way for putting together a skilfully crafted book that is lucid, imaginative and comprehensible to a wide audience.



The Governor's Residence in Tranquebar

The House and the Daily Life of its People, 1770-1845

Edited by Esther Fihl
Museum Tusulanum Press, Copenhagen, 2017

Through a narrative interspersed with anecdotes, illustrations, maps, photographs and excerpts from archival materials, the book paints a vivid portrait of the past as it unfolded in the life of the Governor's house and its people. Written by historians, anthropologists, architects and restorers, the book has rich descriptions about the architectural splendour of the house, the material artefacts that adorned it, and the utilisation of space within it. It discusses the symbolic power and the official presence that the house had within the townscape of Tranquebar. It illustrates the people who lived in the house, visited it and worked in it and even pries into their private lives, in-

trigues, anxieties and longings. Acknowledging that restoration has, from the outset, been the "point of reference" for putting together the book, an entire chapter, towards the end, is devoted to narrating the painstaking process of restoration and its varied meanings.

Although the book may be taken for just another "coffee table book", it is far from one. It is a book designed to be read closely, not merely casually looked at or glanced through. It is rich in description and detail. The elaborate and colourful anecdotes, images, illustrations, maps, architectural plans and photographs that appear with the main text deserve to be read on their own terms. They interrupt the steady

flow of the main text but are integral to what the book is about and provide a much better understanding of the people, places and times that are being referred to.

NATURE OF CULTURAL ENCOUNTER

The larger theme underpinning the book is one of cultural encounter. Through the biography of the house, the book seeks to shed light on and comprehend the cultural encounter that occurred between Europeans and Indians in the late 18th and early 19th century (the years when the house was the Governor's official residence), albeit from the perspective of the Danish, who were minor players in the race for dominance over overseas trade in the region.

In 1620, Raghunatha Nayak, the King of Thanjavur, invited the Danes to settle in Tranquebar with the intention of stimulating trade in his territory and counterbalancing the dominance of the Portuguese. Subsequently, they built a fort and established a trading settlement in Tranquebar. However, because of insufficient investment and lack of any contact with the home country, there was hardly any trading activity in the 17th century. It was in the 18th century that trade began to prosper in Tranquebar. The neutral position adopted by the United Kingdom of Denmark-Norway in European conflicts and wars made Tranquebar a comparatively safe place for European

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traders to undertake their trading activities. By the 19th century, as the British East India Company became a formidable force in the Indian subcontinent, the Danes had to give up their control over Tranquebar and, eventually, handed the trading settlement over to the British in 1845.

In spite of its presence in the subcontinent for almost 225 years, Denmark could never establish lasting trade relations in India, nor did it become an important competitor in the race for colonies. But, for Tranquebar and the surrounding areas, those 225 years were crucial in terms of the cultural interactions that took place between Europeans and Indians—an aspect that was closely examined in an earlier book brought out by the Tranquebar Initiative of the National Museum (Fihl, Esther and A.R. Venkatachalapathy (eds) (2014): *Beyond Tranquebar: Grappling Across Cultural Borders in South India*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan).

In their everydayness, the cultural interactions that took place in Tranquebar were marked by conflicts and misunderstandings as well as attempts to understand and accommodate everyone's

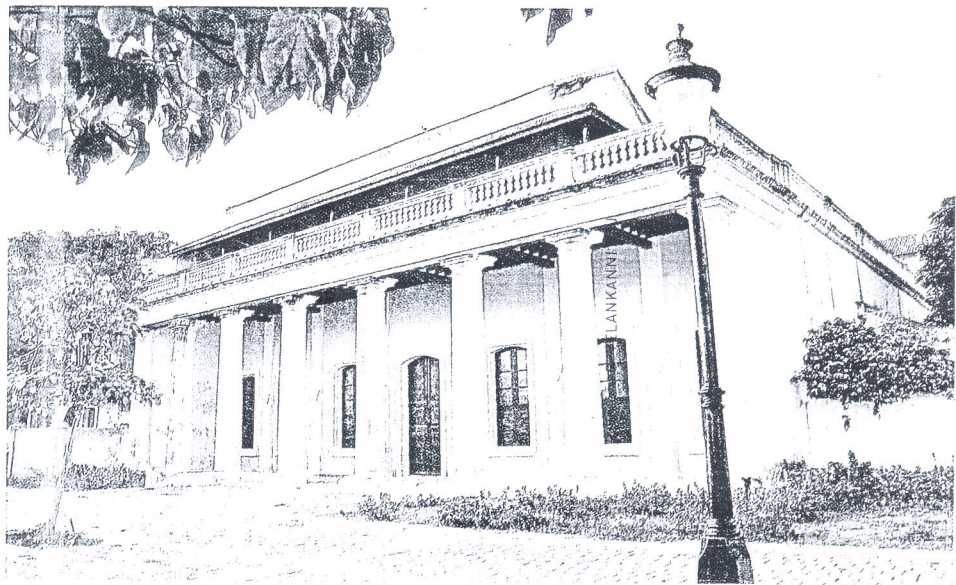
particularities. There were attempts to protect and segregate everyone's space, but there were also moments when those lines of segregation became rather blurred. Using the Governor's house as a point of reference, the book demonstrates how the relationship between the Governor's family and the local servants, the various diplomatic parleys that happened in the house, the banquets the Governor hosted, the artefacts and furniture that adorned the house, and the relations forged by the residents of the house with other Europeans and Indians became important instances of such cultural

interactions.

Given the fact that Tranquebar was under the administrative control of the Danish Crown and that Europeans, in general, felt they were justified in asserting their economic and political dominance in the region, it would be facile to assume that these cultural encounters were not mediated by power. They were definitely tinted with paternalism, racial superiority and a sense of entitlement, something that is evident in the relations between the Governor's family and the local people. However, this does not mean that there was a premeditated and uniform manner in which power

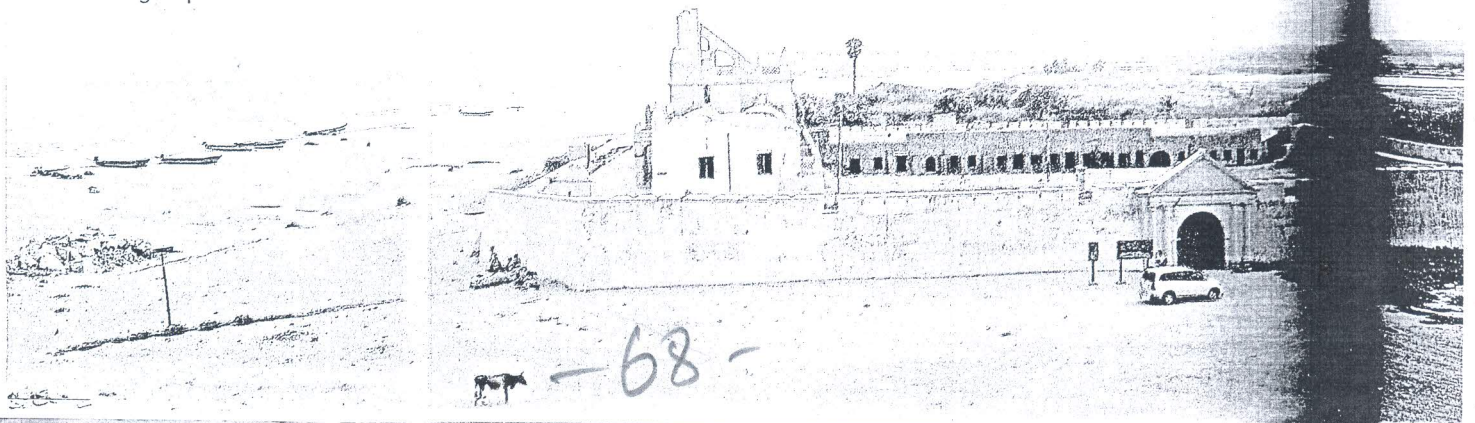
operated. The unequal relations of power between the Danes and the local people, between the various imperialist nations vying for dominance in the region, and the social hierarchies that existed among the Danes and the local people reveal that there were multiple centres of power, and the intersections and negotiations between them made the cultural encounter a more nuanced, complex and multilayered process.

In general, the nuances, dilemmas and politics of cultural encounter are something that the book tries to be conscious and sensitive about. However, there are occasions



THE HOUSE that was once the official residence of the Danish Governor who administered Tranquebar (now Tharangampadi in Nagapattinam district).

THE DANISH FORT, called Dans Borg, in Tharangampadi.



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when it tends to slip into casual references that imply that the Danes were magnanimous for not having imposed their Danishness on local society and for being accommodative of local spaces and culture in spite of their presence in Tranquebar for a little over two centuries; furthermore, there is a tendency to romanticise the Indo-European cultural exchange, almost becoming forgetful of the privileges and power the Europeans were beginning to wield in the region.

Rather than magnanimity or genuine romance for local culture, it might be more apt to say that the limits of circumstances and the negotiations of power restrained and determined the character of the Indo-European cultural exchange. The scope and limitations of the archives and museums consulted, which are primarily located in Denmark, could be one of the reasons for this shortcoming as they mostly privilege the voices, thoughts and feelings of the Danes while the local people tend to be mute and passive subjects.

RESTORATION AS STORYTELLING

The main impetus behind the book was the effort to restore the Governor's

house and turn it into a cultural centre that would contribute towards the development of Tranquebar as an important destination for heritage tourism. Although the book remains silent about the political economy of heritage tourism—despite the involvement of various stakeholders with variant interests—and its implications for local society, it does provide an extremely instructive account of the entire restoration process. It presents the minute planning and details that went into the restoration process—recovering architectural plans of the building complex, excavating the area in and around it, and carefully studying the architectural modifications and additions it was subjected to over the years; also, deliberating and working on the various aspects of restoration, for instance, the materials to be used, the craftsmanship to be employed, the colours to be painted, etc. It also delves into the various concerns and dilemmas that came up during the course of restoration.

Because of certain antiquarian anxieties, there has often been a tendency to perceive restoration as a process wherein a remnant from the past is reinstated to its “original” or “authentic” self. However, as those who were involved in the restoration work aptly point out in the last chapter, restoration involves “a loss of authenticity”. A restored structure is never an exact reconstruction of the structure as it appeared at any point of time but an entirely new structure that has been put together taking into con-

sideration what is known about the building and what remains of it. It represents a flattening of time and an attempt to combine elements from different periods in a structure's history.

The building complex had been put to multiple uses in the past: To begin with, it was the private house of an English businessman. In 1784, it became the official residence of the Danish Governor. Much later, in 1845, as Tranquebar came under British rule, it became a place for the Collector of Thanjavur to hold “the records and the treasury”. From 1860 to 1884, it was turned into a courthouse and, afterwards, until the 1980s, an office for the Salt Department. And, the mandate of the restoration project was to restore the building complex taking into consideration its multiple lives, to compress multiple phases of its history into one.

However, in order to do this, there had to be a point of reference, a moment or an aspect that would be “the basis for the major story in the restoration process”. Given the prominence of the building complex in the town when it was the Governor's official residence and the fact that much of the architectural and historical details available on it are from that period, the obvious choice for the restorers was to treat that period as the point of reference, though they remained conscious and accommodative of the modifications and additions that may have happened during other periods. The residence was handed over to

the Tamil Nadu Tourism Department after the restoration was completed in 2011. The book, ending on a hopeful note, underlines the potential of the restored structure to become an important meeting point for cross-cultural dialogues, a hub of various historical and cultural activities. Although it is for the various stakeholders involved in the restoration process to assess if it has served that important purpose, the reflections of a travel blogger who visited Tranquebar last year may be taken earnestly, especially given the plight of various restored buildings and sites in the country. In her blog, she narrates how deserted and lifeless the town and its many restored structures seemed and wondered whether those structures were restored “only to be kept under lock and key” (<https://sudhagee.com/2018/10/01/travel-exploring-tranquebar/>).

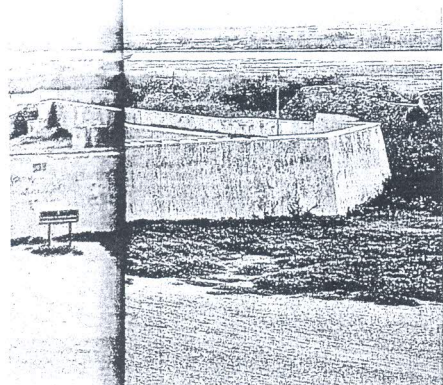
Tranquebar is one among the several places along the coast of the Bay of Bengal that have had a history very different from the landlocked hinterlands of the subcontinent. Given their proximity to the seas, such places have been centres of cross-cultural exchange and assimilation for long. Cultural negotiations and contestations have been an inevitable part of it. In this respect, the book provides important glimpses of how lives may have been made and lived in coastal and southern India. □

Jony Thomas is an assistant professor of history at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Guwahati.



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M. MOORTHY

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Engaging with 'a Quintessential University Person'

MOGGALLAN BHARTI

Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) and Tulika Books' *Conversations with Ambedkar: 10 Ambedkar Memorial Lectures* comprising the first 10 Ambedkar Memorial Lectures (AML), edited by Valerian Rodrigues besides being a university's commitment to the ideas of B R Ambedkar, is a befitting repository of critical thinking and Ambedkar's philosophy. The latter is discussed and followed in the domain of the Dalit-Bahujan sociopolitical world. These scholarly lectures compiled in the volume constitute a firm step on the part of the university in not just bringing Ambedkar's ideas to a more contemporaneous engagement, but also in laying the edifice for an astute friendship with a man who Rodrigues perceptively describes as "a quintessential university person." In its entirety, the lectures delve deeper into concepts like citizenship, justice, oppression, jurisprudence, democracy, and particularly Ambedkar's idea of India and its interaction with the more pressing questions of our times. Though not all 10 lectures included in the volume deal with Ambedkar in a direct manner, they are all part of an ongoing expression of scholarly work that could qualify as the critical Ambedkar studies movement—an important objective of the AUD's AML series as suggested by Upendra Baxi.

Central to Nationalism

The book begins with the very first memorial lecture, in which Bhikhu Parekh points out that any engagement with Ambedkar's philosophy and work should be free of both deification and vilification. It is only after a careful and dispassionate discerning of Ambedkar's thought in his time that one should commence a sense of an uncritical engagement with his philosophy. Parekh underlines an important question that Ambedkar raised—a

BOOK REVIEWS

Conversations with Ambedkar: 10 Ambedkar Memorial Lectures edited by Valerian Rodrigues, Tulika Books and Ambedkar University Delhi, July 2019; pp 282, ₹750.

germane question even today especially to those who want to engage with the political in Ambedkar—as to why caste Hindus do not feel ashamed or embarrassed by the presence of untouchability which forms the very basis of Hindu caste society. For Parekh, it is important to understand Ambedkar's perspective on the absence of "public conscience" among the caste Hindus which is very central to the development of shared fraternal feeling—a fundamental value otherwise very central to the coherency of nationalism in India. The contested national question in the light of the missing "shared sympathies" in Hindu society—that Parekh considers an oxymoron, and rightly so, as it is deeply divisive and hierarchical—flags an important question for the wider public to chew on, that of how to imagine a constitutional republic whose very foundation rests on the corrosive ideology of Brahminism.

It is this question of refiguring the claims of modern citizens in a constitutional republic that Veena Das attempts to probe in her lecture. Through an ethnographic account of events, Das analyses the everyday impact of law in the people's lives and the far-reaching consequences of the same in their citizenship claims. Deepak Nayyar too in the same spirit addresses the question of discrimination and justice in the constitutional republic. Nayyar aims at the possibility of imagining justice in newer ways by extending his reach to the constitutional apparatus in the United States (us) and South Africa. However, it is left

to the ever incisive and provocative Ashis Nandy to dig up the roots of the theories of oppression or as he puts it, "universal theories of oppression" produced at the zenith of colonial history.

Unlike the previous two scholars, Nandy examines the fundamentals of oppression and delineates its scholarship as the result of overwhelming cultural and intellectual hegemony of the West with its roots in European enlightenment and with "reason" at its centre—as opposed to "transcendental or divine injunctions, compassion, empathy"—being the defining characteristic of formulating ideas of social and political significance. This propositioning by Nandy, however, requires further elaboration, as any problematisation of reason as a value and source of critique of the social must invite. Though Nandy does admit that ascribing reason as the "primary source of value can have some virtues," it is this aspect of "can have" and not the do have that needs our attention. Nandy somehow overlooks the significance of "reason" in recovering and bringing the knowledge to the Untouchables in both colonial and postcolonial period of India. It must be emphasised that the post-independence idea of nationalism—a European derivative—mirrored Brahminism and continues to absorb the other voices in its imagery of "Mother India." In his quest for tying the available theories of oppression to that of the imperial and cultural aspects of European hegemony, not only does Nandy not tell us more on why they are "dominant"—other than their birthplace being in Europe—he also does not outline the available subjugated theories—the ones which are apparently being dominated. Moreover, Nandy's argument about an "internal dialogue" between different communities and cultures despite its sincerity ignores the thriving inequality in India—an order of inequality that makes any dialogue on an equal footing a non-starter.

Insurgent Reason

The memorial address by Baxi takes up "reason" exactly from where Nandy has left, and grants it the efficacy as visualised

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by Ambedkar in his lifetime. Baxi treats both M K Gandhi and Ambedkar's method as "insurgent reason," while focusing on their writings and carefully avoiding the hagiographic discourse around them. He compares Ambedkar's philosophy with that of Giorgio Agamben's and Hannah Arendt's work, thereby steering to the core of Ambedkar's thesis on "violent social exclusion" and in the process, does not necessarily restrict him to the liberation discourse of decolonisation alone. For Baxi, Ambedkar's counter to Gandhian view of caste as an "anachronism but not evil," brings forth the urgent necessity of restructuring the "Hindu civilisation" that breeds and feeds on perpetual evil with its genesis in the Hindu caste system. Baxi outlines the quotidian evil of caste which causes a life of "living death" to untouchables, that reminds one of Gopal Guru's (2006) conceptualisation of Dalits' lives being a "walking carcass" in an essay that he wrote for *Frontline*. For Baxi the way forward is as what Ambedkar foresees in his time, the need for "demosprudence," a republic premised on jurisprudence guided by the force of constitutional law which is undoubtedly a system of governance, wherein lies the hope for India as a republic.

This republic of an aware and conscious citizenry committed to constitutional morals and ethics gets highlighted in the address delivered by Gopalkrishna Gandhi and Aruna Roy. Both disquisitions underline the rich democratic heritage of the young republic and also the ongoing constitutional crisis. Roy's peroration particularly mentions the contradictions of our times whereby one gets to see the defence and enactment of the laws like the right to information along with the muzzling of dissenting voices, where the former represents the hope in the democracy—the very immediate political development notwithstanding.

Romila Thapar's lecture probes the "idea of civilisation" as a social construct that emerges with colonial period. Thapar contends that conceptualising the civilisation in India has been the one that manifests the interest and the articulation of "elites and upper castes" at the cost of wider "social ethic." The thesis stands in total unison with Ambedkar's

description of India's history as the struggle between the forces of "revolution and counter-revolution," where the counter to the revolution denotes Brahminism. Like Nandy, though with a very different objective, Thapar too emphasises the neglect of the internal sociocultural differences that could not find a place in the hegemonic Brahminical idea of Indian history, and in order to overcome this hegemonic design the newer writings on civilisation have to "incorporate the dialogue between varying social groups." This obviously mirrors the long-drawn Dalit-Bahujan struggles against Brahminism and reiterates the primary contradiction of India as foreseen by Ambedkar.

The final two lectures of Guru and Homi Bhabha respectively touch upon two varying though contributory concepts that place Ambedkar right in the middle of an ongoing political churn. While Guru's lecture inquires into the question of a possible exemplar in Ambedkar, Bhabha juxtaposes Ambedkar's estrangement with his country to Arendt's understanding on "otherness"—where one is recognised differently within her homeland. Bhabha's analysis would invariably remind its reader of an old television interview of Arendt to Gunter Gaus later translated into English and published—where she movingly described her crisis of being a Jew and a German both. She says she never considered herself German in the sense of belonging to the people, but firmly believed in the idea of being a German citizen. Contrast this with Ambedkar's quest of finding a homeland within the homeland, and Dalit investment in the idea of citizenship, the singularity of global oppression could not be more lucid.

Coming back to Guru, one finds a rather forthright disposition to the treatment accorded to Ambedkar in academia as well as in the larger social interaction on him in general. He makes it abundantly clear that the very idea of seeing Ambedkar as an exemplar does not do justice to the latter's politics, for his recommended path is more autonomous and eventually settles for "atta dippo bhava" (Be a light unto yourself). Guru, however, underlines the significance of the exemplar in Ambedkar for foregrounding the Dalit

political imagination and it is here that he delves into the necessity of exemplarity in Ambedkar for the larger Dalit movement and the covert and overt negation of the same among scholars of varying ideological persuasion. Guru's intervention attributes a certain conviction to the non-negotiability of the great philosopher.

Much More to Ambedkar

While summing up, there is no denying in saying that the volume earnestly deals with the intellectual and moral world of Ambedkar—a world that was always overshadowed by his standalone image of being merely the maker of the Constitution. That there is more to Ambedkar which is beyond the Constituent Assembly has been addressed duly and judiciously, regardless of the jacket image that adorns the book. The textual lectures edited by the guiding pen of Rodrigues unreservedly underscore the question that still remains at the heart of Indian politics—howsoever one denies it—the unattended and unresolved question of nationalism. Irrespective of whether one would want to transcend the metanarrative of nation, there is no escape unless one confronts it squarely and indomitably. Perhaps resolving the national question could then be the most genuine contribution to the critical world of Ambedkar—to which this edited set of lectures from AUD is certainly a promising start.

Moggallan Bharti (moggallan@gmail.com) teaches at the School of Development Studies, Ambedkar University Delhi.

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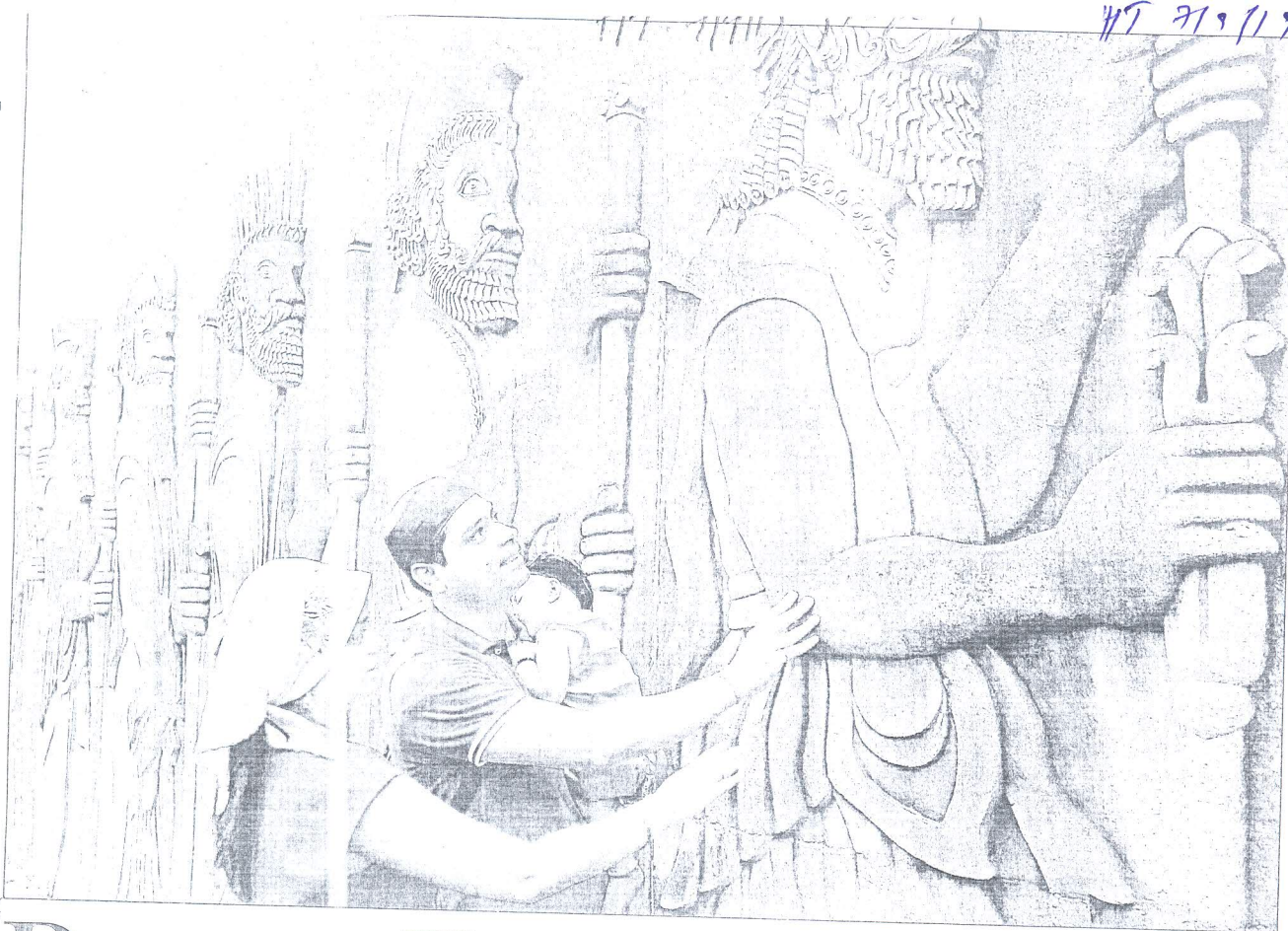
Gyan Deep

Near Firayalal Chowk,

Ranchi 834 001

Jharkhand

Ph: 2205640 (0651)



A Parsi couple prays to the guardians of the fire temple at Tardeo, Mumbai, on Navroz in 2015. KUNAL PATIL/HT PHOTO

Parsis: From a different planet

COMMUNITY Berjis Desai's book that lists the A to Z of the Parsi way of life shows you why this ethnic group makes other Indians both glad and mad

Manjula Narayan
manjula.narayan@hltv.com

Miss Contractor's chalk screeched on the blackboard as she conjugated a French verb in a series of appropriate sentences. *Fais, fait, faisons, faites...* she wrote with her right hand before launching into *lave, lavons, lavez, lavent* with her left. Finally, to the delight of Class 9A, she launched into conjugating two different verbs at once with both hands, rapidly covering the board with her elegant cursive writing. Every afternoon, with Mithoo, the favourite of her 10 parrots on her shoulder, Mrs Mani Dastur would plough through 10 Silhouette romances. She departed from this routine on festivals when she supervised the *mistry* (cook) in the kitchen and carried sumptuous *salli boti* and rose *falooda* in cut glass bowls covered with exquisitely crocheted and beaded *doilies* to the appreciative Malayali family next door. Miss Contractor and Mrs Dastur are just two of the fantastic Parsis who rose out of the vaults of your memory while reading *Oh! Those Parsis; A To Z of the Parsi Way of Life*, a collection of Berjis Desai's columns that appeared in Parsiana magazine between April 2014 and August 2017. Arranged in alphabetical

order, the book's chapters touch on everything from Abuse, Alcohol, Alpha females and Affire to Insanity (Being Cutely Cuckoo) and Xenophobia, Yesterdays, and Zoroaster. "Parsis are from a different planet," Desai's introduction begins, "They confuse other Earthlings. Imagine a human being who is at once genial, high strung, funny, rude, crude, kind, brilliant and barmy. Most of the time Parsis are lovable; sometimes they are annoying. They are in a hopeless demographic decline - barely 85,000 in the world. This decline makes people sad. Rather soon, Parsis will be sorely missed. They are an anthropological rarity worthy of being preserved. However, they themselves are merrily oblivious to their imminent extinction and continue to make others glad and mad."

Desai is a keen observer of his community, of its endearing eccentricities, its distinct culture shared by the *masoor paav* Parsis and the NCPA ones (his labels!), of its rare famous murderers Cdr Kawas Nanavati and Phiroze Dar-



Oh! Those Parsis; A To Z of the Parsi Way of Life Berjis Desai 292pp, ₹500 Zero Degree Publishing

uwalla, and its raucous sense of humour that exults in imaginative cuss words (Parsi swearing sounds sweet. Very often, it is used to express love and affection: "Madar... I missed you!"), double entendre and outrageous lines pronounced in the most deadpan fashion in the manner of Pope's "Puffs, patches, bibles, billets-doux". Desai himself is a master of comic delivery. Here he is on Parsis who display "deviationist behaviour": The genteel, docile proper *bawaji* is now a rare commodity. There is an increase in the number of *lahuvaas*, *haandaas*, *fituris*, *kaklaats* and *pallonjis*. These are highly technical terms which are difficult at times to distinguish even for a seasoned community watcher like your writer... The easier ones first. A *kaklaat* is a garrulous, incessant talker of nonsense which is jarring on the nerves. The listener feels physically exhausted after a *kaklaat* departs. *Kaklaats* steal your energy... A *pallonji* is a compulsive attention seeker... If he is at Allbless Baug, he wants to be the bridegroom and if he is at Doongerwadi, he wants to be the corpse. At this point, you throw down the

book and actually Laugh Out Loud. The chosen excerpt notwithstanding, this is not a comic collection. Desai writes with seriousness on Parsi cuisine, furniture, jewellery and sartorial sense, on baugs and sanatoriums, on the priesthood and on the Zoroastrian faith, on Parsi plays, on why Udvada scores over Navsari and the once bustling Parsi neighbourhoods of the latter. He also tackles the community's entrenched prejudices, writing of the tussles on intermarriage and the 'correct' way to dispose the dead between the traditionalists and the liberals. The undercurrent of sadness at declining numbers never degenerates into sentimentalism and while the writer is generally liberal, he admits to being attached to tradition, leading him to conduct his mother's funeral at Doongerwadi or the Towers of Silence instead of at the new crematorium and Prayer Hall in Worli. In a moving paragraph, Desai evokes the comfort of ritual and the need, in times of grief, to feel one with those who have gone before: Parsipanu can be seen and felt in the environs of the *bunglis*... The collective vibrations of the thousands of *geh sarnas*, *uthamnias* and *Sarosh*, intoned during the last few centuries, can still be felt by the sensitive... Even if the late great Farrokh Bulsara aka Freddie Mercury is the only Parsi you've known, just reading this book will get you through the specialised round of Mastermind: the Ilm-e-Khshnoomists are an occult group, who are ardent believers in reincarnation, vegetarianism and astrology; *sadhana*, *popatji*, *karkaryu*, *varadhuaroo*, *malido*, *mehsoor* and *koprapaak* are all traditional Parsi sweetmeats; the Mad Dog Riots broke out in Bombay on June 6, 1832 because the English decided to cull stray dogs... You have to love a people willing to wreak violence in defence of our canine friends. This is a wonderful book about a wonderful community that might, despite the doomsayers, still dodge extinction.

issue

A subaltern history

The book is the outcome of several decades of serious research and makes a valuable contribution to the understanding of the social history of Odisha.

BY SANJUKTA DAS GUPTA

THE book under review provides a historical analysis of the life experiences of the tribal people and Dalits of Odisha and revisits the contested terrain of middle-class politics and its interactions with socially excluded groups. It thus contributes to the broader problematic of how rural hierarchies were created and how they were continually challenged.

The theme of the book is discussed over six chapters, with the author, Biswamoy Pati, taking a long-term view spanning the precolonial, colonial and post-Independence regimes. The first chapter situates the context of the research and interrogates the invisibility of marginalised communities.

The second chapter analyses the nature of colonial intervention and the social fractures that colonial capitalism created. The third chapter focusses on the complex strategies of survival that evolved within tribal and “untouchable” communities and on confrontations and resistance that challenged

both the colonial and the Brahmanic hegemonic orders.

The two following chapters explore aspects of the lived experience of tribal people and “lower-caste” communities. Chapter Four highlights Adivasi traditions and customs concerning health and medicine and the emotive concerns that characterised the incidence of disease and epidemics in tribal localities.

It also discusses the “medical” gaze of colonialism, which operated to regulate and “sanitise” Indian society, thereby conditioning the perceptions of the

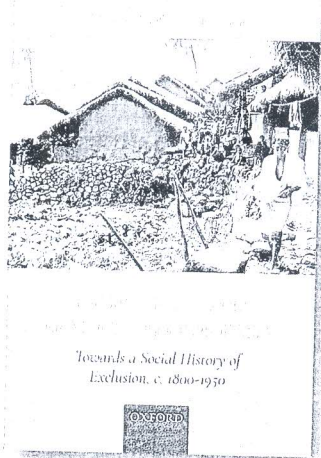
privileged classes. Chapter Five studies the diverse rituals involved in the acquisition and legitimisation of power within the caste hierarchy and underscores the subversive transgressions and the counter-rituals that arose in the popular sphere, with special reference to anti-Brahmanism, the Mahima movement and the national movement. The final chapter examines the State people’s movements in the princely state of Nilgiri between 1937 and 1948, underlining the role of the communists.

The book makes several important points. In the

first place, it argues that the impact of colonisation cannot be discussed in terms of a single narrative, given the wide geographical, cultural and social diversity of the region. The author points out the contradictions inherent within the colonial regime. This is seen, for example, in the contrasting processes of negotiations between colonial officials and the village leadership, on the one hand, and of the colonial “civilising mission” and the zeal to replace the traditional order with colonial modernity on the other.

Tracing the genealogy of the colonial construction of “tribe”, Pati points out the ambiguities and grey areas that existed between so-called tribes and the caste hierarchy. Furthermore, the author traces the continuities between colonial and post-colonial practices, drawing attention to the postcolonial “civilising mission”, and convincingly shows how contemporary concerns are mapped onto a non-existent and imagined past.

Another important contribution of the book lies in its emphasis on the interface between middle-class politics and the movements of socially excluded groups with the Kisan Sabha and the Praja Mandal movement. Challenging the assumptions of both right-wing and subaltern historiographies, the author highlights the linkages between these two domains and provides a new analytical framework to understand how the socially oppressed or ex-



Tribals and Dalits in Orissa

Towards a New Social History of Exclusion, c.1800-1950

By Biswamoy Pati
Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2019

Pages: 221

Price: Rs.945

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LINGARAJ PANDA

MEMBERS OF THE ODISHA DALIT ADHIKAR MANCH protesting in Bhubaneswar against atrocities against minority communities. A file photograph.

cluded sought to contest and alter the systems of middle-class control/dominance in different ways.

Perhaps the most novel proposition of the book is the author's thesis of reading survival strategies as resistance, provoking us to rethink the everyday patterns of Dalit and Adivasi confrontation of dominance and exploitation. Attempting to understand how the system of exclusion, discrimination and humiliation were rooted in and legitimised by the institution of caste, the author critically interrogates the internal order of exploitation. In doing so, he shows how lower caste/tribal resistance drew upon features of colonial modernity in order to delegitimise Brahminical Hinduism.

The author also specifies the inclusive character of such resistance, pointing to the linkages between lower-caste and tribal societies, a factor that is often overlooked in Adivasi histories.

Histories of the socially

marginalised are difficult to reconstruct since they only intermittently feature in mainstream archival

sources. The author has made skilful use of a variety of sources—both archival documents and

vernacular writings—in order to address colonial and postcolonial transitions. The book makes a valuable contribution to the understanding of the social history of Odisha. Written in lucid and readable prose and free of abstruse jargon, the book will be of interest to a wide readership.

It is tragic that Pati did not live to see the publication of this book, which was so dear to his heart. His earlier research into the world of the peasantry in Odisha encouraged him to undertake a detailed study of Dalits and Adivasis. A committed Marxist, Pati's theoretical leanings inspired him to look into the richness of peasant culture and the diversities that characterised peasant resilience against exploitative regimes.

The outcome of several decades of serious research, the book does not disappoint. □

Sanjukta Das Gupta is an associate professor of modern Indian history at the Sapienza University of Rome.



K.R. DEEPAK

A MEMBER OF THE PONDA TRIBAL GROUP in her village in Malkangiri district of Odisha. A file photograph.

Rule of the majority

A volume that attempts to explain why and how the Hindutva project of creating a majoritarian state took off in 2014. BY **SHAIKH MUJIBUR REHMAN**

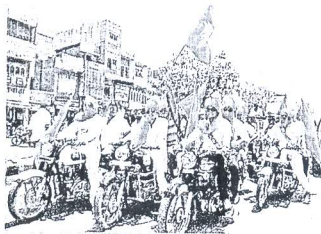
WITH no disrespect, it could be argued that the belief that mere endorsement of a great Constitution would ensure India's unshaken commitment to a pluralist polity was perhaps the most naive assumption of our founding fathers. What many wise people could not foresee was that an internal ideological threat could unsettle the very political processes and bundle of rights on which a pluralist polity is based and that the existence of a great Constitution would do very little to arrest this decline or transformation.

After the abrogation of the Article 370, particularly the manner in which it was done—accompanied by a lockdown in Jammu and Kashmir and the arrest of political leaders of all levels—no one should have any doubt that a majoritarian state has arrived with all its arms ready to respond to the diktats of the governing elite. This volume is an attempt to explain why and how it happened in 2014, and what shape it might take in future. In this volume, accomplished scholars drawn from disciplines such as history, anthropology, sociology and political science demonstrate how interdisciplinary

Angana P. Chatterjee, Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot (eds)

Majoritarian State

How Hindu Nationalism is Changing India



Majoritarian State How Hindu Nationalism is Changing India

Edited by
Angana P.
Chatterjee,
Thomas Blom
Hansen and
Christophe
Jaffrelot

HarperCollins,
2019

Pages: 537

Price: Rs.899

scholarship can be put to good use in the scrutiny of the Indian state and its democratic traditions.

In the introduction, the three editors, who are among the finest names in South Asian studies globally today, present deep insights into the changing nature of the Indian state, especially its particularistic characteristics turning towards majoritarianism. The Narendra Modi regime, they recognise, has four particular features similar to what is seen elsewhere, say Donald Trump's America: majoritarianism, populism, nationalism and authoritarianism. These scholars further claim two additional elements about the Modi regime: its pro-

corporate and upper-caste bias, and the normalisation of anti-Muslim/minority rhetoric in public and political discourses.

By bringing these characteristics together, the Indian state has acquired a majoritarian outlook not by chance or coincidence but by deliberate choices and preferences made by Hindutva elites. While much of Modi's attributes parallel those of strongmen in politics elsewhere in the world, the rise of the Hindu Right marks a historically complex ideological evolution for India. Like most populist leaders, Modi is a gifted communicator and he plays upon nationalistic sensitivities. As a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) and

having served as a full-time pracharak, he remains a steadfast champion of the Hindutva ideology, though with considerable sophistication. As I have argued in my book *Rise of Saffron Power* (Routledge 2018), Modi happens to be the first Hindu Right leader who has understood that Hindutva can be a backdoor agenda, and hence his slogan *Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas*. It is now apparent even to his loyalists that the slogan is a key element in anchoring the Hindutva agenda.

The editors identify four factors to explain the 2014 electoral success: anti-incumbency against the Manmohan Singh-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) regime (2009-14); voter alienation from the corruption-tainted UPA II regime; the perception that the UPA regime was directionless; and Rahul Gandhi's failure to measure up as an alternative to Modi. The BJP, they conclude, won by default in 2014. Voters also opted for Modi because he presented himself as a "development man", *vikas purush*. The volume has a few innovative chapters that would appear unconventional in an academic publication. For instance, it has a chapter titled "Rohith Vemula's Revolutionary Suicide" by Abdul R. Jan Mahmmed and another titled "Kashmiris in the Hindu Rashtra" by Mridu Rai.

Christophe Jaffrelot has contributed a theoretically sophisticated chapter in which he argues that India is fast becoming a *de facto* "ethnic demo-

cracy". The notion of "ethnic democracy" was originally employed by Sammy Smooha. Jaffrelot explains that an ethnic democracy generally possesses two levels of citizenship, with the majority enjoying more rights than the minority, both *de jure* and *de facto*. Jews in Israel have more rights because the Jewish state officially recognises their rights as opposed to those of non-Jewish Israelis.

Jaffrelot argues that given the fact that the 1950 Constitution continues to be part of India's political life, the *de jure* aspect of ethnic democracy is absent but the *de facto* part is omnipresent owing to radically declining representations of religious minorities (Muslims in this case) in State Assemblies and the role that vigilante militias play with the patronage of the law enforcement agencies. The chapter shares data on various types of underrepresentation of Muslims; shows how vigilante groups are acting as state actors, and how even the RSS, a so-called cultural organisation, works more as a vigilante group.

In a conclave in September in 2018, RSS sarsangchalak Mohan Bhagwat did share his concern about these vigilante groups. He noted that Muslims had a place in Hindutva but did not specify what the community's place was in society. Jaffrelot's narrative indicates a clear move towards the downgrading of the rights of Muslims in India under the BJP's rule.

The Hindutva experiment has been going for a very long time in Uttar

Pradesh. Any political party or political leader who aspires to rule India, it is said, has to win Uttar Pradesh. Even Modi is aware of this, and this is why he shifted his electoral base from Gujarat to Varanasi. Ayodhya, perceived as the birthplace of Ram, is also located in this State. Angana Chatterji has examined the process of the making of a Hindu nation by investigating the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riot. Sixty-three people died and 93 were injured in the violence. Women were gang-raped, and close to 50,000 people were displaced. Her paper, written before results of the 2019 parliamentary election were known, offers interesting insights into how the Hindu Right operates. She has expressed concerns regarding the possibility of a Hindu nation.

TECTONIC SHIFT

James Manor examines the sustainability of the Hindutva project. Between 2014 and 2019, Modi's achievements have been rather limited and even disappointing. Yet, Modi returned to power with an even greater mandate than the one in 2014, which raises doubts about Manor's reasoning. He is perhaps hesitant to recognise that a tectonic shift has taken place in India's electoral landscape, creating new patterns and invalidating safe formulations about anti-incumbency. Political scientists should jettison the old approach to make sense of the new patterns and examine the psychology of voting.

Any ideological movement has a special relation-

ship with interpretations of history. The Hindu Right is keen to pursue a particular interpretation of history in order to undercut narratives that legitimise a secular or pluralistic polity. The strategy of rewriting history is a prerequisite because the Hindu Right believes that its ideological agenda can take an enduring shape only in the context of an interpretation of history that presents Hindus as victims and Muslims as aggressors.

According to the noted historian Tanika Sarkar: "RSS history is driven by political needs, popular beliefs, and myths and construction of memory work" (page 172). The role of a massive right-wing cadre to teach history, more as propaganda, has contributed to the erosion of the influence of India's mainstream Left or secular historiography. This seems to be the natural development in an ideological power struggle. Tanika Sarkar recognises that secular histories, though written by the best minds, are written in isolation from local sociocultural processes. She makes an important point about Hindutva votaries' engagement with Ambedkar, arguing that Hindutva cannot make a serious critical engagement with caste. What she does not take note of is that the Hindu Right's engagement with Ambedkar is driven with a desire to sardonise Ambedkar. The efforts in this direction are already seen in various educational programs and institutions in regions under the BJP's rule.

Thomas Blom Han-

sen's insightful essay draws attention to the shrinking space for intellectual freedom and threats to civil liberties and points out that the Modi government has been able to accomplish its majoritarian/authoritarian agenda without enacting new laws. Instead, it has simply used the existing laws that were promulgated by the Congress regimes, and many of these laws have colonial roots. He seems to argue that the so-called deepening of India's democracy has perpetuated the legitimate power of the majority without any the percolation of liberal democratic values. Scholars of Dalit politics who have been celebrating the deepening of democracy with Dalit empowerment have now realised that what is unfolding is the deepening of Hindutva.

The volume has 21 essays covering a wide range of themes. But the complexity of Indian politics is such that even these 21 essays appear inadequate to cover all the dimensions of Hindutva politics. Nandini Sunder has an interesting chapter on how the Hindu Right responds to Adivasis. "Immoral Times" by Ian M. Cook presents a fascinating portrait of the activities of the Hindu Jagarana Vedike, particularly of an assault it organised on July 28, 2012, in Mangaluru. Ratna Kapur explores the difficult puzzle of the Hindu nation and rule of law. □ Shaikh Mujibur Rehman teaches at Jamia Millia Central University, New Delhi. He recently edited the book *Rise of Saffron Power* (Routledge, 2018).

Interweaving Violence and Non-violence

ANIRUDH DESHPANDE

We live in a hopeless violent time and crave non-violence. We have tried to understand human violence since the time familial and social violence began, but our understanding of violence has failed to produce a non-violent world. In the process of understanding the binary of violence and non-violence, we often confuse non-violence with peace. Philosophically speaking, non-violence is a necessary condition of peace, but, is it a sufficient condition as well? The modern world has produced Adolf Hitler and M K Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Idi Amin, the Ku Klux Klan and Martin Luther King simultaneously. Systems produce different men, and then, men produce different systems. Sudhir Chandra's admirable attempt to refresh and improve our study of violence and non-violence must be read in this context. Is non-violence enough or even desirable to create a new world based on peace? Is non-violence always possible? These are the ontological questions of our being today because violence is both individual and systemic. Unless it is addressed at the level of individuals and structures both, there is little point in researching it. Further, notice is to be taken of the fact that individual and communitarian violence are intertwined with social formations which produce them. In this sense all violence is ultimately structural violence.

The objective of this timely volume of collected essays, written by scholars in pursuit of diverse perspectives on the subject of violence and non-violence, is to arrive at a philosophical understanding of violence. After all, as the editor of this volume would have us believe, upon our understanding of violence in time and space depends our chances of rescuing humanity from the curse of violence. Violence began when humanity divorced

BOOK REVIEWS

Violence and Non-Violence across Time: History, Religion and Culture edited by Sudhir Chandra, South Asia Edition, New York: Routledge, 2018; pp 314, ₹1,095 (hardbound).

itself from nature. This divorce in "human history has been a force for good as well as evil" (p x). Civilisation would have been impossible if humans had remained enslaved to nature. But civilisation, as Marx held, also produced social inequality and, thereby, "structural" violence.

This book is a result of two workshops organised at the Nantes Institute for Advanced Study Foundation—in 2013 and 2014—to study why and how "in the evolution of human civilisation non-violence and violence have often so operated as to render their separation difficult" (p x). The rich essays in this volume are guided by the "imperceptibly operating interpenetration of violence and non-violence in human nature and institutions" (p xi). The overall viewpoint of the volume is Gandhian and treats Gandhi primarily as a philosopher of non-violence, leaving out his politics with which the scholars of structural violence may disagree. The offering is interdisciplinary with the motley group of contributors comprising 10 distinguished professors, one former teacher of English, one senior researcher and one Vedic scholar. The book is a sum of 13 contributions, some of which are difficult to read, and therefore, not directed at the plebian victims of quotidian contemporary violence. Further, the price of this South Asia edition will keep it away from many university students in South Asia. Hopefully a cheaper paperback will be made available in the Indian market soon.

The topics of the essays are diverse but thematically linked. The introduction

by Chandra speaks of violence and non-violence across time as a puzzle. Chapter 2 looks at the "negation of violence in the Vedic sacrifice." Chapter 3 raises the important question whether violence is "intrinsic to religious confrontation. Chapter 4 addresses the issue of violence and non-violence in Islam. Chapter 5 is an interesting piece on Japanese Buddhism and violence, based on a reading of the medieval Japanese "war chronicle," *The Tales of Heike*. This is followed by another intriguing essay on the "symbolic use" of elephants in European cultures in the context of military strength and non-violence. Chapter 7 looks at the violence in the philosophy of Hendri de Saint-Simon. Chapter 8 offers a "meditation" on non-violence, identity and sympathy. Chapter 9 provides some "unfashionable observations on non-violence." Chapter 10 looks at the "conditionalities of Dalits and slums" and comes to the Gandhian conclusion that to "change their situation, the Dalits need acceptance by the non-Dalits" (p 200). The chapter is based on a sociological survey of the 2 square kilometre-large Dharavi in Mumbai which, despite being densely populated, is largely non-violent. Chapter 11, one of the best in the volume, is worthy of special notice because it focuses on Palestine.

In Palestine the Gandhian techniques, tried by the colonised, failed against the Zionists in 1936 and then in the immediate context of the *Nakba* (catastrophe). Chapter 12 looks at medical ethics and violence against participants in clinical trials in India—a topic usually overlooked by Indian media and medical circles. It raises an important question: whether "war" against disease can be waged without the violence suffered by trial participants who often become unknowing victims of modern medicine. The last chapter counterposes violence as a "law of life" to non-violence as a law of "our Being" and upholds the life of Gandhi as "an invaluable testimony" (p 299).

In this scheme, where the negation of the ego becomes possible by an individual resort to truth, the success of morally persuading the other to eliminate the duality of the self and other is crucial.

The possibility of the other not conceding to satyagraha remains under-explored in the idealist Gandhian understanding of the world. Just hypothetically, place Gandhi in Nazi Germany or militaristic Japan in the 1930s to understand the point; Mussolini had called Gandhi a saint but it is doubtful whether he would have tolerated this saint in his own backyard.

Solutions to Violence

The editor is aware of the problems in assuming that non-violence is easily possible in this world. Yet, we must have “faith in non-violence even as we believe it to be empirically an impossible possibility” (p 1). One way of keeping this faith alive is to seek wisdom in the parables and syncretic traditions of civilisations. This is the way shown by the Sufi and Bhakti traditions which are under mortal threat these days. Since violence is seen to be bred by feelings of attachment, envy and revenge, it is best to understand its futility with reference to, say, Buddhist perspectives present in the Jataka tales. One Jataka tale is narrated by the editor in Chapter 1, with reference to the work of the famous Sri Lankan scholar Gananath Obeyesekere, to underline the virtue of forgiveness as a possible solution to the cycle of revenge and counter-revenge. The bigger question is whether humanity will learn from its past. For Gandhi, who referred to the *Mahabharata* and swore by the *Bhagavad Gita*, the issue was one of Dharma. His critics might say that for him it was more an issue of *varnashrama dharma* and *sanatan dharma* than anything else; that he was, in essence, an advocate of a humanised status quo. The editor is aware of this and refers to the “violence without which the iniquity of the hereditary Indian caste system could not have been possible” (p 6). What solution to this violence was offered by the master? A change of heart. This, according to Ambedkar, is impossible to square with a belief in the *sanatan dharma*. Gandhi sought solace in a mythical, romantic, non-violent village because his vision of life was idealistic and not grounded in history. He could, and did, inspire a band of followers, but failed to transform a society that was based on caste violence and influenced by

religious prejudices. The magnanimity of the editor is visible in the recognition of this, for he has included a history of Palestine in the volume which asserts that in particular situations non-violence can be “complicit with evil” (p 11). This is anathema to a Gandhian.

Many assumptions presented in this volume are sound. For instance, Cristina Ciucu points out two important things. First, that *ahimsa* can only be based on a “high degree of purity” of thoughts and actions and a “satyagrahi’s position can only be uncompromising or else risks being converted into its opposite” (p 260). Second is the recognition, via Hannah Arendt, that the glorification of violence is “entirely absent from the Western tradition of political thought prior to the modern age” (p 261). We may or may not agree with Arendt’s denunciation of modernity but the point merits consideration. Once again, we arrive at the binary which has guided modernity and its technological arrogance: history is made by men and nature by god. From this we infer that much of the violence in modern times is a result of the misplaced human belief in eternal growth, now made impossible by the terminal contradiction between private profit and the environment. The solution may be found in “forgiveness and non-retaliation” with respect to your “enemy” and, in our view, nature or whatever little remains of it. Yet, unless the structural roots of violence are addressed, forgiveness might seem a platitude doled out by the powerful. The structures remain important to the question of non-violence and violence.

An Impossible Non-violence?

Post 1989, the structures which influence human existence are the same which have dogged humanity since 1,500 CE, capitalism and its corollaries imperialism and colonialism. The sum of these is neoliberalism, fashionably called globalisation to deceive the media-controlled masses. The perspectives offered by Arendt, George Orwell and Noam Chomsky are important to understand the violence of totalitarianism which, after the demise of the USSR and Maoist China, is present in the contemporary world as corporate-backed authoritarian populism. In the

essay on Palestinian society, Abaher El Sakka asserts an important point made by Georges Labica according to whom “contemporary colonial regimes render the realisation of non-violence impossible or nearly so” (p 205). This is largely true because non-violence requires a modicum of freedom and negotiating social space to operate; Gandhi could practice it because the British entertained a certain notion of civilisation about themselves. Even then they tolerated non-violent resistance only till a point. The modern ultranationalist state has no such illusion. In 1936 the Palestinians experimented with civil disobedience à la Gandhi but after the Nakba—the 1948 Palestinian exodus—this became impossible because Israel had arrived on the scene, ironically, comparable to a Nazi state. This brings up the point about the postcolonial states being, sometimes, more colonial than the originals. What alternative did this leave to the victims of Israel? So, “as long as the structural colonial Israeli violence exists, it will be countered by Palestinian resistance, be it classified violent or non-violent” (p 219). The coloniser sometimes does not leave any space for dissent. Thus Palestine “is in a colonial condition par excellence” and “must not be morally judged on the basis of the reigning international formulation of legitimacies which are totally controlled by the coloniser and the dominant powers of the world” (219).

Thus, the praxis of violence or non-violence is never outside the historical context. Further it is also historically wrong to assert that a “just” violent struggle will necessarily lead to violent outcomes. The examples of China (1919–49) and Vietnam (1942–75) prove this. The long Irish war against the English was both violent and non-violent, ultimately resulting in Irish independence. Finally, the limits of legitimate and illegitimate violence, both, must be analysed from the viewpoints of the oppressors and the oppressed to develop the potential of non-violence as an option of mass resistance.

Anirudh Deshpande (anirudh62@gmail.com) teaches at the Department of History, University of Delhi.

feminists found demeaning. The controversy over Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* brought some of these tensions to the fore. Elisabeth Armstrong (2016) has argued that a gradual awareness of racial power dynamics led non-Western feminists to cultivate South–South linkages in the decolonising era. Mukherjee shows that this tendency began much earlier. Indian feminists, in particular, attempted other than networks in the commonwealth, to cultivate Asian links. In Chapter 4, there is a detailed account of such efforts. Unfortunately, an Asian platform did not emerge. Mukherjee argues that the imperial framework enabled deeper networks, which mere geographical proximity could not replicate or substitute.

The issue of race is at present at the forefront of feminism today. Whether as transnational feminism or postcolonial feminism, theory and activism is grappling with the double of dilemma of

accelerated globalisation and deepening significance of global inequalities. It is a very good time to ponder the history of Indian feminism's international connections. Have we moved out of the long shadow of the history of intersections of race, class and gender, or of the ebbs and flows of nation, region and world communities? What can we learn from feminist solidarities and schisms of times past? This book by Mukherjee helps us understand both the value and the limitations of connections and networks in feminist politics. It is a must-read for historians and social scientists.

Samita Sen (samitasen@yahoo.co.uk) is Vere Harmsworth Professor in Imperial and Naval History at the University of Cambridge.

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Unravelling Cities and Urban Spaces

ANUP TRIPATHI

This book is a riveting collection of essays on urban spaces in modern India. It brings together insights on urban spaces from different disciplines and covers a range of cities and towns in the country. The introduction presents an extensive survey of literature on urban history in India and serves as a gold mine of bibliography in this field of study, besides succinctly summarising the papers included in the volume. The book is divided into four sections. The first section has five essays on the spaces in Indian cities that have been created by the processes and practices of urban planning. The second section has four essays on the people-generated spaces in four different cities of India. The third section contains four essays on the changing nature of urban spaces and how they are being reshaped. The final section consisting of three essays is about the representation of urban spaces.

Urban Spaces in Modern India edited by Narayani Gupta and Partho Datta, *Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2018; pp xii + 354, ₹600.*

Shaping the City

The first section considers various state initiatives and institutions providing what Jim Masselos (2007) calls "templates of urban patterning." Sukanta Chaudhury's essay, "Improbable Realities: Urban Spaces in India" points out that Indian notions of urban growth and urban culture are shaped by the urban models spawned by Western post-industrialism (p 21). They prove inadequate in tackling the overwhelming challenges of post-independence urban India. While analysing the Basic Development Plan (1966) of Kolkata, he questions the adequacy of importing models of city regeneration devised for Western cities. Shweta Wagh's essay "Resources, Livelihoods and Spatial Control: Urban Nature and Practices of Commoning in

the Neo-Liberal City," presents a historical account of environmental discourses and spatial control in Mumbai. The twin aims of conserving nature and restricting urban growth allowed for commoning practices to flourish. The resultant "public city" provided the possibility of subsistence to the city's working poor despite their exclusion from the formal economy. Post-liberalisation, the relationship of nature and commons is undergoing a drastic change in Mumbai as the land and nature are being increasingly commodified. In order to tackle these challenges, she suggests that urban social movements that safeguard the commoning practices may be crucial.

Hussain Indorewala's essay, "Housing and Dishousing in Mumbai: A Historical Outline of Slum Discourse and Policy," presents an interesting periodisation of public policy on housing in Mumbai beginning with the colonial period and identifying continuities and contrasts in the postcolonial period. The first phase called the Glasgow Phase between 1898 and 1933 is marked by improvement schemes and suburban expansion to decrease congestion and address the

housing crisis under the aegis of the Bombay City Improvement Trust (BCIT) modelled on the Glasgow Improvement Trust. The Paris Phase of the 1950s and 1960s is marked by slum clearance and provision of public housing. The 1970s and 1980s known as the New York Phase witnessed slum improvement and upgradation. The role of the government in the provision of low-income housing was reconceived from a direct provider to a "facilitator" and "enabler" (p 68). The Singapore Phase of the 1990s saw the coming of the "enabling markets" strategy which reconceived housing as an economic good in place of a public good (pp 71–72). Policies, institutions and regulations were accordingly reformed to enable efficient functioning of the housing markets. The 2000s are termed as the Shanghai Phase in which the "Mumbai Make-over" aspiration captured the imagination of business leaders, the political leadership and city managers. Thus, the slum policy in the post-independence period has allied itself to market-friendly initiatives despite recognising the necessity of low-cost housing.

The idea of master planning in Indian cities is critiqued by Snehanshu Mukherjee in his essay, "Taking the City Back from Planners to the People." With special reference to Delhi, he notes that the cities in India are planned for those with

money and there is no place for the poor to exist in a natural way (p 84). The planned post-independence city is mostly an extension of the colonial city. The first Master Plan for Delhi continued the plotted suburban development with segregated land-use zoning that soon became the urban development model across the country (pp 84–85). Lack of maintenance, proper design inputs and enforcement have made such type of planning moribund and redundant. He argues that we need to rethink Delhi not as a city but as a collection of towns. Such a federation of towns is easier to manage and facilitates problem-solving by giving inhabitants of these towns a say in the planning process. Thus, through such decentralisation and Gandhian alternative of development we need to "unplan" our cities. Pradipto Roy gives a fascinating account of history of modern medicine in Kolkata and its subsequent urbanisation in the 19th century in his essay, "Locating Hospitals In and Out of the City." He juxtaposes the history of town planning with the history of hospitals. He argues that setting up of hospitals like the Presidency General Hospital, the Calcutta Police Hospital, the Calcutta Medical College, the Campbell Hospital, etc, on the Western model set important precedents for colonial urban India. Further, hospitals are permeable

social spaces where hybrid urban spaces are defined and redefined around every corner and season (p 114). Thus, modern institutions like hospitals served as nodes of urbanisation and acculturation in colonial Kolkata.

When People Create Spaces

This section delves on people-generated urban spaces highlighting their agency as well as vulnerability. Appropriating urban spaces through livelihood strategies and identity politics positions claims on the Right to the City. However, as Edward Glaeser (2012) puts it "The city may win, but too often its citizens seem to lose." Dipti Bapat's essay "Emerging from the 'Rags'" investigates two community-based urban industries, namely the second-hand clothes trade practised by the Waghris (a nomadic community from Gujarat) and the waste-hair trade practised by the Waddars (a nomadic community from Maharashtra). She argues that their efforts stand muted in the urban planning processes and suffer from the continuation of stigmatising attitudes towards such de-notified communities (p 123). They are continuously striving to sustain their livelihoods in the face of official intolerance and an oppressive planning regime that renders them invisible. Bhushan Arekar grapples with the Foucauldian Heterotopia of

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the contingent spaces like Chaitya Bhoomi and Shivaji Nagar where Mumbai city encounters caste. In the essay, "Heterotopia: Dalits, Citizenship and Urban Spaces," he studies the resentment of elite residents to the annual congregation of Dalits on 6 December, the death anniversary of B R Ambedkar. He argues that such heterotopias display the cultural practice of unequal citizenship being played out in urban landscapes. Pradeep Nayak in his essay "Right to City in Neoliberal Times," examines the setting up of vending zones in some areas of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation. It was an attempt to legalise vending, despite the state machinery's neoliberal policies favouring middle classes and developers at the cost of the urban poor. Devesh Vijay's essay "Struggling for Space: Notes from a Slum on the Periphery of Delhi" is a "biography" of Aradhaknagar slum in Delhi. It presents the crisis points the slum went through over a period of five decades as well as its changing profile in this period. Limited prosperity in the settlement has facilitated social mobility for some of its residents. However, inequality continues to be deeply entrenched and is magnified through lack of domestic space and struggles for common space.

How City Spaces Get Reshaped

Reshaping urban spaces is the most interesting section of the book as it contains essays that investigate the role of religion, imagined past, surveillance and building designs in reshaping urban spaces and imagery. Malavika Kasturi's historical account of Gorakhnath Math illustrates the key institutional role played by it in remapping the spatial contours of Gorakhpur. The ascetic order became a pivotal social and political actor in the life of the city. Her essay, "Negotiating the Sacred in Twentieth Century Gorakhpur," discusses how, through the politics of *kabza* (illegal encroachment), the Gorakhnath Math expanded its investment portfolio to become an important stakeholder in urban planning in Gorakhpur. The math and the power of the mahant enmeshed in political Hinduism determined the evolution of Gorakhpur town in new ways because

of the close links of the math with the politics of real estate in the city. Garima Dhabai's essay "Of a Lost River and a Dirty Creek," investigates the politics around land and heritage in Jaipur city where a small creek buried under urban debris has been resurrected as the Dravyavati river. This symbolic river is to be reproduced through scientific and bureaucratic machinations. It is obvious that the nostalgia invoked by the city's rapid urbanisation has troubling implications. P Arun's essay, "Surveillance Space: Punitive or Preventive?" investigates the use of CCTV cameras and surveillance technology in Indian cities with special reference to Delhi. He contends that the surveillance gaze is more punitive than preventive, while it plays on the anxieties and needs of the people meandering through the spaces of democratic citizenship. Rohit Gulati highlights the importance of nodal spaces in the city in his photo essay, "Transforming Urban Spaces for Citizens." He stresses on the need to make spaces like airports, shopping arcades, coffee shops, plazas, etc, safe and habitable for citizens. In addition, he recognises the need to make such designs friendly for citizens with inputs not just from architects like him but also from engineers, writers, bureaucrats, historians, etc.

Representation of Spaces

This section delves on aesthetics and the city through the representation of urban spaces in Hindustani cinema, painting and the Delhi Urban Art Commission (DUAC). Saba Mahmood Bashir in her essay "Vignettes of the 'Urban' in Hindustani Cinema" explores the "city" in Hindi films from the 1950s to the present day. She focuses on the problem of housing, labour alienation, lack of intimate spaces and overall struggle for space in the city as reflected in the urban experience presented in the movies. Ella Dutta presents the representation of city in modern Indian paintings, installations and new media in her paper "Imaging the City in Modern and Contemporary Indian Art." Indian artists through most of the 20th century to the present-day have evoked the mystery, pain, angst, alienation of life in the city as well as the harsh,

unfriendly milieu and manic energy of the city. Swathi Shivanand's essay "Aesthetics in the Time of Development" investigates the practice of governance through DUAC, the institution that struggled to infuse a modicum of aesthetics in the built form of the Delhi city. She highlights the difficult space for aesthetics as a practice of reflection within a regime of development. Despite its best intention, DUAC could not enforce the aesthetic regulations because of the developmentalist agendas.

Conclusions

According to Richard Sennett, the idea of a "city" connotes two different things—a physical space, and a mentality compiled from perceptions, behaviours and beliefs (Sennett 2018). The essays in this book seem to criss-cross through these two meanings albeit in a fragmented way. Most of the essays in this book are based on rigorous empirical and historical work which make it a compelling volume for the students of urban history, architecture, public policy and urban studies. Although the book is about the urban spaces in modern India, a great variety of those are not captured by the essays in this edited volume. Despite having informative and well-researched essays on the nature and substance of urban spaces in modern India as well as their production and social reproduction, the reader wishes the book to have contained writings on insurgent city spaces, including homeless settlements, spaces of consumption, consisting also of recreational spaces, political spaces, religious festivals, gendered and queer spaces, transportation nodes, and streets, etc, which cut across themes covered in this book.

Anup Tripathi (anupdu@gmail.com) is a PhD scholar with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

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cholera killed them precisely because their poverty pushed them to labour in these dangerous alluvial flats, but also because these remote colonial outposts were neither served by telegraph nor train. Relief came slowly and was distributed unevenly. It did not help that imperial medical policies almost ignored the ones that suffered the worst.

Written with an eye to wider readership, Kingsbury's book holds lessons from the past for a climate-changed world. Economic inequality, greed, and market liberalism created the victims much before the cyclone and cholera claimed them. My minor squabble with this excellent book is to wonder whether it is possible to write disaster histories of the global South outside of a neo-Malthusian language? Kingsbury begins by documenting the importance of revisiting the cyclone of 1876, because the causes of the cyclone have far outlived the British rule. Among these causes, he

mentions overpopulation; a term which one may argue should not have outlived the mid-20th century neo-imperial developmental discourse of the West (p xv).

What does it mean for a particular population to be "over"? Over what? Can we genuinely rethink the lens through which we view disasters, as Kingsbury's meticulously researched and convincingly argued book asks its readers to do, if we continue to think of human lives in the global South in terms of population thresholds? In spite of this minor misgiving, this thoroughly engaging book should be required reading for historians of South Asia, environmental historians and scholars of disaster studies. Written with an acute sensitivity and historically rich, it is a story of the present as much as a story of the past.

Debjani Bhattacharyya (db893@drexel.edu) is associated with the Department of History, Drexel University, Pennsylvania, United States.

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Dynamics of Rural Class Relations

VENKATESH ATHREYA

Jonathan Pattenden's *Labour, State and Society in Rural India: A Class-relational Approach* is an important book, drawing on his long-term fieldwork in the South Indian state of Karnataka, on the nature of class relations in rural India and its implications for rural labour. The book consists of nine chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the focus of the work, which is to understand poverty in rural Karnataka through class analysis. It also goes into the conditions of working people and the extent of rural poverty in Karnataka and India, and provides a description of the fieldwork locations and the methods of field research employed by the author.

The author's theoretical framework, which he describes as "a class-relational approach", is set out in Chapter 2. As a part of this effort, the author also provides a critique of alternative non-class approaches to the study of poverty which inform policy discussions as well as the

Labour, State and Society in Rural India: A Class-relational Approach by Jonathan Pattenden, New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2017; South Asia Edition, pp xiv + 200, ₹850.

work of Max Weber, Pierre Bourdieu and Amartya Sen.

Chapter 3 takes up the theme of labour, state and civil society in rural India. It seeks to explore the literature on rural poverty and related issues in order to delineate "certain key trends and debates."

The next chapter, titled "Changing Dynamics of Exploitation in Rural South India", goes into the modes of exploitation of rural labour from the villages studied in detail by the author in 2013 and 2014, in different settings. It looks at migrant labour from villages in Raichur working in faraway Bengaluru mostly on construction sites. It also examines the conditions of labour in Dharwad district where the workers from study villages commute to work in nearby towns.

Chapter 5 explores the issue of class relations as mediated by state and society at the local level. It provides a healthy antidote to the more romantic views of local governments—elected local bodies—by demonstrating how local government institutions "have become an increasingly important basis of rural dominant class control over the labouring class" (p 89).

This analysis is followed up in the next chapter by a study of the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in the study villages. It brings out the contested nature of the MGNREGS implementation, with the dominant classes adopting different strategies and tactics in different local contexts to try to ensure that MGNREGS does not empower the rural labourers to the detriment of the dominant classes.

Chapter 7 takes up the theme of how under a neo-liberal policy regime civil society also becomes "neoliberalised." It demonstrates that both forms of civil society organisations (CSOs)—non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs)—help "maintain the status quo or exacerbate inequality, and are linked to processes

of accumulation” (p 150). Chapter 8 provides a case study of Jagruti Mahila Sangathan (JMS), an organisation of Scheduled Caste (sc) female agricultural labourers in the district of Raichur. Unlike with earlier chapters which were rightly sceptical of the potential of csos to counter the modes of domination and exploitation to which rural labour is subjected, the author offers a more positive assessment of this particular organisation, arguing that the type of collective action engaged in by JMS is quite distinct from those of the neo-liberal csos discussed in the preceding chapter of the book.

The final chapter provides a summary overview of the main arguments of the book. It argues that “labour in rural India remains relatively weak, fragmented in a variety of ways, and largely restricted to small-scale forms of collective action focused on the state” (p 165). At the same time, it tries to strike an optimistic note on the challenges facing the rural labour by suggesting that class-based collective action by small-scale organisations can be upscaled and linked to broader fronts of working people, and if this happened, “degrees of material deprivation which remains high across

much of India would be less severe than they are today” (p 165).

Nature of Employment

The fieldwork on which the book is based was done over a much longer period, from 2002 when it began in a village in Dharwad district. The initial research expanded over the period 2002–14 to 39 villages in three districts: Dharwad (23), Raichur (15) and Mandya (1). The set of villages in Dharwad and in Raichur differ significantly from each other. The nature of employment also differs significantly. The labourers from Raichur district, in the absence of urban centres within the district not far from their villages that could provide jobs, migrate to Bengaluru to work in construction, whereas the labourers from Dharwad villages commute to work in nearby urban centres for non-agricultural employment.

Pattenden’s book is of considerable value, both for the body of rich empirical material that has been collected and analysed skilfully, and for the attempt to present a coherent narrative using the framework of class relations which brings out the ways in which the “dominant class”—defined by Pattenden as

being “surplus producers” whose land is cultivated by hired labour and who are more likely to diversify accumulation strategies out of agriculture (Table 2.1, p 35)—pursues the processes of accumulation of capital by domination and exploitation of “classes of labour” defined essentially as “net sellers of labour.” Much of the description in the book is vivid and provides a very realistic picture of processes on the ground. The book also shows that the state does not “retreat” in a neo-liberal regime, but provides robust support to capital, local and global. Its demonstration that the flow of government funds for rural development and welfare occurs through channels that the dominant class is able to control and benefit from, even in instances of rural spending on welfare schemes and entitlements of rural labouring classes is useful, even if unsurprising. The book’s critical assessment of local government institutions and its debunking of social policy as marketed by the World Bank and sundry liberal well-wishers are important.

The book’s attention to detail, in terms of spelling out and seeking to understand the distinct features of class relations as well as processes and mechanisms of

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accumulation in each of its sites of study, is commendable. For a book with so much detail, it does read well, though I must confess that it took me more than one reading before I could connect the disparate themes dealt with in each chapter.

Peasantry Made Invisible

Having summarised the book sketchily and stated its merits as I see it, I must now turn to some issues that the book's analytical framework raises as well as the understanding of the dynamics of rural class relations that the book is based on. First of all, it is not clear that the umbrella term "classes of labour" helps analyse a rural economy/society in which the peasantry continue to be present in large numbers, both absolutely and as a share of the rural working population. Peasant households—whose working members form a significant part of those working for wages in the villages studied—form a key social force in the countryside. Of course, the peasantry is differentiated, and the process of differentiation has continued under the neo-liberal regime though possibly at a slower pace than earlier at least during some sub-periods since 1991 in India (and Karnataka). But, the peasantry has not disappeared! The use of the term "classes of labour" tends to render the peasantry invisible. This has important implications for any strategy to change the balance of class forces.

A large majority of peasants fall in the official category of "small and marginal." They are actively engaged in commodity production. There is a whole set of issues facing this section that have historically been taken up by the peasant movements in India. It is of course also true that in the period of neo-liberal reforms, a substantial section of the peasant households with such holdings face the crisis of being unable to reproduce themselves through crop agriculture alone. Members of these households are also in many instances rural manual labourers working for wages in and outside of agriculture, in and outside the village. Nevertheless, this section of the agrarian population continues to cultivate and needs progressive mobilisation both against the state whose policies are impacting

negatively on farm viability and against industrial and agribusiness capital.

It is also the case that in at least some parts of India, land monopoly results in severe exploitation of tenants by big and powerful landlords. Land monopoly and the issue of comprehensive land reforms that put an end to the monopoly of landed property cannot be lost sight of. Apart from their economic significance, both the struggle for and achievement of such land reforms have important political and social implications in the Indian context, especially in relation to caste and gender. Only a strong alliance of the poor peasants and agricultural/rural manual labourers can help change the balance of class forces in the long run in favour of working people. Replacing the terms "peasantry" and "rural wage labour" with the term "classes of labour" does not advance either analysis or struggle for transformation.

Pattenden states,

The distinction between classes of labour and the dominant class is based primarily on the net buying and selling of labour power ...and whether households are surplus or deficit producers. (p 23)

However, when non-agricultural employment has become an important feature of the countryside, and when buying and selling of labour power cuts substantially across classes, and the rural-urban economic interactions have widened and deepened, the criteria become rather more problematic. The author defines the "dominant class" thus:

The term "dominant class" refers to net buyers of labour who tend to produce a surplus, and includes (i) those who produce exclusively through hired labour; and (ii) those who produce predominantly with hired labour but also work on the land themselves. (pp 23-25)

He adds that the term "dominant class" is a proxy for the capitalist class. In an increasingly complex rural economy, whose interactions with the urban economy have increased significantly, and in a setting where non-agricultural activities have become important in rural areas, these are inadequate and problematic.

It is a fact, as shown by the studies carried out by the Foundation for Agrarian Studies (FAS) (<https://www.agrarianstudies.org/>), that the most rapidly growing

section of the rural population in the many villages that have been studied is the category of manual labour households whose income comes primarily from manual labour performed for wages. The term "classes of labour" has an obvious appeal in such a context, and provides a strong temptation to subsume the poor and middle peasantry and other petty producers under this label. In the view of the present reviewer, however, such subsuming is not useful and is in fact counterproductive to a careful and differentiated analysis of rural classes for arriving at a strategy for a progressive transformation of rural class relations.

What the studies by FAS also show is that while there is an ongoing process of proletarianisation among peasant (and other petty producer) households swelling the numbers of rural wage labourers, most peasant households continue to derive some, often significant portion of their incomes from self employment in agriculture and animal husbandry. Likewise, studies carried out by a team (of which the reviewer was a member) also indicate that the new "dominant class" in the countryside is best identified not solely in terms of net hiring of labour power, but in terms of interconnected modes of dominance aiding surplus appropriation. Land, while no longer the sole facilitator of such dominance, continues to be important as a marker of dominance. Ownership and control of multiple "enterprises," straddling agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, education, healthcare, entertainment, services, including leasing out of farm machinery, de facto control/substantial influence over local bodies and cooperative societies, strong influence in the bureaucracy, etc, define dominance.

The observations in the preceding paragraphs notwithstanding, Pattenden's book is an excellent addition to the literature on the political economy of rural transformation in India. One looks forward to his further work in this field.

Venkatesh Athreya (venkatesh.athreya@gmail.com), an economist, has worked and published on the political economy of agrarian and rural transformation in India for over four decades.

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A New Note to the Polyphony

PURNACHANDRA NAIK

Coming Out as Dalit: A Memoir by the New York-based journalist Yashica Dutt is in many ways an informative, insightful, damning and somewhat cathartic compendium of personal/political awakening by a “nouveau Dalit” who was obsessively “schooled” since childhood in many detours to duck her “ex-untouchable” identity. After living what she calls a “lie”—“pretending to be from a caste that’s not Dalit” (p xi) for a long time, she finally “came out,” declaring (and thereby asserting) herself to be a Dalit in the aftermath of the Rohith Vemula incident in January 2016.

Dalit memoir writing as a potent and preponderant genre of self-expression can be broadly affixed (but by no means fixated) to such leitmotifs as pressing penury and hunger, everyday engagement with dirt, caste/gender oppression, raw discrimination and humiliation, unflagging struggle for education, the seminal legacy of social revolutionaries and intellectuals (for example, Savitribai Phule, Jotirao Phule, B R Ambedkar), a certain attainment of material decency, contestations contra the structures of inequality and oppression (for example, caste, gender) and the continuous collective struggle towards achieving unbranded human personality or liberation. To this polyphony of voices, Dutt’s memoir adds a somewhat different note in the sense that it is not a raw and ragged Dalit life-writing that we have witnessed so far. While the saga of pressing hunger and smacking caste discrimination are absent in her memoir, by no means is it devoid of the monster of caste that B R Ambedkar so presciently warned about.

Pivotal Moment of Epiphany

January 17, 2016 is a date that would be indelibly etched not only in the annals of Dalit memory but also in the evolving chapters of Dalit student activism and politics. The letter that Vemula left behind as a parting testimony, narrating who he was and what he aspired

Coming Out as Dalit: A Memoir by Yashica Dutt, New Delhi: Aleph Book Company, 2019; pp xx+212, ₹599.

to be, resonated with such a quantum of poignancy, epiphany and intensity hitherto unseen among the Dalits (particularly the college/university attending students) across region and linguistic variations. The power of his charged articulation sparked off a pivotal moment of self-reassessing consciousness, particularly among the upwardly mobile Dalits who had, with a degree of naivety, hoodwinked themselves to be beyond caste.

It is this sheer intensity of the letter which made Dutt halt for a moment and reassess the “stolen badges” (p xi), including her surname (Dutt) that she had been sporting to pass off not only as a non-Dalit but as a Brahmin. She started a Tumblr page named “Documents of Dalit Discrimination” where she sought to provide a space to the likes of her who had been faking or passing as “upper caste” to share their stories and experiences. She describes this momentous act of “coming out”:

I wrote DALIT in a bold size 24 Georgia font. Underneath I defined the word in English and Hindi as “one who has been oppressed.” In that moment, I stopped being ashamed. I experienced something I had never felt about my Dalitness: empathy. (p xvii)

Education: Convent to Columbia

The unflagging endeavour for education is a constant thread that runs through all the Dalit life-writings. Dutt, in the first chapter traces the hard-earned educational lineage on both sides of her parents. Her great-grandfather would learn to read and write by scrawling in the mud with a stick as he was denied access to a slate by the “higher caste” teachers. Her grandfathers on both sides struggled hard and entered into the Indian Civil Services. Her father became an excise inspector while her mother was a graduate in English literature, and had an MA in history. Dutt went to Sophia, “one of the top convent schools in Ajmer” (p 22) and grew up

speaking both Hindi and English at home. In Sophia’s boarding school she underwent a simultaneous schooling in “upper caste” culture—manners, behaviours, dressing habits and so on. She describes her ordeal at the boarding school as follows:

But a boarding school meant that I would need to pretend I was upper caste in nearly every breathing, waking and sleeping moment—an onerous effort for most adults and nearly impossible for a seven-year-old. (p 26)

In spite of the financial strain at home (her father was an inveterate alcoholic), her mother sought to buy the necessary accoutrements to keep up “upper caste” appearances. Dutt narrates, there was, however, one thing that constantly threatened to give away her “wheatish/tan than fair” skin colour. It is a long prevailing stereotype in Indian psyche that the deep shade of skin tone is attributed to Dalits. Dutt writes, “In modern India, caste and colour are deeply connected, with both being equated with notions of purity/cleanliness and impurity/pollution” (p 28) as she denounces the burgeoning skin-whitening industry and Bollywood’s complicity in degrading deep skin colour. Her mother made her apply what she calls *ubtans* (face packs and masks of spices, roots, fruits, pulses, vegetables, etc), as she “needed to be fair to be accepted, and not ‘Dalit-looking’” (p 30). All these attempts at looking fair (and hence “upper caste”) were a source of constant anxiety for Dutt. She was taunted, humiliated and suffered self-disgust in the hostel. After two years at Sophia, she had to move to a boarding school in Mussoorie. Things were never smooth in Mussoorie either as her internalised sense of inferiority always weighed on her psyche and self-worth. Despite achieving a high rank in school the self-doubt would persist. She writes in self-deprecating tone:

To my mind, if someone *like me* could score so well, then this school couldn’t be all that great. For years after that, this sentiment persisted—no institution that accepted me could be all that good. I was never good enough for anything, and once I became good enough, it stopped being good enough for me. (p 36; italics in original)

Writing in hindsight, she quotes the journalist-writer Ta-Nehisi Coates to argue

as to how Dalit children (like black children in the United States [us]) have to work twice as hard to overcome the systemic casteism. She went on to join one of the most sought after colleges in the country—St Stephen's, which she describes as an "exclusive club" (p 61) in Delhi—amidst financial uncertainty (her father had lost his job and her mother had to work two jobs) while Dutt herself had to teach tuition, work in a 5:00 pm to 2:00 am call centre and ghostwrite articles to earn some money. Her "Stephen stamp" helped her to secure a well-paid job in the advertising agency FCB Ulka where she would write articles on Indian fashion. It was not long before she realised that fashion was an elite preserve of the upper class/caste in India and decided to move into "real journalism." She applied for a master's programme in journalism at Columbia University, us but struggled in securing a scholarship. With much-needed help from senior colleagues and friends (what she calls "cultural cache" or the strong network of support), she finally moved to the us to pursue her degree. On the importance of social capital she convincingly argues:

Often the first in their family to attend college, most lower-caste people don't know how the system works and have no mentors to guide them. Without access to such well-connected networks, many lower-caste people never get the same chances as upper castes ... That's why even when someone is not actively discriminated against for their lower caste, generations of being denied these networks holds Dalits back from truly succeeding in their careers. (p 103)

The Myth of Merit

Being a Dalit who was obsessively trained to pass herself off as a Brahmin, there was no way she could have not encountered the ticklish question of merit. It is that holy insignia which self-evidently ensures mental and moral upper hand to its bearer against the quota-yielding Dalit usurper. And this is precisely the myth that Dutt so painstakingly seeks to deflate in her memoir. She provides a panoramic background of the anti-Mandal protests of the 1990s and the anti-reservation protest in 2006 spearheaded by students in premier institutions like All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Indian Institute of

Management and so on. Providing examples from her own experience (bearing a "Stephen stamp" facilitated in securing a job) she seeks to shake the smokescreen of merit by exposing the inherent systemic bias and prejudice against the historically disadvantaged Dalits. She quotes studies done by former University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Sukhdeo Thorat and Paul Attewell (on how, qualifications being similar, Dalits/Muslims were discriminated vis-à-vis "upper caste" Hindus in the private sector) to substantiate her arguments. "The private sector, which is largely controlled by the upper castes" (p 84) functioning on the supposed foundation of merit, she writes, apart from checking qualifications, also screens "family backgrounds," "cosmopolitan attitudes" ("code for an urban, middle-class, upper-caste upbringing") by further quoting academicians like Surinder S Jodhka and Katherine Newman. Dutt informs with a tinge of irony that when Dalits have their own businesses, they are reduced to and identified by their caste names like "Chamaron ki dukaan or Chudon ki factory."

Another important arena of inherent bias she shines light upon is the very profession she practices, namely the media. While the visual media disproportionately highlighted the anti-reservation protest and deliberately ignored the pro-reservation protest and police brutality on it, the print media selectively published articles and opinions on the "gross injustice" of reservation as the "forward-thinking" intellectuals pointed out the punishment meted out to anti-reservation people for the "follies of the past generations" (p 82). In sum, she reveals that it is the "invisible package of unearned assets" attached to the "upper caste" tag which "opens doors for jobs, bank loans, business opportunities and education that are often closed for Dalits" (p 90).

Movements and Dalit Women

The memoir charts the genesis and development of anti-caste movements against Brahminism in various parts of the subcontinent like the ones initiated by Phule, Periyar E V Ramasamy or for that matter, the Namasudra movement in Bengal, the Adi movement in Uttar

Pradesh and Punjab. Dutt elaborates particularly on Jotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule's "cultural revolution," their immense and catalysing contributions to education of girls/Dalits while pointing out the inadequacy and inherent contradictions in reformist efforts headed by "upper caste" men in the Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj movements. She then shifts to the seminal legacy of B R Ambedkar—his hard-won degrees from abroad, his movements to secure Dalit rights like the Mahad Satyagraha and Kalaram Temple Satyagraha at Nashik, his participation in Round Table Conferences, his encounters with M K Gandhi and his politics of "Harijan Sevak Sangh," the Poona Pact, the sine die postponement of his seminal speech *Annihilation of Caste*, his conversion to Buddhism and eventual "Mahaparinirvana" on 6 December 1956.

Dutt briefly directs her gaze towards the Marathi Dalit literary scene and the emergence of Dalit Panthers in 1970s à la Black Panthers in the us. The selective appropriation of Ambedkar by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)—Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is juxtaposed with the saga leading to Vemula's suicide and the continuous dissemination of Ambedkar's legacy in university spaces by various Ambedkarite student organisations. One of the recurring issues throughout the memoir is the institutional harassment and discriminations meted out to Dalit students. By citing the cases of Senthil Kumar, Madari Venkatesh, Delta Meghwal, Jisha, Balmukund Bharti she points out how the institutions of learning have turned into graveyards of Dalit students with far-reaching debilitating consequences for their families.

The memoir, however, counterbalances the saga of atrocities (for example, Khairlanji, Una) and suicidal deaths with the

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Suffragettes in Saris

How Indian Women Won the Vote

SAMITA SEN

Sarojini Naidu famously disavowed feminism: “I do not like what you call feminism.” In February 1929, addressing a meeting of the National Women’s Party at Washington, she said that Indian women had too much to do fighting for both freedom and political equality to have time for feminism. To her, feminism smacked of an inferiority complex. Why should women want to be like men? (p 147) She was not alone in this. In the first half of the 20th century, as Indian women struggled to balance nationalist politics with their social and political demands, lines of alliances became crossed and complex. Mithan Tata reported that Madame Cama, an Indian nationalist, who had unfolded the Indian tricolour at the International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart (1907) and published the journal, *Bande Mataram*, from 1909 in Paris, shook her head at them for meeting the Southborough Committee demanding votes for Indian women. The best way to achieve votes for women was to fight for freedom, she said. Indeed, for many women leaders in this period, the balance between the fight for freedom and the struggle for political rights, including that of the vote, was a delicate one, rendered enormously complex by the context of imperialism.

Sumita Mukherjee’s new book on Indian suffragettes delves into these complexities, expanding the canvas to explore national, regional and international dimensions of the movement. The book is a pioneering effort, since there has been no major study of the suffragette movement in colonial India. It is one of the peculiarities of the historical scholarship on gender in South Asia that subjects and themes that have attracted a great deal of attention elsewhere in the world have had relatively little attraction for researchers here. There was, as elsewhere, a women’s suffrage movement in

BOOK REVIEWS

Indian Suffragettes: Female Identities and Transnational Networks by Sumita Mukherjee, Oxford University Press India, 2018; pp 312, ₹699 (hardcover).

India; many historians of the period have noted its existence in passing. There have been only a few attempts, however, to focus research on this aspect of women’s political engagement. This is perhaps in part because of the positional complexity of the struggle for the vote within a context of imperial subjection, as Mrinalini Sinha (1999) pointed out. The only discussion of the subject at some length has been by Barbara Southard (1995), but she told us the story of women’s suffrage only in Bengal. These movements have been dismissed as elite, restricted, and not serious political mobilisation; it is quite common for even scholars to argue that Indian women got the vote by the generosity of nationalist male leadership. Moreover, since women did not have to fight for it, they did not value it. In recent years, feminist historians have suggested that franchise was included in the fight for freedom. The adoption of universal adult suffrage was not in the gift of the male leadership, it was the term on which all sections of the population rallied to the Congress. Even such arguments preclude consideration of the long struggle for the vote waged by a section of women leaders.

Neglect of Political Women

Why has a mainstream political issue of such great significance for Indian democracy been of so little interest? More than 30 years ago, Tanika Sarkar (1984) lamented the neglect of “political women” in the literature on nationalism in India, suggesting that in the case of women, politicisation and general emancipation

were treated as synonymous. Indeed, the tag “the personal is political” appears to have had a paradoxical consequence; it has marginalised the question of women’s participation in mainstream politics. The complex relationship between the “social” and the “political” in constructions of gender may have resulted in little attention being given to the central political issue of early feminism—the struggle for the vote.

Mukherjee points out that writing suffragette history is not only about women and the vote but also about the fundamentals of political processes. Indeed, in colonial India, the suffrage question arose not only in the context of difference by sex, but also divisions of caste and community. It was at the centre of political negotiations between M K Gandhi and B R Ambedkar and between the Congress and the Muslim League. The question of women’s vote was closely tied to the devolving notion of political rights along multiple axes of identity. Yet, somehow these issues have fallen through the cracks of social reform and nationalist ideology.

The issue of women’s franchise in India raised its head during the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919. Despite some preliminary lobbying, the Southborough Report (April 1919) rejected any possibility of women’s enfranchisement. Rather, “cultural” explanations, such as purdah, segregation and (lack of) education, were offered as reasons for not allowing women to vote and became a standard trope in discussions about suffrage for years to come. Thus, gendering of suffrage came early in the history of India’s democracy. The first women’s organisation, the Women’s Indian Association (WIA, 1917), had been established only a bare two years earlier. In the initial years, WIA and some of its leading members played a crucial role in lobbying for female franchise. In January 1927, the All-India Women’s Conference (AIWC) was established and it dropped the word “education” from its title the next year. The AIWC was to become the second-largest mass organisation in colonial India, closely allied to the Indian National

Congress, and including most major women leaders of the period as members. Some of these, such as Sarojini Naidu, Muthulakshmi Reddi, Avabai Mehta, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, became closely involved with the suffragette movement. Naidu gave leadership during the second Round Table Conference (RTC). It is not generally known, however, that many other women had longer association with the movement. Herabai Tata and her daughter, Meethibai (also Mithan) Tata, were perhaps the two earliest campaigners. At the first RTC (1930), British government invited two women, Radhabai Subbarayan and Begum Shahnawaz, who made quite an impact in London. The AIWC journal, *Roshni*, complained that the choice had been made with an eye to conformity. Shahnawaz was a member of AIWC, but neither of the two women were associated with nationalist politics.

At the first RTC all Indian delegates were divided by interest groups, and the representative character of women's leadership was not resolved. It was perhaps not surprising, given her connections and experience, that Subbarayan was included in the Indian Franchise Committee (IFC). When Rustomji Fari- doonji, vice president of AIWC, met the IFC on 23 March 1932, Ambedkar asked her how progressive she thought the majority of Indian women to be. She answered in the affirmative but the question of representation was a knotty one and to readers today the early challenge of intersectionality will not be lost (pp 218–19). The fifth chapter of the book discusses these issues in great detail, with new nuggets of information that are bound to fascinate practitioners of women's history.

Connections and Networks

The focus of the book, however, is "network" as signalled in the very naming of the chapters. Mukherjee places Indian suffragists at the confluence of many networks in which they actively participated. She argues that the suffragette movement had a critical international dimension and charge, not only in the obvious context of imperialism but also in the way the movement imagined the

women's constituency. One perhaps now well-known aspect of this is a few Indian women's association with the British suffragette movement. Princess Sophia Alexandrovna Duleep Singh, the daughter of Maharaja Duleep Singh in exile in Britain, became an active suffragette and her story has been told in a wonderful book by Anita Anand (2015). Sushama Sen took part in a Women's Social and Political Union demonstration in 1910. The novelty of a woman in a sari in a suffragette procession attracted great attention. In 1911, in the coronation suffrage procession in London there were three Indian women, Lolita Roy, Leilavati Mukherjee (daughter) and Bhagwati Bola Nauth. According to Crawford (2018), Bhagwati was 29 years old at that time and married for 14 years.

Apart from these early, little-known suffragette connections, there was a sustained effort at international networking by women activists. Curiously, even though the fight for the vote is typically a national one, addressed at a particular government, the movement has always had international ramifications. In that early period, women came together, each to wage their own tough battle. In Mukherjee's analyses, three issues about the internationalism of Indian suffragettes are particularly striking. First, there was a long and somewhat unequal relationship between Indian and British suffragettes. The white man's burden was extended to the white woman and British feminists saw women's franchise in India as part of an imperial responsibility. Even in 1934, Eleanor Rathbone continued to lobby British government on behalf of Indian women. However, by the 1930s, most Indian women leaders were disillusioned with British authorities. They veered to the view that political emancipation could be achieved only with national independence and decided to place their trust in the male leadership of the Congress. There was a resolution in favour of adult franchise in the Karachi Congress (1931) and Gandhi made a promise to Indian women that they would get the vote upon independence. Roughly 5 million women voted in that first election (1936–37), overwhelmingly for the Congress.

The suffrage network, however, extended much beyond Britain. The United States suffragettes also played a crucial role. As a non-imperial white collaboration, the involvement of Carrie Chapman Catt and Jane Addams was particularly valued. In 1925, the National Council of Women in India (NCWI) was founded, affiliated to the International Council of Women. As part of an international network of women's organisations, NCWI and some of its members became part of perennial webs of feminist solidarities. In the interwar period, the League of Nations also offered opportunities of networking. Above all, the commonwealth offered scope for colonial conversations. Scholars have used the term colonial feminism in different ways, Mukherjee is able to give the term a very specific definition (pp 78–79). Women in different colonies of Britain, such as Australia, South Africa, Kenya, and the Caribbean, were able to discuss common issues and share concerns in the imperial metropolis as well as in the peripheries. Even though, in many of these locations, Indian women dealt with white women, they were able to make a distinction between feminists from the commonwealth and those from Britain. However, these interactions also highlighted some differences in contexts, such as the very different place of race, since the Indian population was perceived to be racially homogeneous. There was, however, mobilisation on the issue of indentured emigration. Thus, the suffragette story unfolded along intersections of race, gender and class.

Race in Feminism

The issue of race was a complicated one. There have been two views on the significance of race in international feminism. Some scholars, such as Fiona Paisley (2009), have shown how non-Western women achieved significant presence in international bodies. Equally, however, despite enormous help and support from Western feminists and the active participation of Indian women in international networks, there were underlying assumptions of superiority. Even within the movement, there were orientalist stereotypes, which Indian

feminists found demeaning. The controversy over Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* brought some of these tensions to the fore. Elisabeth Armstrong (2016) has argued that a gradual awareness of racial power dynamics led non-Western feminists to cultivate South-South linkages in the decolonising era. Mukherjee shows that this tendency began much earlier. Indian feminists, in particular, attempted other than networks in the commonwealth, to cultivate Asian links. In Chapter 4, there is a detailed account of such efforts. Unfortunately, an Asian platform did not emerge. Mukherjee argues that the imperial framework enabled deeper networks, which mere geographical proximity could not replicate or substitute.

The issue of race is at present at the forefront of feminism today. Whether as transnational feminism or postcolonial feminism, theory and activism is grappling with the double of dilemma of

accelerated globalisation and deepening significance of global inequalities. It is a very good time to ponder the history of Indian feminism's international connections. Have we moved out of the long shadow of the history of intersections of race, class and gender, or of the ebbs and flows of nation, region and world communities? What can we learn from feminist solidarities and schisms of times past? This book by Mukherjee helps us understand both the value and the limitations of connections and networks in feminist politics. It is a must-read for historians and social scientists.

Samita Sen (samitasen@yahoo.co.uk) is Vere Harnsworth Professor in Imperial and Naval History at the University of Cambridge.

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Unravelling Cities and Urban Spaces

ANUP TRIPATHI

This book is a riveting collection of essays on urban spaces in modern India. It brings together insights on urban spaces from different disciplines and covers a range of cities and towns in the country. The introduction presents an extensive survey of literature on urban history in India and serves as a gold mine of bibliography in this field of study, besides succinctly summarising the papers included in the volume. The book is divided into four sections. The first section has five essays on the spaces in Indian cities that have been created by the processes and practices of urban planning. The second section has four essays on the people-generated spaces in four different cities of India. The third section contains four essays on the changing nature of urban spaces and how they are being reshaped. The final section consisting of three essays is about the representation of urban spaces.

Urban Spaces in Modern India edited by Narayani Gupta and Partho Datta, *Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2018; pp xii + 354, ₹600.*

Shaping the City

The first section considers various state initiatives and institutions providing what Jim Masselos (2007) calls "templates of urban patterning." Sukanta Chaudhury's essay, "Improbable Realities: Urban Spaces in India" points out that Indian notions of urban growth and urban culture are shaped by the urban models spawned by Western post-industrialism (p 21). They prove inadequate in tackling the overwhelming challenges of post-independence urban India. While analysing the Basic Development Plan (1966) of Kolkata, he questions the adequacy of importing models of city regeneration devised for Western cities. Shweta Wagh's essay "Resources, Livelihoods and Spatial Control: Urban Nature and Practices of Commoning in

the Neo-Liberal City," presents a historical account of environmental discourses and spatial control in Mumbai. The twin aims of conserving nature and restricting urban growth allowed for commoning practices to flourish. The resultant "public city" provided the possibility of subsistence to the city's working poor despite their exclusion from the formal economy. Post-liberalisation, the relationship of nature and commons is undergoing a drastic change in Mumbai as the land and nature are being increasingly commodified. In order to tackle these challenges, she suggests that urban social movements that safeguard the commoning practices may be crucial.

Hussain Indorewala's essay, "Housing and Dishousing in Mumbai: A Historical Outline of Slum Discourse and Policy," presents an interesting periodisation of public policy on housing in Mumbai beginning with the colonial period and identifying continuities and contrasts in the postcolonial period. The first phase called the Glasgow Phase between 1898 and 1933 is marked by improvement schemes and suburban expansion to decrease congestion and address the