

**ISSN:2583-004X**  
**E-ISSN:2582-7154**

# **INDIAN STUDIES REVIEW**

**(A UGC-Care Listed and Peer-Reviewed Journal)**  
**Vol. 2 No. 2 (July-December 2021)**



**A JOURNAL OF CENTRE FOR STUDY OF  
POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE, DELHI**

## **INDIAN STUDIES REVIEW Journal of Centre for Study of Politics and Governance Delhi**

Volume 2 Number 2 July - December 2021

Print ISSN : 2583-004X

Online ISSN : 2582-7154

RNI Reg. No. DELENG/2020/79638

**Indian Studies Review** is a Multidisciplinary, UGC-listed Peer-reviewed, academic journal published twice a year (January and July) both online and in print from Delhi. It welcomes original research articles from authors doing research in social sciences and its sub-disciplines. Review articles and book reviews are also welcome.

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Indian Studies Review Journal of Centre for Study of Politics and Governance Delhi is printed and published by Sangit Kumar Ragi on behalf of Centre for Study of Politics and Governance Delhi and printed at Balaji Offset 1/11884, M-28, Uldhan Pur, Navin Shahdara, Delhi-110032 and published at KH-14/1/2, Gali No -3, Chaten Bihari Mandir Road, Kamal Vihar, Burari, Delhi - 110084.

Editor: Prof. Sangit Kumar Ragi, 310, Patrakar Parisar, Sec-5, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad-201012

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# INDIAN STUDIES REVIEW

Journal of Centre for Study of Politics and Governance

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# Contribution of Indian Diaspora in Singapore during India's Freedom Struggle

Atanu Mohapatra\* and Aparna Tripathi\*

## Abstract

Singapore is a multi-cultural state and Indians enjoy their cultural freedom and they have been integrated very well in Singaporean society. They are also very well connected with their roots and 'Indianness'. The native citizens of Singapore have learned to enjoy and admire the Indian culture, for example, Indian songs, folk dance and movies have become very famous everywhere. In Fact, the Indian community in Singapore represents the diversity of India. Singapore as a multi-cultural state accepts every religion and community. Indians have their own marriage rituals, their own caste patterns in Singapore. Ethnicity and Identity are reflected in the Indians in Singapore through their life and activities. There heterogeneity is described by the example of ethnicity. The different Indian communities like Tamils, Punjabis, Malyalis, Bengalis, Telugus and Gujaratis are associated with their community-based groups. These groups perpetuate their ethnic identities in the form of togetherness. Due to their ethnic identities in the Singaporean society, sometimes the Indians seem like an inherent part of the society and sometimes aliens. Therefore, this paper aims to study and understand the formation and integration process of socio-cultural values and beliefs of Indians in Singaporean society and through this analyze the challenges and prospects of Indian community in Singapore.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, Community, India, Singapore, Multi-cultural, State

## Introduction

Indian Freedom Movement is historically relevant and has also brought many consequences for India. It happened as a result of the colonial government's exploitative attitude. During the colonial period, European influence occurred in practically every element of Indian life. Indian people began agitating against the colonial authority as a result

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of these initiatives. Indian reformers and leaders travelled to foreign countries and witnessed citizen freedom in respective countries. They were surprised to see that the native citizens of these countries were enjoying liberty in every form of their lives. Therefore, they formed campaigns and organisations to free India so that Indians could experience the same level of liberty. Many leaders, such as Gandhi, began their political careers in a foreign country (South Africa) and dedicated their lives to ensuring India's independence. Indian leaders such as Shyam ji Krishna, Lala Har Dayal, and Bhikaji Cama, visited different countries to promote India's independence campaigns. They backed national movements by forming organisations such as the India Home Rule Society, India House Ghadar Party, and Indian National Army.

For nearly two centuries, India has been enslaved by a foreign power. Since the very first struggle of India's freedom struggle which was begun in 1857, also known as the Indian Mutiny. For the freedom of the motherland, a number of battles have been fought both inside and beyond India. Whether using aggressive or peaceful tactics, visible or hidden tactics, civil or military tactics, individual or group tactics, within or outside India, the mission has always been the same: to win our birthright of freedom. The mindset behind this was to bring home to Indians, in a kaleidoscope manner. The Indian Independence Movement, which was begun in East Asia by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The foundation of organisation named Azad Hind, the Indian National Army (INA), which served as the Government's weapon, and other subsidiary formations were used for the campaign's aforementioned components. On the dawn of freedom, a brief summary of Netaji's momentous effort to India's independence is the most tribute his followers and countrymen can pay him on the anniversary of his birth.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was unquestionably a foresighted and pragmatic leader. He expected World War II to erupt sooner or later as an inevitable result of the Versailles Treaty. He understood that until a military assault was initiated from outside India, our nation could not be liberated. During World War II, he also realised that another campaign could only be gained from Britishers adversaries, not from their allies.

With these fundamental beliefs, he made his way out of India, first to Germany, and then to Japan.

### **Beginning of Indian National Movement**

On July 4, 1943, Netaji arrived in Singapore. Rash Behari Bose, a veteran nationalist exiled in Japan, had already started the East Asian Indian Independence Movement. The outgoing leader passed the baton to a newcomer, Subhas Chandra Bose, better known as 'Netaji'. Within several days of his arrival, Bose had established himself as the link between Japan and the other captured countries of East Asia, and he had absorbed all the Indians who resided there. He emphasised to them the significance of grabbing the fantastic opportunity that had presented itself to Indians in East Asia at the time. His arguments were basic yet effective and as well as unchallengeable and highly persuasive. His dedication to our mission and sincerity in his intentions were evident. Everyone's ears were filled with the words "Netaji will not surrender our homeland to the Japanese." Netaji became the most popular figure in India, as well as in East Asia, as a result of his dynamic personality, daring conduct, sterling character, pleasant demeanour, and childish innocence.

Under Netaji's command, the INA was categorised into three sections. On October 21, 1943, he established the Interim Government of Azad Hind, which included a Council of Ministers and counselors. On October 24, 1943, as Head of the Provisional Government, he announced attack against British government in order to free forty crores of India's citizens. The National Flag (Tri-Colour) of the Congress was chosen as the flag of the Interim Government. In order to meet this objective a new national anthem was created for all Muslim brothers and sisters. "Chalo Delhi" was the battle slogan and "Jai Hind" the recognised salute. The expressions of elation seen during the outbreak of battle in front of a large public and military assembly in Singapore were incredible, spectacular and unforgettable. "Father of our nation, we need your blessing and direction at this vital juncture, when we have launched on this important step towards the attainment of freedom for our motherland," Netaji broadcast to Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian people shortly after the declaration of war. Netaji held high admiration

for all of our national leaders, especially Mahatma ji, whom he regarded as his friend, philosopher, and constant advisor.

Many new institutions were formed to aid in the conduct of the campaign. For instance, “Azad Hind Dal, Rani of Jhansi Regiment, Indian Independence Leagues, Balak Sena etc (Chandra et al, 1998).” Material resources were abundant, and crores of rupees came into the National Bank of Azad Hind's coffers. In reality, everyone willingly sacrificed their “Than,’ ‘Man,’ and ‘Dhan” for the sake of freedom. In many training sites, troops were recruited and trained simultaneously (Chandra et al, 1998).

### **Contribution of Indian Diaspora in Singapore during Pre-Independence Period**

‘Neta ji’ as Subhas Chandra Bose, a renowned Indian nationalist leader and two-time President of the Indian National Congress, led the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia from July 1943 to the Japanese surrender in August 1945. This period is remembered in history texts and popular memory as the pinnacle of Indian enthusiasm among Singaporean Indians. The notion of being on a path to rescue motherland from imperialism sparked a level of “Indianess” and patriotism among Indians that had never been witnessed before. So many Indians in Singapore were personally involved in the campaign to independent India from English control under Subhas leadership. Many young citizens joined the Indian National Army, and many of them were positioned on the Burma-India border. Finally, struggle of INA proved a military defeat, but it is considered as a glorious moment and is remembered as a heroic chapter in the annals of the Indian diaspora in Singapore (Cohen, 1963).

### **Voices of Subalterns**

The emergence of the INA, and particularly Subhas involvement in the formation of a revolutionary force, has been the focus of historical studies on the Indians in colonial times. While these are crucial aspects of the Indian narrative. The ‘voices’ of subalterns touched by these changes have received relatively little attention. Many people felt compelled to liberate India from British dominance. According to their

accounts, the conditions placed on them were harsh, and the pan-Indian identity encouraged was not always the result of a true shift in perception, but rather was enforced on them. Although, the study's central emphasis is about why so many Indian citizens entered the struggle at that time is a primary focus. The study also addresses the limitations of the movement, particularly after 1944 onwards, when word of the INA's military failure spread (Fay, 1995).

Indeed, the Japanese Occupation's most terrible period occurred over these two years. The economic situation gradually deteriorated. Indians, as well as many other ethnicities in Singapore, were plagued by lack of supply, hunger, and medical delivery delays, all of which contributed to a significant rise in mortality rates in the port city. At the same time, countless Indians being subjected to forced labour on Japanese projects including deadly 'Thai-Burma Death' Railway and many have never returned. Several Indians had motivated to transfer to new towns where conditions were challenging. As a result of relocation initiatives required to deal with resource scarcity in the metropolis. The Indian experience during this crisis left a strong mark on the diaspora's socio-political growth in the port city, with long-term ramifications (McCoy, 2013).

### **Unite for the Movement**

An ecstatic crowd greeted Subhas Chandra Bose (often referred to as 'Netaji') at the Kallang airport in Singapore on July 2, 1943. Two days later, delegations from the Indian Independence League (IIL), INA, and Japanese troops convened witnessed Rash Behari Bose's formal surrender of the Movement to Netaji at the Greater East Asia Theater. Neta ji gave one of the first incredible speeches in Singapore when he accepted the charge, declaring preparations to form a new constitution of Free India. Netaji worked incredibly hard in the aforementioned period to put in place the measures that would allow the Provisional Government to be formed. His oceanfront residence at 61 Meyer Road 2 in Singapore was regularly was surrounded by visitors including Japan and INA officials, IIL officials,

important Indian people, and numerous more who came solely for a darshan of the famous commander (Sharma, 2018).

Netaji initial mission was to bolster the spirit of INA force. On the 5th of July, he gave the legendary Dilli Chalo! (Onwards to Delhi!) address to INA forces at the Padang. According to eyewitness accounts, Netaji's appearance had an immediate impact on the thirteen thousand strong army. Lieutenant-Colonel Sahgal, who later has become INA's Deputy Commander and Army Secretary, noticed a change among the troops, "A large number of people went out of the INA with Mohan Singh. And morale was naturally low. When Subhas came, the whole thing changed. Subhas Chandra Bose was a known Indian national leader.... Everybody felt he would be [more] acceptable to the people of India than Mohan Singh.... The coming of Subhas Chandra Bose completely revolutionised the whole movement because people had great confidence in him" (Upadhyay, 2014).

### **Support by the Government and Indians**

Netaji's organisation was paraded once again the next day and this time in front of the Prime Minister of Japan. Tojo was alleged to have given instant consent for 'the foundation of the Interim administration of Free India' after being pleased by the show. The attendance of Japan's Prime Minister was a conclusive proof of the Japanese continuing stance for Netaji's leadership. It also highlighted Netaji's political sway in Japan, that had the effect of restricting Japan's meddling in the development of the Movement.

Re-enlistment of Indian POWs who did already quit the INA after 1942 was attempted. It was a challenge. Only two thousand extra people signed up. The fact that a large number of POWs had already been sent to Japanese territory outside of Singapore for indentured servitude. The Hikari Kikan, the Japanese diplomatic agency which had replaced the Iwakuro Kikan, rebuffed Subhas requests for the repatriation of individuals who had been deployed. Because of the restrictions of the

POW recruitment effort, the only way to develop a large INA force was to mobilise civilian volunteers.

Following Netaji takeover, a wave of optimism swept across civilian society. On July 9, 1943, more than sixty thousand Indians witnessed Netaji's maiden public lecture at the Padang. He stated that Indian soil would be successful only if Indian forces and resources in Southeast and East Asia were completely mobilised. He simply wanted all elements of Indian society to support the INA's efforts and develop a 300,000-strong army over time. Men and women of all ages were motivated to join the INA, which had taken precedence over the newly formed Rani of Jhansi Regiment. Junior Military Schools, the Balak Sena, and the Balika Sena training institutes established for the INA's objectives. Boys and girls under the age of eighteen were allowed to participate in military, drill, language, and ideological training in these organisations. Others may be able to work in IIL departments. Netaji emphasised the necessity of the Movement becoming economically self-sufficient, and he requested Indians in East and Southeast Asia contribute generously to this aim. The audience was highly inspired, according to eyewitness testimonies of the event on July 9, 1943 (Mani & Ramasamy, 2006).

## **Conclusion**

Hence, the exploitative nature of the British colonial authority, the Indian national movement arose in India. Because they desired additional economic gains, the British acquired Indian regions. Following the Battle of Plassey, the British gained control of the Indian bureaucracy. The British had a significant number of colonies spread over the globe. Not only was India a significant marketplace for British products, but it also had a large workforce. As a result, the British Indian administration deported numerous Indians as indentured servants to various countries. These overseas Indians had grown economically powerful through time, and they were able to exercise influence on local governments. When these abroad Indians met educated Indian leaders, they became supporters of the Indian national movement.

Throughout the campaign, Netaji maintained an autonomous mindset in every detail. He was a master of diplomatic and military strategy. All of the resources were indigenous to India, and the INA was trained using

Hindustani commands. The INA wore uniforms that we designed ourselves. The Japanese had no involvement in the movement at any level, including the front-line engagements, except for aviation transport. Of course, because the Japanese possessed sovereignty rights in the occupied countries, we must admit that Japanese liaison was required to bring all facilities under control.

The Interim Government of Azad Hind and the Superior leadership INA transferred their headquarters to Rangoon on January 6, 1944. The brave warriors of the INA entered into the Indian territory on February 4th. The INA had encircled Imphal by June and was pounding away at its outer fortifications. The INA was forced to retire into Burma later due to severe weather. The circumstances of the INA's final surrender to British forces in Malaya on September, 1945 and the INA's subsequent valiant engagements in Burma until the fall of Rangoon on May, 1945 are well documented. The historic military courts martial proceedings of the brave INA leaders and troops, the majority of whom are, regrettably, still imprisoned, re-enacted Netaji's military mission in the Red Fort of Delhi. The 'Unity of India' merits special notice among all the wonderful concepts put into practise throughout the movement's whole era. Religious, communal, and other such divisions were unknown in Netaji's INA, which was formed with the goal of serving as a fine example of future free India. The fact that such solidarity still exists between all members of the INA today, irrespective of their economic difficulties, indicates that it was not fleeting. Belief in the mission and willing to serve through voluntary total self-mobilization were pushed on and readily accepted, resulting in a long-term, realistic perspective. He was aware that the exiled World Nationalist leader had been handed up by all parties involved. To be a shining example to the world, leadership requires absolute courage and determination and absolute sacrifice in the ethos of Samurais, as well as organisational skill and administrative aptitude.

Everyone put in a lot of effort and sacrifice, and there were no regrets when it was all said and done. On August 14, 1945, Netaji, the unflappable leader, spoke to a large crowd in Singapore, saying that although millions of Indians in Asia were slain, the loss would be little comparable to the liberation of motherland and our people for several

years. Netaji then predicted that INA military operation in East Asian region would make an effect on the colonial empire and causing them to become politically aware. Netaji felt that India's ultimate power was the true strength of our East Asian movement. He realised that the military action in East Asia would have enormous propaganda value in our motherland. This reality was vividly demonstrated by the widespread enthusiasm displayed across India during the historic I.N.A. trials.

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# The Subnational Politics of Dispossession: How Nepotism Stymied Development and Sparked Resistance in Polepally, Andhra Pradesh

Raman Kumar Apsingikar\* & David Hundt\*

## Abstract

Economic dispossession is usually assumed to be a process that originates from global capital and flows down to the national level, but little is known about how subnational actors facilitate and benefit from this process. By developing a bottom-up perspective on dispossession, this article argues that the synergy between subnational political and economic elites resulted in the dispossession of farmers in the south Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. It illustrates that subnational elites had their own motives to establish a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Polepally, and that this episode of dispossession sparked a high degree of resistance.

**Keywords:** Dispossession; Capitalism; Resistance; Subnational Politics; India; Andhra Pradesh

## Introduction

According to David Harvey (2003), dispossession is required so that surplus capital can be profitably redeployed. When capital lies dormant or its circulation is constrained, it leads to crisis. Harvey argues that 'accumulation by dispossession' (ABD) is a strategy to overcome the barriers that capital faces to its further expansion. ABD, he argues, is imposed by global institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank by dint of their ability to lend to developing nations on a conditional basis (Harvey, 2003; 2004).

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There is ample evidence to suggest that dispossession of the people (particularly farmers) from their basic means of subsistence (primarily land) for capitalist production is taking place in developing societies such as India (Levien, 2011; 2012; Vasudevan, 2008). There is growing recognition, however, that dispossession is not solely or wholly a consequence or outcome of global capitalism (see e.g., Sud, 2014; Upadhyaya, 2020). The spatial and social variation of ABD therefore warrants careful examination (Banerjee–Guha, 2013). Harvey sees ABD as an economic process driven from above, but such an interpretation risks overlooking the more overtly political dimensions of the process, both in the global North (see e.g., Glassman, 2006) and the South too. In India, for instance, it has been found that ABD has exacerbated rural–urban conflicts when the state re/allocates the rights to resources such as water (Birkenholtz, 2016; Upadhyaya, 2017), and that dispossession has aggravated existing social tensions and inequalities (Agarwal & Levien, 2020; Jenkins et al, 2015; Sud, 2014; Vasudevan, 2008), caused by differences in class, caste, gender, ethnicity, and religion. The state has been complicit in triggering ‘land grabs’ in rural areas, in the interests of corporate capital, which has sparked resistance in the form of ‘land wars’ (Levien, 2011; 2018; see also Hall, 2013; Jenkins et al, 2015).

In keeping with such a ‘bottom-up’ view of ABD, this article contends that subnational politics influences the intensity of dispossession in India. It explores the political–economic dynamics associated with state–business transactions in Andhra Pradesh (AP), through a case study of the establishment of a pharmaceutical Special Economic Zone (SEZ) located in Polepally (hereafter, the Polepally SEZ). Farmers were dispossessed of their land to make way for this large-scale SEZ project, and subnational political and economic factors played a vital role in facilitating this instance of dispossession. The article suggests that the collusive state–business deals struck at the subnational level smoothed the path to dispossession for global capitalism.

This article proceeds as follows. It begins by reviewing the literature on ABD and its application to India. Harvey’s insights are valuable in understanding the process of dispossession, but we show that a greater focus on the subnational level of analysis helps to explain how and why ABD takes form. Second, we set out the empirical background to the

case, and the promulgation of the SEZ policy in India in the 1990s. Third, we focus on the land dispossession in the Polepally case during the period in which Yeduguri Sandinti Rajasekhara Reddy (popularly known as YSR) was Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. In addition, we detail the resistance to YSR's policy and the development deadlock that it entailed. We conclude with the implications of the study, and detail how democracy was subverted for personal political-economic gains by the YSR government.

### **A Bottom-Up Perspective on Dispossession in India**

Dispossession has long been a prominent feature of capitalist society. The commodification of labour, money and nature in a market society has disastrous implications for human society (Polanyi, 2001). The commodification of land, which is part of a market society, threatens the very existence of human life. Land has several use values, like growing food, building shelter and so on. Those affected with the market fundamentalism (including the commodification of land, as well as labour and money), Polanyi argued, would launch a countermovement to protect society from the pernicious effects of the market. Therefore, he expected that 'our age will be credited with having seen the end of the self-regulating market' (Polanyi, 2001[1944] p. 148). He did not foresee, however, the rise of neoliberalism in the 1970s (Harvey, 2005; Burawoy, 2013). Consequently, David Harvey's 'crises of capitalism' thesis has become a persuasive way of interpreting contemporary events. His concept of 'accumulation by dispossession' has been widely used to interpret the SEZ phenomenon (Ananthanarayanan, 2008; Gopalakrishnan, 2010; Holden, Nadeau, & Jacobson, 2011; Levien, 2011; Oza, 2010; Sampat, 2010; Sarkar & Chowdhury, 2009).

In formulating strategies to deal with neoliberal capitalism, developing states such as India act within a given social, cultural, political, and economic context. National and subnational governments broker forms of relations between capital and labour that it is exploitative, and which results in dispossession. Southeast Asian states, for instance, have adopted differential regulatory and administrative practices for different sections of populations (Ong, 2000). The creation of SEZs as

differential regulatory spaces is a means of segregating the population. These economic enclaves are a 'nation within a nation' (Ong, 2000), and a particularly exploitative mode of capitalism operates in these zones. Cross, meanwhile, argues that 'India's new economic zones are not closed or bounded systems. On the contrary the precariousness of work, the porosity of its boundary and the politics of citizenship inside the zone re-creates the character of working life outside' (Cross, 2010, p. 370). SEZs provide legitimacy to the conditions under which most economic activity takes place in India's informal sector: 'these spaces reproduce what are already *de facto* conditions of work for a majority of people' (Cross, 2010, p. 358).

A bottom-up perspective enables greater scrutiny of the SEZ model and the resistance that it sparks. It allows us to examine the role that subnational political leaders play in facilitating dispossession. Proponents of liberalisation in India advocated SEZs, but 'the displacement and disruption of livelihoods caused by SEZs and their grave implications are emerging even as the country witnesses steadfast resistance by peasants and state violence and repression or coercion' (Sampat, 2010, p. 166). The SEZ policy has 'generated... a sense of disenchantment about the state's approach to liberalization more generally – in particular, its lack of attention to the agricultural sector and its disregard of the rural poor' (Jenkins, 2011, p. 61).

Dispossession remains prevalent in India, which 'is arguably the global epicentre of land grab protests' (Levien, 2018, p. 1). Particularly since the liberalisation of the economy in the 1990s, the issues of resettlement and rehabilitation of the displaced persons, the project affected persons, and the environment and ecology issues, have led to massive resistance movements (Sampat, 2010; Shrivastava & Kothari, 2012). The 'forces of economic globalization are severely curtailing democratic institutions and values in many countries across the world', but 'anti SEZ movements across [India] illustrates that the country's citizens will not give up their democratic values without a fight' (Jones, 2008, p. 68).

This article accepts that the SEZ-type models lead to dispossession, as manifested in the loss of land and livelihood of several people and in the accumulation by elites, as in Polepally. However, it departs from Harvey's structural dimensions of capitalist exploitation as a focal point for dispossession. Subnational-level politics, we contend, play a vital role in facilitating dispossession. This includes the management of the resistance to the land-based dispossession by subnational political elites, who legitimise dispossession by enacting a limited degree of measures to promote development and welfare on the one hand, while enriching their corporate and political supporters on the other.

### **SEZs and Popular Resistance in Andhra Pradesh**

Subnational leaders in India, especially Chief Ministers (CMs), use a range of strategies to balance the competing claims of the market economy and political democracy (Suri, 2005). In Andhra Pradesh, Yeduguri Sandinti Rajasekhara Reddy (YSR), who served as CM between 2004 and 2009, embraced such strategies to balance welfare and development (Upadhyay, 2017). Until his death in a helicopter crash in September 2009, Reddy was a popular CM from the Congress Party, known for his government's adoption of pro-poor and pro-farmer measures at a time when market-friendly policies were in vogue. He was the first CM to complete a five-year term in office and to win a second term.

YSR became the leader of Andhra Pradesh when there was a significant degree of popular unrest, especially among the poor. The unrest was in part due to the business-friendly strategies adopted by YSR's predecessor, Chandrababu Naidu, of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), who ruled from 1995 to 2004. Opposition parties accused Naidu of being an agent of the World Bank. Naidu proposed the development of several SEZ-type industrial projects in rural areas. When addressing business leaders in New York in early 2002, Naidu proposed a 9,000-acre SEZ near the port city of Vizag (*Times of India*, 2002). A few months later, his government formalised its SEZ policy, and the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC) was given responsibility for developing SEZ projects. The rural distress and the apathy of the poor contributed to Naidu's defeat in the 2004 elections. YSR's Congress Party won with thumping majority on the back of his promise to alleviate the suffering of the poor and the rural populace. Once in

power, however, YSR continued with the pro-business reforms and the transfer of fertile farmland to SEZs.

The efforts and personal traits of YSR included electoral success at all levels, tackling dissent within the Party, consolidating the Party position through a stronghold over its cadres, and overcoming the opposition from all walks of life such as film stars with popular appeal (Chiranjeevi), shrewd politicians (Naidu and KCR), and social activists (such as Jaya Prakash Narayan of Lok Satta). His innovative welfare measures, his ability to raise funds, his mass appeal, his quickness in grasping and resolving issues of public concern, his ever-smiling face, loyalty towards friends and hostility towards his opponents made him a 'loyal, dependable and perhaps the most trustworthy lieutenant of the Congress president Sonia Gandhi' (Menon, 2009). Gandhi gave YSR 'carte blanche' (Narasimha Rao, 2008) to manage the government and the Party affairs in AP. Using this to his advantage, YSR became a regional satrap and vetoed on every governmental and party issue. His personal appeal and political acumen enabled him to take full control of State affairs.

### ***The SEZ Policy***

The AP government proposed a Green Industrial Park (GIP) in Polepally in 2001. The park 'aimed at promoting green business technologies by encouraging non-polluting companies to set up their bases' (*Hindu Business Line*, 2005). The APIIC processed the acquisition of 954.04 acres of land from 352 farming households (families) in 2002–03 for the purposes of setting up the GIP. Most of the farmers in this case were either small or marginal landholders owning less than 5 acres of land.

The farmers opposed the acquisition of their land, through a blockade of the national highway in 2003, and a demonstration in front of the State Legislative Assembly in 2004 (Asher, 2008; Prashanth Reddy, 2009). However, most of these protests were sporadic and not well organised. Popular resistance during the time of land acquisition was minimal because the government had assured the farmers that the GIP would employ people with agricultural and horticultural skills. They were lured by the guarantee of secure employment. Farmers were in a helpless situation as agricultural production was also in distressing

conditions (Rao & Suri, 2006). The YSR government, however, failed to attract green industrial units to the GIP. The pharmaceutical industry in Andhra Pradesh was also in a state of distress and several firms relocated to other parts of India. The government set up an exclusive pharma SEZ, in the belief that the best possible use for the GIP was as a pharmaceutical SEZ, as the land was already in its possession.

The APIIC submitted a proposal in September 2006 to the central government for a SEZ in Polepally. B.P. Acharya, the Managing Director of APIIC, stated that 'Aurobindo and Hetero pharma companies expressed their willingness to be the anchor clients in the proposed pharma formulations SEZ' (cited in *Hindu Business Line*, 2006). In October 2006, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry granted 'formal approval' to the proposed SEZ at Polepally. Aurobindo and Hetero each applied for 75 acres of land to set up operations in the Polepally SEZ. The APIIC gave in-principle approval, allotting 75 acres of land at the rate of 7 *lakh* Rupees per acre (about US\$980), or almost three times below the level (20 *lakhs*) that had previously been suggested for land inside the GIP (*Asian Age*, 2012).

The Polepally struggle intensified after the government announced in late 2006 that it would earmark 250 acres of land for a pharma SEZ within the GIP. The movement gained momentum when the construction was initiated to house pharma units in 2007. The announcement about the launch of a pharma SEZ created huge discontent among the displaced farmers and villagers in Polepally. The government never informed them that a SEZ would begin operating, let alone one involving the pharmaceutical industry and its high levels of pollutants. The popular anguish culminated in an organised movement against the government's decision to set up a SEZ.

### **Resistance to the SEZ**

The displaced farmers gained support from concerned citizens, activists, human right groups, political parties, and the media, and tried through various democratic means to force the government to reverse its decision to set up a SEZ. The first prominent people to raise the issue were Upendar Reddy, the Deputy *Sarpanch* (village head) of Polepally, Madhu Kagula, a political activist, and Sujatha Surepally, a women's and

Dalit rights activist. They organised a series of meetings, walkathons, rallies, and other events. At times, they were treated with brutality by the police. On several occasions, almost all opposition political parties took part in the protests against the SEZ. Human rights activists, NGOs, legal experts, and institutional committees expressed their solidarity with the anti-SEZ movement. They tried to address it through legal and institutional means.

Amid the ongoing protests in Polepally, the Indian government convened 'the Subcommittee of the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce' in 2007 to investigate 'the functioning of Special Economic Zones'. Members of the committees visited the displaced farmers in Polepally and observed events on the ground. The committee members spoke to the concerned stakeholders and in particular the displaced farmers over the loss of their primary means of subsistence. It assured them that the matter would be taken to the prime minister with recommendations to enhance compensation for the SEZ's victims in Polepally (Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce, 2007).

Telangana Vidyavantual Vedika (TVV, Telangana Educational Platform), under the leadership of Madhu Kagula, played a vital role in the early phases of the campaign. TVV convened meetings involving people from academia and human rights forums to discuss the displacement of farmers from the Polepally SEZ. A delegation from the TVV told the farmers that the government had become a 'land broker' as it allotted land to the big pharma companies at higher prices while paying less compensation to the farmers (*Andhra Jyothi*, 2007a). Similarly, members of the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee referred to the state as a real-estate broker during their visit to the farmers. The committee recommended that 'land for land' should be given in compensation to those displaced in Polepally (*Andhra Jyothi*, 2007a) as it found that the government failed to keep its promises in respect to employment guarantees, rehabilitation and resettlement. In a seminar entitled 'Abrogation of the SEZs' organised by the TVV, the human rights professor G. Haragopal opined that 'land is individuals own right, if one's land is taken through this (SEZ) law how s/he could live'. Further, 'governments should rethink and say goodbye to SEZ laws' (cited in *Andhra Jyothi*, 2007b). The committee made another visit to Polepally in

2008 and confirmed that there were 42 deaths related to the loss of land and livelihood, and recommended the scrapping of the SEZ (*Eenadu*, 2008c; *The Hindu*, 2008a).

K. Balagopal, a lawyer and founding member of the AP Human Rights Forum, noted that the 'transfers of land assigned to the poor are actually illegal'. But the government amended this law in 2006 to reclaim assigned land when such land had been sold or was not being used. The farmers asserted that the acquired land was never 'alienated' as they were totally dependent on it for cultivating 'rice, jowar, horsegram, chillies and vegetables'. A 55-year-old displaced farmer who lost five acres of her land to the SEZ lamented that

The district revenue officer told us that whether we like it or not, we have to give the land. He said that if we gave it now, we will receive the compensation, or else the money will be deposited in the treasury. (Cited in Asher, 2008)

It was reported that 'subject to constant pressure and coercion, many residents accepted the compensation' (Asher, 2008). A group of locals were arrested and jailed for attempting to stop the construction of the SEZ.

To provide further impetus to the resistance movement, the TVV's Madhu Kagula organised the affected farmers and the concerned villagers under the banner, 'Polepally SEZ Vyathireka Aikya Sanghatana' (Polepally Anti-SEZ United Forum, PASUF). The main demands of PASUF and the farmers were the cessation of the SEZ; the return of land to the farmers; compensation for the loss of crops; a judicial enquiry into the illegal land acquisition; and the repeal of the SEZ Act.

With the rehabilitation and resettlement packages proving to be a mere façade, the farmers and the PASUF intensified their struggle. They adopted democratic means of protest, mainly where the SEZ was being built. Activists, political leaders from a range of parties, NGOs, scholars, film stars with political aspirations and several caste groups attended the protests between 2006 and 2009 and expressed their solidarity with the displaced farmers.

A group of BJP members known as *Kisan Morcha* (BJP Farmers Front) participated in a rally at Polepally and expressed solidarity with the farmers: the front claimed that ‘as per the new SEZ policy land for land should be given’ to the farmers (*Eenadu*, 2008e). Vidya Bushan Rawat of the Social Development Foundation, meanwhile, said at a demonstration in Polepally that ‘across the country SEZ victims would be united for fighting’ against the SEZs (cited in *Eenadu*, 2008d).

Varavara Rao, a member of *Viplava Rachayutula Sangham* (Revolutionary Writers Association) said at a press conference that the ‘SEZ Act be abolished’. He demanded that the farmers in Polepally be given ‘land for land, pucca houses to live in and a job to one SEZ victim family member’ (Rao, 2008). A prominent journalist noted that

The land acquired by the government for the SEZ (Polepally) is adjacent to the national highway. It is also not far from the Shamshabad international airport. Land rates in the region are thus well above Rs 20 *lakhs* [US\$28,000] per acre. Often even higher than that. But the displaced farmers got sums ranging from Rs 18,000 to Rs 50,000 [US\$252 to US\$700] an acre, way below the prevailing market rates (Sainath, 2008).

Chiranjeevi, a popular Telugu film star, launched his own political party, Praja Rajyam Party, in August 2008. He visited Polepally in September 2008 to console the farmers. He stated that ‘while SEZs are essential as they spawn industrial development, it cannot be done by depriving poor farmers of their land’ and argued that ‘it is not development when it is achieved at the cost of hungry stomachs’ (cited in Krishnamoorthy, 2008). He issued an ultimatum to the government that ‘either you solve the problems of Polepally farmers, if not, they will vote for us and we will look after their woes’ (cited in *Andhra Jyothi*, 2008).

Addressing a mega all-party rally organized by the Communist Party of India in Polepally in November 2008, the then Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) president lamented that his party ‘is not against industrialisation, but we are against any unit that comes up at the expense of farmers’ and added that the ‘separate Telangana State which has now become a

certainty was the only solution to the problems' of displacement (cited in *The Hindu*, 2008c).

The democratic protests were mostly organized at the Polepally SEZ, but some were held in Hyderabad, the state capital. For instance, a 'solidarity meet' was organized in Sundarayya Vignana Kendram in Hyderabad in April 2008, and a *Dharna* (sit-in) in July 2008 saw about 200 farmers from Polepally hold a demonstration to protest the government's decision to establish a pharma SEZ. In this protest farmers demonstrated their anguish holding placards such as 'SEZ Hatao, Zameen bachao' (remove the SEZ and save the land). There were also round-table conferences and workshops held to usher in justice for the development induced displacement in Polepally. At the SEZ construction site, a public hearing was held in August 2007 and a *bhu-sathyagraha* (passive political resistance against forcible land acquisition) was held for one week beginning in late September 2008.

### **Electoral Contestation**

In addition to the protests described above, the farmers contested elections at the State and Central levels. Thirteen displaced farmers filed their nominations to the Jadcherla Assembly constituency by-election that was scheduled for May 2008. The SEZ victims wanted to raise awareness of the fact that the government had created their plight by forcibly acquiring their lands to set up the SEZ. They competed for and not against each another to make the public aware of the losses they incurred due to displacement. They had a common manifesto of defeating the major political parties. They agreed with each other on the trauma created by the SEZ. They intended to showcase, to the world beyond Polepally, their problems caused by the government's embrace of SEZ-type development policies (Sainath, 2008).

The farmers did not win the by-election, but they achieved their objective of defeating the sitting member from the TRS, Lakshma Reddy. The farmers together secured 13,500 votes (Prashanth Reddy, 2009), with Mala Jangilamma securing the highest number of votes (Sainath, 2008). The farmers collectively spent 1.58 *lakh* Rupees (US\$2,163) on their campaign, which included a security deposit of 65,000 Rupees (US\$895). According to the PASUF, the farmers had to take out loans of

about 78,500 Rupees to contest the elections. The local member at the time that the SEZ was approved was from the TRS, so the Polepally candidates opposed both major parties. The TDP lost the election in the Polepally region, despite winning elsewhere. Mallu Ravi of the Congress Party won a seat in the Jadcherla Assembly. The farmers were happy with their decision, for they succeeded in drawing attention to their struggle against the SEZ (Sukumar, 2008).

### **The YSR Government's Response**

YSR did not directly react to the resistance against the SEZs, including in Polepally, but his overall response to the opposition to the acquisition of farmlands for SEZs is worth mentioning. He said that

There is no forcible acquisition and except where it is essential fertile land of the farmers is not taken. Whenever such an acquisition happened, we are giving the farmer full value for her/his land besides a unique R&R [Relief and Rehabilitation] package. The controversies raised and campaigns projected by the opposition parties are politically motivated. (Cited in Narasimha Rao, 2008)

YSR's ministers, however, did react to the struggle against the Polepally SEZ. Geeta Reddy, the industries minister, countered the criticism about the alleged inadequate compensatory measures by saying that

The Relief and Rehabilitation Package offered to the land losers in Polepally was the best in the country. Not only compensation ranging from Rs 75,000 to Rs 1.25 *lakh* [US\$1,033 to US\$1,722] per acre was paid, but each of them was also provided 200 sq. yards of land and the government now planned to build houses for them (Cited in *The Hindu*, 2008b).

She added that 99 per cent of the people were happy with the package, as people who lost their land were given job cards assuring them of employment. The Jadcherla SEZ would create 30,000 jobs when completed, she claimed (*The Hindu*, 2008b).

The Mahbubnagar collector, Usha Rani, stated that land was acquired with the 'consent' of the farmers. She countered farmers' allegation that 'because of the loss of land farmers committing suicides in Polepally is terrible' (cited in *Saakshi*, 2008). Compensation was paid as per the 'prevailing market rate' (*Saakshi*, 2008). In an agreement with the farmers, she said, the authorities had accepted to 'build pucca houses, provide drinking water, roads and schools', and 'the eligible candidates would get jobs in the upcoming corporate pharma SEZ Units' (cited in *Eenadu*, 2008b).

From March 2009 onwards, the Polepally farmers were busy planning to contest the Mahabubnagar parliamentary seat as part of the Lok Sabha elections that would be held in April. While they had contested the 2008 by-election to spread the message of development-led disaster at the State level, their decision to contest the Lok Sabha polls was to draw national attention to their plight. One of the candidates noted that the farmers' electoral fray marked a protest against parties which did nothing to prevent farmers from being dispossessed of their livelihoods and homes. We are 'using democratic means accessible to us to make our resentment known to them' (Akhileshwari, 2009). Fifteen farmers contested the 2009 elections. Altogether they received more than 70,000 votes, which prevented the Congress candidate, Vittal Rao, from winning. Instead, the TRS won by just 20,000 votes. The farmers achieved their goal of defeating the ruling party MP and they also made it difficult for the TRS to claim victory (Venkateshwarlu, 2009).

### **Political Management, Developmental Deadlock, and the limits of Formal Politics**

As outlined above, the farmers adopted various measures to regain their land from the government but in vain. These contentious events were 'a mark of protest against the existing political parties and their policies in relation to corporate interests and SEZs' (Rawat, Bharath Bhushan, & Surepally, 2011, p. 38). Specifically, the farmers criticised the flawed process of land acquisition, the flouting of policies pertaining to displacement, the inadequate compensation and rehabilitation and resettlement packages, the unkept promises, deviations from the original plans for the industrial project, and most importantly for the lack of transparency in transforming the project from a GIP to a pharma SEZ.

What is puzzling, perhaps, is that so many of these measures were enacted by the YSR government, which had campaigned on a pro-farmer policy. In seeking to comprehend the land-related dispossession in Polepally, this article turns to David Harvey's theory about the structural compulsions of capital flows. It accepts the conceptual importance of accumulation by dispossession but differs with Harvey on the point of the agency in the process of dispossession, through its focus on subnational politics, including a collusive state–capital alliance under YSR's leadership, the selective use of pro-poor policies to shore up his electoral majority, and nepotistic relations that benefited his son.

YSR's emergence as a strong leader in AP 'has been accompanied by more bloodshed than that of any other politician in this state. Not bloodshed for some avowed "higher cause", but bloodshed for the narrowest possible cause: the rise of one individual to political power and prominence' (Balagopal, p. 2425). YSR was known for dethroning the Chief Ministers and encourage dissidence against them. However, starting from early 1990s he started to create an image of himself as a more mature and responsible leader and started to settle differences with different factions. The idea to transform the negative image of creating dissent and troublemaker to that of a popular leader came in the wake of growing influence of TDP in the State politics. YSR was quick to realise that rather than wasting energies in the intra-party struggle against each other, better direct the same to defeat Naidu of TDP, the main rival of the Congress party (Price, 2011, p. 141). His image of a changed leader came to be felt by all during the 2004 elections. But after coming to power, YSR's rule marked authoritarian and ruthless rule, intolerance to any forms of criticism, violent practices in eliminating the opposition leaders and the centralisation of his power (Srinivasulu, 2009).

### **The Pro-poor Agenda**

YSR's pro-poor campaigning was welcomed by farmers, who had suffered due to the indifference of the TDP government. Rural voters voted for YSR en masse and allowed him to assemble an electoral majority. Once in power YSR implemented some of the promises he made during the elections, particularly the pro-rural ones like free electricity for farmers and waivers for agricultural loans. His tenure was

also marked by impressive economic growth and a surge in revenue which allowed him to implement a slew of welfare schemes. These schemes were not the 'election handouts' that are usually floated on the eve of voting, which target specific groups like minorities, artisans and women. Rather, they were 'long term' schemes that aimed to provide welfare to all eligible beneficiaries (Elliott, 2011, p. 70).

The elaborate welfare regime included subsidised housing for homeless people, free electricity for farmers, subsidised farm inputs, subsidised rice for families below the poverty line, health insurance, and pensions for the aged. Andhra Pradesh, under YSR, became a torchbearer for other States across India in the implementation of the centrally sponsored 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee' scheme, which assured employment, legally, to people living in the countryside.

YSR's welfare schemes were a novel example of how to combine welfare, development, and corruption to serve electoral interests, reduce popular unrest, and satisfy corporate interests too. For instance, the *Arogyasri* (health insurance scheme) provided free tertiary medical treatment for the poor in private hospitals, while failing to invest in primary and public sector healthcare. Private hospitals benefitted from public funds as they inflated their medical bills (Rao, 2014), just as a fee-reimbursement scheme for professional education enriched private colleges (Vasu, 2011).

### **Catering to the Regional Business Elite**

The Polepally dispute unfolded amid the emergence of an aspiring business class in South India, which was influential in subnational politics. In Andhra Pradesh, an agrarian-turned-capitalist class was becoming prominent (Baru 2000; Upadhy 1988a, 1988b; & Damodaran 2008). Rich farmers from coastal Andhra accrued profits from agriculture following the Green Revolution, and some diverted the agrarian surpluses of the early 1980s and 1990s into the industrial and service sectors. They invested in sectors such as health, education, and food processing, as well as fertiliser, the film industry, pharmaceuticals and information technology. This regional capitalist class, however, faced hurdles to obtaining licenses prior to the reform era of the 1990s.

Regional firms needed central government permission to enter various sectors, but the Congress government in Delhi favoured big national groups such as Tata and Birla. In this context, the business class in AP sought the help of regional political leaders, such as Naidu, whose TDP ended three decades of Congress Party at the state level in 1983. The regional capitalists 'invested in regional political parties to gain political support at the state level' as they clearly saw that 'any system which increased the leverage of the state government over the central government would increase their relative strength vis-à-vis national big business' (Baru, 2000) that received undue favours from the central leadership. The state-business nexus continued and expanded in the 2000s, irrespective of which party was in power.

YSR campaigned on the promise to address the region's lack of irrigation facilities and the negligence of the TDP government on this issue. After being elected in 2004, YSR started the *Jalayagnam* programme, under which new irrigation projects would bring water to the fields for cultivation and to households for drinking purposes. The programme, however, was poorly implemented. The projects lacked transparency in their tendering and contracting, which caused delays in completing projects and incurred huge losses to the State (Comptroller and Auditor General of India, 2013).

The YSR government violated the procedures relating to the awarding of contracts for the irrigational projects for political and personal gains. Most contracts were awarded to entrepreneurs who were also politicians, mostly from YSR's camp. For instance, the government awarded eight contracts, worth 3,739.22 *crores* (US\$524 million), to Progressive Constructions, which was founded by the five-time Congress MP, Kavuru Sambasiva Rao. The Gayathri Group, founded by noted filmmaker, Congress MP and billionaire T. Subbiram Reddy, secured 14 projects worth 4,798 *crores* (US\$672 million). And Lagadapati Rajgopal, another Congress MP and founder of the Lanco group, was awarded three *Jalayagnam* projects worth 128.41 *crores* (US\$18 million). YSR, however, also facilitated the business interests of the opposition parties. Nama Nageshwar Rao, a TDP parliamentarian from Khammam and director of Madhucon Infra, won the right to four projects in this scheme (Kirpal, 2013), worth 1,644.15 *crores* (US\$230 million). Due to

these gross violations of the rules in the allocation of irrigation projects, the opposition dubbed the *Jalayagnam* programme as 'Dhanayagnam', or the ritual of siphoning off money (Suri, 2009).

### **Nepotism under YSR**

Harvey's theory of ABD goes some way towards explaining the dispossession of small landholders and accumulation by the private sector. It does not, however, adequately account for agency in the process of dispossession. This article focuses on subnational politics, including the state-capital alliance in the YSR period. A significant beneficiary of this alliance was YSR's only son, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy ('Jagan').

Jagan set up businesses in the power, cement and media sectors after his father became the CM. Through his father's influence, several firms were induced to invest in Jagan's businesses. The land was allotted in nefarious ways because Jagan wanted firms to be granted favours in lieu of their investments in his newly floated business ventures. YSR thereby misused his official position and provided incentives to some firms, which resulted in dispossession of the marginalised sections of society. The state-business nexus, which was established to promote Jagan's business empire, was the main cause for the loss of assets of the marginalised people.

The nepotistic arrangements also affected the Polepally pharma SEZ land allotment. As noted earlier in the article, in 2006 the APIIC had granted Aurobindo and Hetero 75 acres of land each in the Polepally SEZ at a cost of just 0.7 *lakhs* (\$US964) per acre (Janyala, 2012). The opposition parties accused YSR of extending undue favours to these and other private businesses in return for investing in Jagan's businesses (*Eenadu*, 2008a; 2008f). Despite these allegations, no probe was ordered by the Congress-led government. India was about to go to polls in 2009 and AP was an important State for the UPA government, which was hoping to win a second term. In this context, the charges of corruption against YSR were not taken seriously by the central government.

Following YSR's untimely demise, the Congress leadership at the central and State levels responded differently to Jagan, as the latter aspired to the CM's position. Congress leaders did not accept Jagan's demand that he be nominated to succeed his father as CM, straining ties between the leaders and Jagan. The differences grew so much that Jagan launched his own Party in May 2011. Congress leaders at the centre finally agreed to act on the frequent allegations that Jagan had amassed huge wealth while his father was CM. The centre directed the CBI to launch an enquiry into Jagan's disproportionate assets. The CBI began investigating Jagan's illegal assets case in July 2011, and Jagan was arrested less than a year later. According to the CBI, Jagan had 'prevailed upon his late father... to ensure "nefarious deals" of allotting large amounts of land to at least three major companies as a quid-pro-quo for investments made into entities owned by him' (cited in Rahul, 2012b).

The CBI filed 11 charge sheets between March 2012 and September 2014 against Jagan and some of these deal with the Polepally case. In the case of Polepally, the CBI alleged that the land allotted to Aurobindo and Hetero in return investing in Jagan's Jagati Publications and Janani Infrastructure. YSR, persuaded by his son, misused his position, and pressured the APIIC, to allot land to these companies at well below market rates (7 lakhs), while the APIIC had fixed the price at between 15 and 20 lakhs per acre. Acharya cleared the file in haste on the grounds that the CM had decided the amount of land and price at which it should be sanctioned to these companies. The transaction, according to the charge sheet, resulted in a loss of 12.26 crore (US\$1.7 million) to the government (Rahul, 2012a). Jagan, meanwhile, alleged that these charges were part of a designed political vendetta (*Mahapatra*, 2011).

Thanks to the nepotistic ties he had cultivated, Jagan quickly became one of India's richest entrepreneur-politicians. He declared his assets as worth 77.7 crore (US\$10.8 million) while filing nomination to Kadapa Lok Sabha seat in the 2009 general elections. By way of comparison, his declared income on the eve of the 2011 May by-election to the Kadapa constituency as 430 crores (\$US60.2 million) (Sainath, 2012; Srinivasa Rao, 2012). Jagan's case reveals how corruption occurs when 'excessive discretionary authority' is placed in the hands of politicians and officials

rather than relying on the ‘impersonal forces of market to decide economic outcomes’ (Das, 2012). The Polepally case, among others in the YSR period, supports this claim.

### **Conclusion: Dispossession and the Subversion of Democracy**

This article has traced the emergence of a powerful subnational political leader and detailed how his substantial political autonomy enabled him to design policies in his own style. The former AP Chief Minister, YSR, promoted industrial, infrastructural and welfare policies that catered to the needs of business and political elites, and secured electoral majorities. Despite purporting to be oriented towards development, however, YSR’s policies mainly catered to the interests of the private sector and his close associates, including his son.

The government of AP used extra-economic means to establish the SEZ in Polepally, which began operating in late 2009 after the former Chief Minister’s untimely demise in a helicopter crash. The government did not consider farmers’ demands pertaining to issues such as the dispossession of land, and the lack of transparency surrounding the acquisition of land. The farmers themselves had a certain degree of agency in this process, as Upadhyaya (2020) has noted in a different context within Andhra Pradesh. YSR’s policy on the Polepally SEZ sparked substantial resistance, but the farmers’ coalition ultimately was not powerful enough to destabilise the government or the regional political-economic order. YSR proved to be adept at managing political dissent in AP, and thus provides a crucial explanatory link between global capitalism and the dispossession on the ground. Conventional readings of ABD tend to overlook the agency of subnational leaders, which we have shown was central to the story in Polepally.

Some scholars (such as Jones, 2008) claim that the Polepally case indicates a flourishing of formal democracy, since a diverse coalition was mobilised and demonstrated a commitment to the ‘formal, effective and substantive’ dimensions of democracy, such as standing in elections and ejecting corrupt politicians. Whether the case constitutes a ‘democratic deepening’ (Heller, 2000), however, is debatable. The

Polepally case passes the test of procedural democracy, when viewed in terms of a set of institutions such as universal adult franchise, the rule of law, constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and the right to association, and the formation of governments through regular elections. The case represents a setback for democracy, however, when assessed by criteria such as the potential for the farmers to influence or reverse policy decisions (particularly those concerning economic development) that considerably affected their lives. A bottom-up perspective on dispossession confirms Harvey's supposition about the anti-democratic tendencies of global capitalism.

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# A Study of the Military Strategy and Leadership of *Ahom* Commander Lachit Barphukan

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## Abstract

Lachit Barphukan, a military leader and strategist from the kingdom of Ahom, is one of India's most important military leaders and strategists. After a series of raids in mediaeval India, the Mughals were able to force Ahoms (governing in modern-day Assam) to sign a humiliating treaty in 1661. When the Ahom commander Lachit Barphukan pushed the Mughal Governor out of Gauhati in 1667, he restored the Ahoms' glory. As a result, a huge troop of the Mughal army was dispatched to destroy the Ahoms under the command of Raja Ram Singh. However, the Ahom Commander, Lachit Barphukan, not only repelled the Mughal invasion, but also drove the Mughal army away, thanks to clever military preparation, properly calibrated military strategy, superb military leadership, and incomparable bravery. In recent years, the state government of Assam has attempted to honour this hero. In his honour, numerous memorials and monuments are being constructed. The Government of Assam has declared November 24th as Lachit Diwas. Despite the government's attempts, little research on this military officer and his time has been conducted. In general, descriptions of India's military history or strategic culture neglect to mention the Ahoms, one of mediaeval India's most successful military defence systems. It is critical to emphasise the Ahom military's greatness through its most known military leader, Lachit Borphukan.

**Keywords:** Lachit Barphukan, Ahoms, Mughals, Islamic Invasion.

## Introduction

From time immemorial, the geography of the Indian nation has witnessed an uncountable number of wars and battles. A number of military leaders and war heroes have exhibited exemplary valour and leadership. Any war requires military strategy. There are strategic

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thinkers and military leaders, who formulate military strategies. The Indian history from ancient times is replete with examples of various types of military strategies formulated and executed by strategic thinkers and military leaders. The military strategies mentioned in the epic of *Mahabharata* is well known. The '*Rajmandala*' theory propounded by the great ancient thinker *Chanakya* is widely studied till now. However, the study and research about the evolution of military strategy and thinking is very limited in scope and variety in India. Therefore, there is a lack of proper study and research about the evolution of various military strategies in different parts of India. And the most unfortunate part is the fact, that many military strategists and leaders from the north-eastern part of India are unknown to the people of India. This has happened either by chance or by design. One of the most important military leaders and military strategists of India from the kingdom of *Ahom* is Lachit Barphukan. In medieval India, after successive attacks, the Mughals were able to force a humiliating treaty on *Ahoms* (ruling in present-day Assam) in 1661. However, the *Ahom* commander Lachit Barphukan restored the glory of the *Ahoms*, when he drove away the Mughal Governor from Gauhati in 1667. As a result of this, a very large contingent of the Mughal army was sent under the commandship of Raja Ram Singh to defeat the *Ahoms*. But with the astute military planning, clearly calibrated military strategy, exemplary military leadership, and unmatched bravery the *Ahom* Commander, Lachit Barphukan not only repelled the Mughal attack but drove the Mughal army away. In recent times, the state government of Assam has tried to give this hero his due place. Many memorials and monuments are being built in his memory. 24th November has been declared as *Lachit Diwas* by the Government of Assam. Despite the efforts from the government, the research activity about this military leader and his times remains negligible. In general, the discussions about India's military history or India's strategic culture do not take into account one of the most successful military defence system of medieval India; the *Ahoms*. It is important to highlight the glory of the *Ahom* military through its most renowned military leader; Lachit Borphukan. This paper intends to explore the qualities of his military leadership and highlight the salient features of his military strategy.

## **The Ahoms and Their Military System**

The *Ahoms* established themselves as the rulers of Assam in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The *Ahoms* ruled over Assam for around six centuries. They are amongst the longest-ruling dynasties in India. With the treaty of Yandabo in 1826, the British took over Assam. So, the *Ahoms* ruled over Assam for around six centuries. In the history of six centuries, the *Ahoms* had faced many attacks from various quarters. And in all these wars, the leadership skills, organising capabilities and the military acumen adopted by the *Ahoms* have been commended even by their opponents. Lord William Bentinck observed that 'The fact that the ancient Government (of the *Ahoms*) continued for six centuries indicated that there must be something intrinsically good in the constitution' (Bhuyan, 1965, p.143). Shihabuddin Talish wrote -"Every army that entered the limits of this country made its exit from the realm of Life; every caravan that set foot on this land deposited its baggage of residence in the halting place of Death" (Bhuyan, 1965, p.149). The six centuries of *Ahom's* rule in Assam is not only a history of dominance over the small neighbouring states but also of their struggles against one of the toughest invaders – the Mughals. The Mughals had desperately tried to invade and acquire these lands. All these resistances are the reflection of not only the military strategies and skill of the leaders but also of the coordination between the people and the rulers in times of crises. J.N Sarkar argues; For a modern observer, the fact that the *Ahoms* in Assam under Sukapha and his successors not only conquered an unknown land, carving out an independent vast and invincible kingdom until the mid-17th century, but also fought for their independence for another thirty years without any formal and exclusive military department separate from the civil administration, and without a standing army, a regularly paid soldiery under military personnel is a striking fact. This would not have been feasible if their military system had not been well-organized and efficient, and if their leaders had lacked military comprehension and organisational skills (Sarkar, 2007, p.64).

The capital of the *Ahom* kingdom in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was situated in *Gargaon*, in eastern Assam. The length of the *Ahom* kingdom was almost 600 miles, with an average breadth of 50 to 60 miles (Bhuyan,

1947, p.4). In the *Ahom* system of government, the Barphukan was the nomenclature for the Governor of the lower Assam.

The *Ahom* military system evolved due to practical requirements. The military system was loosely organised at various levels. In this loosely organised system, the *got* was the lowest fighting unit. And the highest-ranking officer was *Phukan*. Despite the fact that conscription was not enforced, every able-bodied male was required to give his services to the king's defence needs (Sen, 1979). The system of military organization that developed during the *Ahoms* is known as *Paik* system. *Paik* system was not merely a system of military organization. Rather it was broadly a socio-political organization. Both the civil and military functions within the society were organized with this system. It was a system that helped the *Ahoms* to muster all the men in times of war necessity (Hazarika, 2015).

Soldiers were given military training based on their needs. There was also a reward and punishment system in place for soldiers. In theory, the King was the army's Commander-in-Chief. In addition, the king took part in the training of soldiers himself. In general, ground forces were assigned to *NeogPhukons*, while the navy was assigned to *PaniPhukon* (Barbaruah, 2006).

### **The Battle of Saraighat**

The battle of Saraighat is the most well-known battle in *Ahom* history. The Battle was fought in 1671. The Mughal army was led Raja Ram Singh I. The *Ahom* army was led by Atan Burghaohain (North bank) and Lachit Barphukan (South bank).

The seeds of this battle lay in the Mughal attempts to annex the *Ahom* territories. There were seventeen attempts of invasion of the *Ahom* Kingdom by the Mughals. However, only one attempt was successful. In 1661, Mir Jumla, the Mughal Viceroy at Dhaka marched with a large army and defeated the *Ahom* king Jayadhwaj Singha. The *Ahom* King agreed to a humiliating treaty (Treaty of Ghilajharighat in 1663). According to the pact, two *Ahom* Royal princesses were taken for the Mughal imperial harem, and the *Ahoms* were required to pay a war indemnity of 3 lakhs and a 20-elephant annual tribute. They also had to

relinquish control of the western half of their kingdom, from Gauhati to the Manas River (Sinha, 2001). The humiliating treaty was never fully accepted by the Ahoms and they resolved to take back their land. Therefore the next *Ahom* King Chakradhwaj Singhachose Lachit Barphukanas the commander to lead the mission of recovering the lost territories. Lachit captured Gauhati from Mughals in 1667. The Commander of the *Ahom* army, Lachit, attacked Gauhati swiftly and the imperial Governor, Syed Firoz Khan was not prepared for this attack. The swiftness of the attack did not provide any time for the Mughal reinforcements from Rangamati and Dacca to protect Gauhati. Thus within a short space of two months the *Ahoms* succeeded in recovering their lost possessions and along with it their lost prestige and glory (Bhuyan, 1947, p.28).The attack on the fort of Itakhuli, which was the base for the Moghul military men and war provisions, was executed in latter half of the night with the successful pre-attack strategy of putting water in the muzzles of the guns by the *Ahom* spies. Henceforth the incessant *Ahom* soldiers, seething under the humiliation of defeat and memories of disgraceful treatment meted out to their king Chakradhwaj Singha, became unstoppable and at midnight of November 2, 1667 Itakuli and the garrison of Gauhati were seized by the *Ahom* army under the skilful leadership of Lachit Barphukan.

After the Mughal defeat, it was expected that the Mughal emperor will send an army to defeat the *Ahoms*. The Rajput king –Mirza Raja Ram Singh of Amer was deputed by Aurangzeb to attack *Ahoms*. Both the Mughal army and the *Ahom* army fought between 1669-1671.This period of war was full of ups and downs for the *Ahom* army. The *Ahoms* had faced a major reversal at Alaboli. Around 10,000 *Ahom* soldiers were massacred by the Mughal horsemen. After this massacre, the Mughals proposed that the status quo prevailing at the time of Treaty of Asurar Ali (1639) could be agreed upon to be maintained. However, the *Ahoms* totally rejected this proposal. And this led to the final phase of the battle. In 1671, near the Brahmaputra River at a place called Saraighat the decisive battle took place between these two armies. This place is at the triangle in to the river between the area of Itakhuli, Kamakhya and Aswakranta. In this decisive battle the Mughals were defeated by the *Ahoms* and driven away. The Mughals were pursued all the way to Goalpara's Manas River. Meanwhile, in March 1671, Raja

Ram Singha returned to Rangamati, where he remained until 1676 in the hopes of conquering Assam for the second time. But, Aurangzeb summoned him to Delhi and thus ended any more attempts by the Mughals to conquer Assam.

### **Military Strategy and Military Leadership of Lachit Barphukan**

Military strategy is the process of reducing an adversary's physical capabilities and motivation to fight and continuing to do so until the goal is achieved. It can occur in both times of war and peace, and it can involve the use of force as a threat, either directly or indirectly. The four components of military strategy are ends (objectives), ways (courses of action), means (resources), and risk (Echevarria, 2017).

Lachit Barphukan was instrumental in not only in the taking over of Gauhati from the Mughals in 1667 but he was also the hero who defeated the mighty Mughal Commander Raja Ram Singh. In this period Lachit had shown exemplary knowledge of military strategy and shown extraordinary military leadership. The strategic move of bringing the adversary to fight in the narrow stretch of Saraighat was important to reduce the physical capacity of the enemy. Lachit used his limited resource with great effectiveness in this war. He was very clear about the objectives and was well prepared to cover the risks. Some of the important highlights of his strategic thinking and military leadership is explained below:

1. Creation of defence structures: Natural hills, rivers, and dense forests provided natural defence capabilities for the *Ahom* troops. In general, the *Ahoms* used defensive tactics rather than offensive ones (Hazarika, 2015, p.20). The *Ahom* rulers have created a fortification ring. These fortifications were known as *garhs*. These *garhs* were not only erected on land but in water too. Unlike the northern part of India, the *Ahoms* built fortification, which was more suitable to their geographical area. Hence use of bamboo and mud was common for these *garhs*. The hilly terrain of Assam provided natural planks to erect forts. Low hills on each bank of the river enabled Lachit organise formidable defences in the Gauhati area. He set up prepared defences with 9-foot gaps on the plains and 13.5-foot gaps on the hills. The river line was reinforced on both

sides of the defensive perimeter, and stockades were erected on the river's sand banks to prevent the usage of the waterway. Defense in depth and all-around defence were guaranteed (Sinha, 2001) The use of forts as an important defensive mechanism for war strategy by Lachit Barphukan is also mentioned in the book by Kautilya ('The Arthashastra' by Kautilya). Kautilya regards the fort to be more important for the defence of kingdom, since it allows the kingdom to survive during the period of the siege. Kautilya in Arthashastra has mentioned mainly four type of forts- *Parvatadurg* (hill fort), *audakadurg* (water fort), *dhanvandurg* (desert fort) and *Vandurg* (forest fort). Lachit Barphukan had mainly used two types of forts according to the terrains of the *Ahom* Kingdom.

When a traveller Hangalbhanga Laskar, who had stayed in the camp of Ram Singha prior to the battle of Saraighat, fell into the hands of *Ahoms* and was asked to opine on the impression that the Mughals have about the preparedness of Assam, he narrated the conversation between Ram Singha and his commander Rashid Khan: The *Ahoms* have built forts on the tops of the hills, and the outer plains are too narrow for an open combat. The Assamese have proven unbeatable in their conflicts against foreigners because of this. The fortifications are complicated and complex, with three corridors leading to each fort. Our powerful weaponry cannot reach the enemy, and we have no choice but to battle with arrows and guns. Their ministers, commanders, and infantry should all be commended for erecting such a formidable defence wall.

2. Importance of Preparedness: As in the battle to capture the fort of Itakhuli, the spies played an important role in sealing the preparedness of the *Ahom* army. Assamese spies were deputed to follow the footsteps of Moghul army right from the time they departed from Delhi. The departure of Ram Singha from Dacca was also promptly communicated to the *Ahom* Commander in Chief Lachit Barphukan who made numerous efforts to thwart the enemy's march towards Gauhati which, though did not succeed in defeating the army there and then, created an edge over the Mughals thus sending them a message that the *Ahoms* are better prepared and intensely watchful of their march.

When Ram Singha approached the fort at Sarai and initiated an attack, he once again experienced the farsightedness of the *Ahom* commander. He reached near the fort through an underground passage and used heavy artillery to fire at the fort causing considerable damage to the fort. But the *Ahoms* had ready with them a number of men with material to repair any such breach caused by the enemy. Despite this being a surprise attack, he and his army could not sustain for long in front of the counter attack from the Assamese side and retreated.

3. Understanding the weakness and strengths: Lachit was well aware of the military might of the Mughal forces. However, he wanted to assess the accurate strength of the Mughal army. For this, Lachit personally surveyed the position of the Mughals from the top of his fort. The Mughals had professional cavalry and mounted forces. On the other hand, the *Ahom* military was less in numbers and was very ill-equipped and trained to fight in open fields against the Mughal army. Therefore the strategy that Lachit Barphukan adopted was to deny the Mughals to use their strength. He decided to choose the terrain of Gauhati, which was hilly, for the battle. In the hilly terrain, the large Mughal army with its mighty cavalry will not get enough open space to manoeuvre. This will impede the mobility of the Mughal forces. To avoid the hilly terrain and attack the *Ahom* forces, Mughals had only one option to move via Brahmaputra River. And the Brahmaputra at Saraighat, at its narrowest 1 km width, was ideal for naval defence. In the preparation for war, Lachit had created a system of naval defence in this zone. The *Ahoms*, having realised the futility of open warfare, tried everything they could to exploit the physiography, heavy rainfall, and floods in the summer to their advantage, and resorted to indirect warfare, employing tactics such as scorched earth, hit-and-run, harassment, and so on (Gogoi, 2017).
4. Time and Place of battle: Kautilya has highlighted the importance of time and place in any battle; "In the daytime, the crow kills the owl and at night the owl kills the crow". Similarly, "a dog on land drags a crocodile and a crocodile in water drags a dog" (Singh, 2013). In his military strategy, Lachit Barphukan has understood the importance of time and place and acted accordingly. When Mughal army

reached closer and the *Ahoms* were not fully prepared, Lachit started a sham negotiation with the Mughals. The negotiation was done through the captured Mughal Governor, Firoz Khan. Lachit Barphukan even called the Mughal emperor the “Bhai Raja” (brother sovereign) of the *Ahom* Kings. This clearly sent a signal to the Mughals that the *Ahoms* were thinking of negotiation. However when the *Ahom* army was fully ready for the Mughal attacks, then Lachit Barphukan sent a clear message to Raja Ram Singh that Gauhati and Kamrup belong to the *Ahoms* and they will fight to the last to defend it. Similarly, the *Ahom* commander, Lachit Barphukan was aware of the fact that in the open land the Mughals can crush the *Ahoms* anytime, but in narrow stretches of land and river, the *Ahoms* will have an upper hand due to the capability to fight in such areas and the knowledge of the terrain and river. Therefore the Mughal army was provided deliberate openings to reach Saraighat. And the strategic location of this place of battle proved harmful to the Mughal army and beneficial to the *Ahoms*.

5. Personal valour and leadership– Lachit was able to use the *Ahom* army to its maximum possible effectiveness. This was possible due to his determination and leadership. The maximum effective utilization of manpower was done by using many psychological tools. The use of national sentiment, religion and superstition was important. Interestingly, Kautilya has also specifically mentioned the use of religion, and superstition to bolster the morale of the soldiers. For example, the services of astrologers were taken to interpret the dream and predict the victory of *Ahoms*. At the same time, the use of fear was also important. The leader tends to instil a sense of fear amongst his troops about failures and laxness. Before the war “ Lachit Barphukan gave an order that every man must fulfil his duty by holding true to his charge, and that if any commander or soldier was found to be negligent, his head would be taken off immediately, with the potential of royal intervention following.” (Bhuyan, 1947, p.37). It is interesting to note that it is believed (however not verified) that Lachit killed his uncle due to his negligent behaviour. It is highly possible that this rumour was spread for the purpose of psychologically preparing the manpower to fight till the end. Leadership also involves leading from the front

by showing exemplary courage and selflessness. During the final phase of the war, Lachit Barphukan was seriously ill. The Mughal army had an upper hand and the *Ahom* soldiers were demoralised. Lachit was observing the unfolding of events from the *Itakhulifort*. Finally, Lachit ordered his men to carry him on a boat towards the theatre of war. He shouted- "The King has put all the people in my hands to fight Bongal. Shall I go back to my wife and children?" (Sarkar, 1992, p.226). This was an important turning point in the battle for *Ahoms*. Lachit's brave entry in to the battle boosted the morale of the *Ahom* soldiers and now all of them were ready to fight till the end.

6. Psychological warfare: Psychological warfare is a strategy for demoralising an opponent and ensuring success in warfare. The primary aim of any Psychological warfare is to instil fear amongst the enemy. The Psychological warfare also uses the pre-existing anxieties of the enemy fighters. The tactics of psychological warfare were astutely employed by the *Ahom* commanders. Lachit and other military commanders adopted a strategy of intentional delay and frustration. They tried to postpone the battle with sham negotiations, so that the enemy soldiers become morally and physically frustrated and tired. The *Ahom* fortification was another method to frustrate the Mughal soldiers. The fortification looked impregnable and impenetrable. Even before the beginning of the battle Ram Singh also tried to use the psychological warfare method, but clearly Lachit outsmarted him in the method of psychological warfare. "Ram Singh is also said to have sent a package of seeds to Lachit, implying that the Mughal army was as large as the seeds and that the *Ahoms* would be crushed. Lachit retaliated by sending back a box of sand, implying that the *Ahom* army was as numerous as sand grains and so impossible to crush" (Sharma, 2015). One of the most important means to create fear and anxiety amongst the Mughal soldiers, was the tactics of guerrilla warfare. It is said that the Lachit had tried to spread a rumour that there are *Rakshasas* in the *Ahom* army and these *Rakshasas* go to fight in the night time. The Barphukan devised a strategy to prove the *Rakshas*' assertions. The *Ahom* soldiers, clad in black and carrying a severed human leg in one hand and roasted fish in the

other, travelled from camp to camp at night, hoisting the severed legs towards the Mughal camps and devouring the roasted fish as if it were human flesh (Gogoi, 2017). This method of attacking in the night, demoralised the Mughal soldiers. On the other hand to boost the morale of Ahom warriors, Lachit said that Lions go to hunt in the night too. The use of guerrilla tactics was critical in this battle, as Lachit was aware that Mughal army was stronger and had more men than the Ahoms.

### **Importance in Indian History**

For a long period of time, the north-eastern part of India remained untouched from the Islamic invasion. The first Islamic invasion of Assam was by Bakhtiyar Khalji. He was a Turko-Afghan military general of the Ghurid Empire. Bakhtiyar Khalji is infamous for the destruction of Nalanda University. He also attacked Lakshman Sena at his capital, Nabadwip, in 1203-1204 AD and captured most of Bengal. After the victory of Bengal, he was emboldened to attack *Kamrupa* in a desire to invade Tibet. From Devkot, Khalji proceeded with 12000 Turkish cavalry to assault Assam and Tibet (West Bengal). At that time, the kingdom of *Kamrupa* (Assam) was ruled by the King Vishwasunder Dev (also known as Maharaja Prithu). Maharaja Prithu annihilated Bakhtiyar Khalji in the famous battle of *Kamrupa* in 1205. This defeat halted the insidious march of this infamous invader and he died in 1206.

After Bakhtiyar Khalji, Assam was attacked by many Islamic invaders (Ali, 2002); Ghiyasuddin Khalji (1226), Nasiruddin Mahmud (1228), Malik Tughril Khan (1257), Ghiyasuddin Babur Shah (1323), Mohammed Tughlaq (1332), Sikandar Shah (1357), Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah (1394), Ruknuddin Barbak (1474), Allaudin Hussain Shah (1493), Tarbuk (1533), Sayyad Abu Baqr (1615), Shah Jahan / Islam Khan (1636), Aurangzeb/Mir Jumla (1661), 1669 Aurangzeb / Ram Singh (1669), Aurangzeb / Mansur Khan (1671).

The Islamic invaders repeatedly attacked Assam. In most cases, they were defeated. And in no case, any Islamic invader was able to control or hold Assam for a long period of time. The Battle of Saraighat marked the end of any major Islamic invasion attempts. The Mughals had by now accepted the fact that they will never be able to conquer Assam,

and hence they stopped making any more attempts. The heroic resistance started by Maharaja Prithu, which culminated in the commandership of Lachit Barphukan, has major implications for the history of India. The Islamic invaders had planned to move towards Tibet after the conquest of Assam. The resistance and reversals in the hands of *Ahoms* and other rulers, quashed the hopes of Islamic invaders. This has also worked as a bulwark against the Islamic cultural aggrandizement in the north-eastern part of India. It can also be argued that the resistance of the Assamese people has also protected Tibet from any kind of Islamic invasion or rule. Further, a successful campaign in the northeast of India would have opened the doors of Southeast Asia for these invaders too.

In the modern times, the resistance of the people of Assam is becoming a rallying point for the Assamese pride and glory. It is interesting to note that the battle of Saraighat and its hero, has become symbols to unite the people of Assam through a commonly shared history of bravery and resistance.

### **Conclusion**

For a long time, the name of Lachit Barphukan was unknown and unheard in larger parts of India. However, in recent decade, with the political efforts and social awakening, the valour, bravery and military genius of *Ahom* commander is now being recognized. The battle of Saraighat is of immense importance to Indian history. Due to the distorted look at Indian history, many episodes and heroes were sidelined and kept out of the mainstream Indian history. With the growing research about these episodes and heroes of Indian history, gradually the heroes like Lachit will get their due place in the annals of Indian history. The announcement by the famous movie star, Mr. Vivek Oberoi in early 2021, to make a movie on Lachit is an evidence to the growing acknowledgement of the legend of this military hero. In the era of the internet, some small documentaries and plays are also available about lachit on the Internet. Despite, the growing recognition of this medieval war hero of India amongst common masses, the research and study about Lachit is still lacking. The myopic history writing about medieval India, has left many episodes and personalities of Indian history in dark. The study and research of history about medieval India

is mainly Delhi centric. Now, it's the duty of the academic community to explore and highlight the role of unsung heroes in Indian history. The role of military strategists, like Lachit should also be studied in the departments of military and security studies. The inclusion of these excluded sections and heroes in school and college syllabuses will not only educate the students about the history of India. But it will also play an important role in national integration and national unity.

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# Urban Politics: A Case Study of Delhi

Hari Mohan Sharma\* & Hari K. Sharma\*

## Abstract

The term urban politics refers to the diverse political structures which reflect its complex socio-cultural set-up. It incorporates all the socio-political processes of urban and semi-urban areas, and the on-going changes in the pattern of urbanisation. It also includes diverse topics of political discourses, which also distinguishes it from the rural areas and defy the common notion of universal patterns of political activity and their impact upon the society. Sometimes urbanisation has been referred to as a natural activity which is beyond human control. It was even explained as a sign economic growth and progress which transforms a largely agrarian society into an urbanised one. Studying urban politics becomes a daunting task keeping in view of the on-going process of urbanisation and incorporation of new elements in its political spectrum. The present study primarily focuses on the diverse socio-economic and cultural spectrum of Delhi and its impact over its politics and political discourse. It is an attempt to understand and analyse the incessant evolution of Delhi as a megacity, its heterogenous nature, altering character, complex socio-cultural composition, growing economic profile and its political insinuations.

**Key Words:** Delhi, Diversity, Demography, Migrant, Urban Politics

## Introduction

Urbanisation is not a new development and the urban revolution has taken place in an independent form at many places at different point of times. Urbanisation has a long history, and presently it has also been referred as a phase of urban revolution keeping in view of growth and expansion of urban centers around the world. It seems to have developed first in Mesopotamia, in ancient Sumer, as early as 5000 BP. Later on, cities appeared in Egypt, Northern China and in India in form of Indus Valley civilization with Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa emerged as

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major urban centers. (Urban Revolution, 2016) The term urban revolution was introduced by the archaeologist V. Gordon Childe in the 1930s and it refers to different processes by which agricultural village societies were developed into socially, economically, and politically complex urban societies. Economic liberalization and globalization played a critical role in the growth and lateral expansion of urban centres around the world. Urbanisation is generally considered as a sign of development and economic growth. There is a robust relationship between urbanization and per capita income as nearly all countries become at least 50 percent urbanized before reaching middle-income status and all high income countries are 70-80 percent urbanized (Vaidya, 2009).

India is the largest, one of the most complex and vibrant democracies of the world. At the time of independence Indian society was largely agrarian, poor and illiterate and it was even predicted that as a democracy it would fail in near future. Some thinkers have predicted that Indian democracy would have a similar fate, as witnessed, in case of Pakistan. With the spread of education and economic activity in the post-independence period India's process of urbanisation has started and rural areas gradually transformed into new urban or semi-urban areas. The existing urban centers further expanded have attracted large scale inter and intra-state migration due to rampant poverty and unemployment in their home states and local areas and lack of adequate educational and other facilities. Delhi was one of the most attractive cities of India because of its geographical location and being the centre of all political and bureaucratic activity it has vast potential of socio-economic development.

### **Urban Politics- Key Factors**

The politics of urban areas is different from the politics of rural areas in many ways. Generally, in urban areas the population is comparatively more educated, more diverse, culturally and socially more complex, economically uneven and politically aware. For example in Delhi the population is tremendously diverse on grounds of caste, class, religion, language, ethnicity, region, race etc., while in rural areas certainly there was some dominant caste, linguistic, ethnic or religious community. The

bigger the city, the more diverse the population is, in urban areas. It happens mainly because of the reason that urban areas are the centre of regional or sometimes even national and international human activity. It gives the place a lot of exposure in terms of social mobility, economic and political activity, cultural and religious events which make it both complex and stimulating.

Keeping in view of the heterogeneous nature of urban society the following are some of the key factors that play an important role in urban politics:

1. **Diversity of Population:** In comparison to rural areas the urban population is quite diverse and complex which leaves a scope for different socio-cultural organisations and associations to play a crucial role in their political mobilisation. People belonging to various castes, class, ethnicity, regions, religious and linguistic groups shared the same territorial space to meet their life expectations. It forced the political parties to adjust their ideology, behaviour and strategy to win their electoral support. Different groups of peoples and members of different communities have their loyalties and allegiance to different political parties and socio-cultural organisations. They also affect the policy making process as the state have to satisfy the interest and expectations of such a diverse population. Class composition in urban areas is also very diverse that presents a contrasting socio-economic profile. The challenge of urban poor, socio-economic disparities and conflicting class interest also gets reflected in its political milieu.
2. **Level of Political Awareness:** Population of urban areas have better literacy level and better educational facilities in comparison to rural areas. Their level of political awareness is also higher. Media plays an important role in shaping people's political behaviour and keep them well informed. Media also acts as a strong check on the wrongdoing of the authorities and makes them accountable towards the people. Being the metropolis it always remains in media highlights and subject of judicial scrutiny. Since most of the educated class already have strong political opinions regarding things; it is hard to influence the upper and upper middle class urban voters, and political parties, especially the new entrants,

mainly rely on the slum dwellers and poor migrant population that largely work in the unorganised sector.

3. **Migrant Population:** Contrary to rural locations urban areas attract large scale migration. For example nobody can deny the fact that Delhi is a migrant state and there is no single caste, community, ethnic, linguistic or religious group or surrounding neighbouring state that can claim its natural proprietorship. Being the capital of India and a prominent centre of educational and employment opportunities it appeals not just all the Indians; but also to foreign nationals and dignitaries. On one hand it seems an entirely encouraging phenomenon, but on the other hand it also accounts for many of the problems of the state- be it water, electricity, education, housing, food, sanitation, infrastructure or law and order related problems. Due to democratic compulsions and vote bank driven politics most politicians and political parties avoid blaming the migrant population for the capital's constant woes and persistent challenges. The same migrant population also adds to its diversity, vibrancy, and economic, social and cultural profile.
4. **High Level of Political Expectations-** People of urban areas, especially of metros and other major cities, have very high expectations from the system. They want everything in place and want to see their city having a comparative edge over others and secure a suitable ranking in comparative surveys and ratings. Similarly, migrants wants proper housing and other basic amenities of life, women are concerned for their safety and security, youth wants more and more lucrative jobs, students wants world class education facilities, commuters wants best of transportation with less congestion on roads, the middle class people expect quality of life, less corruption and lesser inflation, the young generation wants more and more freedom and liberties and so on. The list is endless, and the authorities have to face the challenge of fulfilling most, if not all of their expectations; and that also with limited resources and accountability.

### **Delhi: A Demographic Profile**

Delhi being the capital city of India has always remain a centre of attraction for the people of all the neighbouring states and continuously

shown an upward trajectory of growth both in terms of its territory and population. The national capital territory of Delhi has shown an impressive 20.44 per cent growth in its urban area during 2001-2011. The ever growing pace of urbanisation was responsible for the reduction in the number of villages in Delhi from 300 in 1961 to just 112 in 2011. (Economic Survey, 2018-19)

Delhi as a city steadily evolved in the post- independence time period and emerged as a megacity that attracted large scale migration not only from other Indian states; but from foreign countries also. Being a centre of political and economic activity it has grown with a remarkable pace that has not only changed its demographic composition, but also the nature of its political discourse, economic profile and governance model. Its ever expanding infrastructure failed to match its growing population that gives birth to newer demands, rising expectations and populism.

The population of Delhi has grown extraordinarily and according to the census data of 2011 its population was around 1.68 crore as against around 1.39 crore in 2001. Around 97.50 per cent of its populations lived in urban areas in 2011 and it has one of highest decadal growth rate in the country. (Census, 2011) For more details please refer to Table 1.

Table1.

**POPULATION OF INDIA AND DELHI & ITS GROWTH DURING 1951-2011**  
(Lakh)

S.No.	Years	Delhi		India		Share of Delhi's Population in All India
		Population	Growth (%)	Population	Growth(%)	
1.	1951	17.44	--	3610.88	--	0.48
2.	1961	26.59	52.44	4392.35	21.64	0.61
3.	1971	40.66	52.93	5481.60	24.80	0.74
4.	1981	62.20	53.00	6833.29	24.66	0.91
5.	1991	94.21	51.45	8464.21	23.87	1.11
6.	2001	138.51	47.02	10287.37	21.54	1.35
7.	2011	167.88	21.20	12108.55	17.70	1.39

Source: Economic Survey of Delhi 2018-19

Delhi is a home for people practicing various religions. Hinduism is majority religion in Delhi city with 80.21 % followers. Islam is second most popular religion in city with approximately 12.78 %, followed by Christianity 0.96 %, Jainism 1.39 %, Sikhism 4.43 % and Buddhism 4.43% (Delhi Religion, 2011). Demographic profile of Delhi broadly highlights

its cosmopolitan character, diverse background of its voters, economic and infrastructural challenges and political preferences.

### **Delhi- A Migrant Cosmopolitan City**

Delhi has always been a melting pot of heterogeneous population, cultural diversity and civilizational differentiation due to its geographical location and political significance in India's political history. Over the period of time it has developed a rich cultural heritage which makes it one of the most vibrant cities of the world. It became a natural home of invaders, foreign visitors and surrounding neighbouring population and the most happening place of political, administrative and economic activity. Delhi has been termed as a truly cosmopolitan city keeping in view of its large scale migrant population, foreign nationals, diverse cultural and religious traditions, difference cuisines, languages, festivals and so on. Since a significant part of Delhi's population is constituted by the migrants and most of its expansion has taken place in the surrounding rural areas, nobody could actually claim it onto the basis of language, ethnicity, religion or other regional basis as in case of Mumbai, Kolkata or Chennai where language, ethnicity or sons of the soil theory (Weiner, 1978) are at work. However, ironically, in terms of language Delhi is still not as cosmopolitan as other metros such as Mumbai, where less than 50% of the population speaks Marathi and Bangalore, where less than half speak Kannada (Mukerji, 2011).

The migrant population started flooding Delhi as early as 1911, when it has become the capital of India. The first wave of mass migration was witnessed soon after Partition from 1947 to 1951 when a huge population of Sikhs and Hindus have flocked to Delhi ("Cosmopolitan Delhi", 2013). The large scale migration which during 1946-47 didn't stop there and rather became an unending phenomenon. The administrative machinery of the newly independent India has been set-up in Delhi and people from across the country were offered official postings in government offices. Infrastructural development for government officials and business purposes has given the city a new look. Over the period of time it became an educational hub and land of opportunities for students, professionals, workers and business community.

According to an estimate, nearly 40 per cent of the city's population is constituted of migrants, accounting for nearly 3- 3.5 million migrant voters in Delhi (Kumar, 2013). Contrary to the popular perception, Delhi, not Mumbai is the most sought after city for the people of India. The primary reasons for such a huge flow of migrants to Delhi are its highest per capita income among all metros, quality infrastructure, relatively high quality of public services, and access to quality education and career opportunities.

The migrant population, however, have changed Delhi's economic status in a significant way. The recent migrants to Delhi, especially from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have migrated in search of better livelihood opportunities and large part of them belongs to the lower economic class. For example of all the migrants from Bihar, nearly 63 per cent are poor while another 30 per cent belong to the middle class. Similarly, of those who migrated from UP, 46 per cent are poor and another 45 per cent are belong to the middle class (Kumar, 2013). This is in sharp contrast to that large population Punjabis and Sindhis who migrated in the city as refugees at the time of partition of India, which now belong to the upper and middle classes. Delhi now no longer remains a city of rich people and it has a sizable lower middle class population and a large number of poor people who lived in slums and unauthorised colonies which have scattered all over Delhi and has strongly influenced the political calculus of different political parties in the recent assembly elections.

People came to Delhi for different reasons which were dominated by employment and finding better livelihood opportunities. Among other reasons are the shifting of the household permanently, marriage and better educational opportunities. Among the push factors in the surrounding neighbouring states is their inability to create better educational facilities and generating employment for their inhabitants both in the organised and unorganised sectors. Despite landing in slums and working in the unorganised sector, the migrants, mainly from UP and Bihar, find the city lucrative due to its high per capita income and other facilities such as access to good roads, bridges, flyovers, better healthcare facilities, better transportation such as buses and Metro services, and also the charm of living in the capital of India. Most of these people have settled in the Trans- Yamuna area and the urban

periphery of Delhi. Apart from that Delhi has also attracted people from Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh etc. and many of them have settled here for generations.

### **The Issue of Illegality of Urban Poor**

Delhi has never been planned in a systematic way in the post-independence period. Even during the British period the new capital city was just an extension of the older city of the same name, designed and partially developed for administrative purposes only. But they have still given central Delhi a decent look and made proper arrangements for all official and political offices and residences. But after independence nothing has happened in terms of urban planning which can be categorised as a sincere effort in the direction of making it a world class city.

Although in the post New Economic Policy period attempts have been made to make Delhi a better place to live in. With the growing profile and relevance of New Delhi in world affairs, remarkable performance of its economy, availability and affordability of resources and a desire to compete with the best cities of the world has forced the political leadership of both the state and the central government to work sincerely in that direction. The creation of DMRC and introduction of Metro has solved the traffic woes of the citizens irrespective of their economic class. Master plan has been prepared and a lot of development work has been done during the Commonwealth Games. The on-going Central Vista development project is going to be a major milestone in Delhi's infrastructure as it'll not only improve the productivity and efficiency of the government and administration; but also gives the city a new look and world class office infrastructure. But despite that the problem of urban poor due to large scale migration keeps haunting all the development work as the city was crumbling under the excessive burden over its resources- both economic and physical.

The state attracts migrants in huge numbers and over the period of time they have settled and became voters and started gaining political importance due to their significant numbers. Political parties have also raised their issues, mainly relating to housing and other basic public services to life such as water, electricity, sanitation, education, healthcare infrastructure and so on. Among others the issue of housing

and regularisation of unauthorised colonies and notified slums became so prominent that none of the political parties dare to talk about the removal of illegal settlements and encroachment of public spaces. Activism, litigation and populism have further aggravated the situation. It has given birth to a debate between the urban poor's right to shelter which has been explained in the spirit of Article 21 and the issue of illegality and encroachment of public land which has created innumerable problems for the state authorities and its inhabitants. It became a highly debatable topic in public discourse and attracts judicial scrutiny. The central government has even introduced a scheme named as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) to check inter-state migration of people. The scheme provides livelihood security in rural areas by ensuring at least 100 days of employment to every household in a financial year. But it has a limited impact and still a lot more needs to be done, primarily by the state governments to ensure better education and generate employment both for its educated and uneducated population.

In order to reduce congestion, discourage migration and give the city a better look the civic authorities and the government have to run demolition drives against illegal encroachments of public places. Between 2004 and 2007 alone, however, at least 45,000 homes were demolished, and since the beginning of 2007, eviction notices have been served on at least three other large settlements. (Bhan, 2009) Interestingly, in the recent past these evictions were also not the result of planning directives or actions initiated by either municipal or city level state authorities; but as final verdict of several Public Interest Litigations (PILs) filed in Delhi courts by non-poor resident welfare and trade associations. It can also be seen in the light of inaction and indifference of different political parties towards Delhi's crumbling infrastructure and excessive burden over its resources due to vote bank politics. This gradual change in the attitude of the judiciary has surprised many and the champions of human rights of slum dwellers that once lauded the judicial protection, have started criticising their verdicts.

## **Political Trends and Voting Behaviour in Delhi**

One of the lesser known facts about Delhi's political history was that Chaudhary Brahm Prakash of Congress party became the first Chief Minister of Delhi in 1952 when Delhi became a Part-C state of the Indian union. As a popular leader who was known for his organizational and administrative skills, he became the Chief Minister at a very young age of 34 years. (Roy, 2013) His tenure lasted only for three years and he was succeeded by Gurmukh Nihal Singh in 1955 that remained in power for one year. The States Reorganisation Act, 1956 made Delhi a Union Territory under the control of the central government. It was only in 1993 when Delhi became the National Capital Territory with its own Legislature and Chief Minister ("Delhi's Chief Ministers", 2020).

Since 1993, Delhi has witnessed seven assembly elections. Like the rest of India, Congress has a strong presence in Delhi, being Bhartiya Jan Sangh (BJS) the main opposition party till 1971. Bhartiya Lok Dal (BLD) has replaced BJS in the 1977 general elections and gave Congress the first electoral jolt by winning all the seven parliamentary constituencies. After the failed Janata Party experience the party made a comeback and again dominated the political space in 1980 and 1984 Lok Sabha elections. But since 1989 Lok Sabha election, the dominance of Congress has been challenged by the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). It has polarised the state into two main political parties, the Congress and the BJP. The BJP posed a serious challenge to Congress in Delhi, especially in the parliamentary elections of 1991, 1996, 1998 and 1999 when the party won five, five, six and seven seats respectively. The Congress made a comeback in 2004 Lok Sabha elections when it won six out of seven seats and again improved its tally to a clean sweep (seven out of seven) in the 2009 general elections. However, in the last two parliamentary elections of 2014 and 2019 the BJP riding on a NaMo wave have registered a thumping majority by winning all the seven seats. The Congress candidates were not even on the second spot as some of them were replaced by the AAP.

The assembly elections although presents a continues shift in power and political equations and the BJP has never been able to regain a clear majority ever since 1993 when the party had won 49 seats out of 70 and secured 42.8 per cent of the vote share. In next three assembly elections of 1998, 2003 and 2008 the Congress has registered a handsome victory under the leadership of Sheila Dixit and the party had won 52, 47 and 43 seats respectively, although, with a shift and declining vote share of 47.8, 48.1 and 40.3 per cent of the popular votes. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has emerged as a third political force in the capital during the 2008 state assembly elections, when the party has secured 14.1 per cent of the total vote share. Although, the party was able to win only two seats, it has played a crucial role in polarising the Dalit votes which were traditional Congress supporters.

The political fight in Delhi largely remain concentrated between these two key political parties until the state assembly elections of 2013, when the 'Anti- Corruption Movement' born Aam Aadmi Party has challenged the traditional brand of politics and emerges as the second largest party, pushing Congress at the third spot. The AAP has surprised all by winning 28 seats in their maiden election and secured 29.1 per cent of the votes share. The BJP has won 31 seats with 33.1 per cent of the vote share and the Congress made a dismal performance and was able to win only 8 seats despite having a 24.6 per cent of vote share. The AAP has registered a landslide majority in the last two assembly elections of 2015 and 2020 by winning 67 and 62 assembly seats respectively. In terms of AAP's vote percentage a marginal decline of 0.77 percentages has been registered between 2015 and 2020 and in the recent assembly elections it has secured 53.57% of votes. Now, the two cornered fight has translated into a triangular contest and in this seems to remain so in near future.

### **Voting Behaviour and Political Support Base of Different Political Parties**

Delhi has been a traditional supporter of the Congress party due to its all-encompassing character and ever since India's independence they have voted the party in power, both in centre and the state, until they were first challenged by the Janata Party in 1977, and later during late 1980s by the BJP. Caste and ethnic cleavages were supposed to be

dominant factors during the elections, not just in Delhi but in entire India, and a number of researches have proved that how mobilisation of castes have changed the dynamics of electoral politics. In the initial phase, the Congress party got the support of different caste groups and minority communities. Especially, the Dalits, backward castes and the Muslims of the city were the strong supporters of the party.

The BJP was largely popular among the upper castes such as the Brahmins, the Rajputs, Vaishya/ Bania and the Punjabi- Khatri community and they have given their consistent support to the party even during the adverse circumstances, when the party perform badly in elections. Among others the Jats have also preferred the BJP in the assembly elections. On the other hand, the political mobilisation of the Dalits of UP under the BSP and their remarkable electoral success have also mobilised them upto some extent in Delhi. Keeping in view of their sizable population, (17 per cent) they can't be ignored in Delhi's politics. Traditionally they were Congress supporters; but BSP's entry in Delhi's politics has divided their votes between the Congress and the BSP. The impact of caste hierarchies is not limited merely to fixing the social ranking; but it also have an economic aspect and generally people belonging to higher caste groups are also professionally, economically and socially better off. Therefore, economic variables also reflect caste hierarchies and voting preferences.

The new entrant AAP, although, have mobilised the people cutting across caste lines; but it was largely dependent upon the support of the backward communities including the Dalits and the Muslims. The migrants or say primarily the people who're poor and living in urban slums, unauthorised colonies and settlements have voted in large numbers in AAP's favour. The AAP shares most of its support base with Congress and may be it is because of the last fifteen years of anti-incumbency, huge corruption charges, high inflation, increasing crime against women, political arrogance and dissatisfaction of Congress party's traditional supporters that now they have shifted their loyalties towards the AAP. Almost 60 percent urban poor have voted for AAP in the assembly elections of 2015. A dominant segment of the migrant population that comes from Eastern Uttar Pradesh/Bihar (Poorvanchalis) have also preferred AAP over BJP and the Congress. AAP's much hyped success in reforming the school education, primary

healthcare via mohalla clinics, freebies and a clear chief Ministerial candidate have played a major role in its electoral success in the assembly elections of 2020.

If we analyse the class wise composition of the support base of different political parties then the Congress party always gets the support of the middle, the lower middle class and the economically backward or say the poor sections of the society, and until the emergence of AAP they have always voted for the Congress. The BJP was mainly popular among the upper and the upper middle class, which includes the government officials, professionals, traders and other business community. From 2008 assembly election onwards a new trend has been observed when the class solidarity has started taking prominence over caste based support. Over the years there was a lot convergence of caste and class based votes between the BJP and the Congress, but with the advent of AAP a clear shift was visible during the 2013, 2015, 2020 state assembly elections when people preferred their class considerations over their caste based loyalties.

With its remarkable performance in the last two assembly elections AAP has changed the direction of politics in urban areas, particularly in metro cities. The cosmopolitan migrant nature of these cities, class identity of people, huge population of urban poor, addressing the question of very basic amenities of life, freebies, populism and reaching out to the people directly through traditional politics could turn the entire political game upside down. Grabbing the nerve of the city, AAP has emerged as a key political force in the capital and will remain so in times to come.

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# The Political Significance of Saliha Satyagraha

Kamalakanta Roul\*

## Abstract

The idea of freedom was not only to make India free from British colonialism but also to uplift toiling masses from poverty and miseries. Indian freedom fighters simultaneously led freedom movement along with the fight against poverty. The Saliha Satyagraha (1930) in Nuapada district of Odisha exemplifies this. It was a popular movement against the oppressive colonial policies and exploitative feudal rulers. Nuapada district, primarily dominated by tribals, played significant role in India's freedom movement from 1857 to 1947. Alas, Nuapada remains as "extremely poor and underdeveloped district" which has eroded the essence of Saliha Satyagraha. The continuity of colonial-feudal power structure, accumulation of resources by a tiny section, and failure of land distribution are major contributing causes of poverty in Nuapada. These causes have disrupted the functioning of participatory democracy, distributed development and decentralised governance. The paper primarily examines the significance of Saliha Satyagraha in present day Nuapada. It argues that ending poverty in Nuapada will dismantle the exploitative nature of colonial-feudal power structure and will certainly promote freedom and democracy in the district. The study is, primarily, qualitative in nature. The hypothesis is in the nature of an exploratory one. Both primary and secondary sources of data have been used here especially primary data has been extensively used.

**Keywords:** Salihan, Freedom, Poverty, Colonialism, Feudalism

## Introduction: Struggle for Poor People's Swaraj

The idea of freedom was not only to make India free from British colonialism but also to uplift toiling masses from poverty and miseries. Issues of poverty and freedom were deeply reflected over India's anti-colonial struggle. Indian freedom fighters simultaneously led freedom movement along with the fight against poverty. The Saliha Satyagraha (1930) in Nuapada district of Odisha exemplifies this. It was a popular movement against oppressive colonial policies and exploitative feudal

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ruler. Nuapada district, primarily dominated by tribals, played significant role in India's freedom movement from 1857 to 1947. Alas, Nuapada remains as "extremely poor and underdeveloped district" which has eroded the essence of Saliha Satyagraha. Amid huge natural resources (Sabar, 2015), poverty is unabated, labour trafficking and migration are regular in the district. The continuity of colonial-feudal power structure, accumulation of resources by a tiny section, and failure of land distribution (Deo, 2011) are major contributing causes of poverty in Nuapada. These three causes have disrupted the functioning of participatory democracy, distributed development and decentralised governance. Consequently, a large section of disadvantaged people has been denied basic rights, fair treatment and equal opportunity.

The paper primarily examines the significance of Saliha Satyagraha in present day Nuapada. It argues that ending poverty in Nuapada will dismantle the exploitative nature of colonial-feudal power structure and will certainly promote freedom and democracy in the district. In this context, two major political questions have been raised: What has made Nuapada's tribes enslaved? Despite having several constitutional provisions, policies and vast natural resources, why Nuapada is battling with poverty and deprivation? The study is, primarily, qualitative in nature. The hypothesis is in the nature of an exploratory one. Both primary and secondary sources of data have been used here especially primary data has been extensively used.

### **India's Freedom Movement and Combating Poverty**

From 1778 to 1948, Indian tribals fought more than seventy anti-colonial movements. These movements were mainly two types: first, movement against rajas, zamindars, thekedars, British officials, traders, and moneylenders and second, movement in association with the national freedom movement. Gandhi was aware of tribal exploitation by colonialist-feudalist combine. In South Africa, Gandhi had worked with Zulu tribes. It was Thakkar Bapa who brought Gandhi closer to Indian tribes especially Bhil tribes in Gujarat who were exploited by colonial rule. Gandhi said that tribals were "part of rural communities who were exploited by the powerful class of people; thus, they required welfare measures. Welfare measures should be taken up on the basis of

understanding their society and culture” (Chakrabarty, 2019). Gandhi emphasised over providing all kinds of services in tribal areas and asserted that “who can deny that all such service is not merely humanitarian but solidly national, and it brings us nearer to true independence?” (Gandhi, 1941: 24). In his constructive programme, Gandhi emphasised that “service of adivasis is also a part of” the Swaraj movement (Gandhi, 1941: 23).

Gandhi’s Swaraj movement against British colonialism was not only to achieve political freedom but also to protect social and economic rights of depressed people. Gandhi said, “Swaraj is the poor man’s Swaraj” (Gandhi, 1947: 6). In Belgaum Congress session Gandhi said, ‘it will be Swaraj for starving and poor people if we can provide food to them’ (Roul, 2021: 222). Gandhi’s idea of Swaraj was not separate from poverty and inequality. Gandhi blamed exploitative policies of British government for miserable living conditions of Indian people. Gandhi said, “real Swaraj will not be the acquisition of authority by a few but the acquisition of the capacity of all to resist authority when it is abused” (Prabhu, 1961:4-5). Further, he said, “I shall work for an India, in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice...” (Gandhi, 1947: 9). Civil liberty, for Gandhi, “...is the breath of political and social life...the foundation of freedom ... the water of life” (Harijan, June 24, 1939).

### **Nuapada’s Poverty Issue**

Nuapada is well known for its glorious past, great adivasi civilisation and the Nature’s bounty. It’s rich natural beauty is engirdled with candid green hills and dense forest. Once, Nuapada was known as the “home of teak”. The melodious sounds of streams and waterfalls along with luxuriant wild vegetation creates natural scenic beauty. Nuapada is situated in the southern part of Odisha. It constitutes with 668 villages, 109 gram panchayats, 5 Blocks, and 3 NACs. (DCHN, Part XII-B, p 12). In 1993, Nuapada was made a separate district. According to the Census 2011, Nuapada has total 6, 10, 382 population, out of which Hindus 6,01,092, and Muslims 4,952 (DSHN, 2018: 9). The male and female ratio in the district is 1000: 1020 which is higher than the state level ratio (ODGN, p. 68). In sex ratio, the district has been ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in state level (DCHN, Part XII-B, p.14). Nuapada is a tribal dominated district

which is 33.8 per cent of the total population. Komna block has highest number of tribes. Major tribal groups in the district are “Gond, Bhunjia, Saora/Sabar, Banjara, Binjhal, Dal, Kandha, Mirdha, Munda, Paruja and Bhattoda”. However, Nuapada has 13.46 per cent SC population and Khariar block has highest number of SCs. Main SC groups are “Dom, Ganda, Chamar, Ghasi, Dhoba, Keuta, Mehra, Beldar and Panika” (ODGN, p. 69). During the colonial period, Hindu castes like Brahmin and Karan migrated to Nuapada from coastal Odisha and were mainly settled in urban and semi-urban areas. These two castes are well-established and most dominant groups in society, government jobs and business. In 1991, literacy rate of Nuapada was 27.52 per cent and in 2011, it was increased to 57.3 per cent. However, in comparison to state literacy rate, Nuapada district is far behind of it. The 2011 Census indicates that ST literacy rate in Nuapada is 51.09 per cent whereas SC literacy rate is 60.02 per cent (ODGN, p. 71). In fact, the ST literacy rate of Nuapada is not only lower than the literacy rate of SC but also lower than the district and state level literacy rate. As far as primary education is concerned, Nuapada had 571 primary schools and every school had 2 teachers in 2017-18. In the same year, 23, 533 students were enrolled in primary schools and teacher-student ratio was 1: 17 (DSHN, 2018: 59, 60, 61). Remarkably, in 2015-18, more girls and ST students were enrolled in schools.

Nuapada produced miserable performance in development indicators. In 2006, the Panchayati Raj Ministry of India stated that Nuapada is “country’s 250 most backward districts out of total 640 districts”. It is the 19<sup>th</sup> district of Odisha which comes under the coverage of Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme. Nuapada has 83 per cent BPL families whose annual income is only Rs. 15,000. Moreover, 50 per cent BPL families belong to “very poor” category with an annual income of only Rs. 6000 (DSHN, 2018). In contrary, Odisha government claims, Nuapada’s “per capita supply of agricultural land was the highest among all the districts in the state”. Moreover, 68.2 per cent agricultural families were owner cultivators in the district and only 2.4 per cent agricultural tenants live in rural areas. Official data shows, “Nuapada produces surplus paddy” (OES, 2004-10). In 2009-10, the district produces 228.64 MT paddy and 155.48 MT rice. On an average, from 2004 to 2010, the district produces 218.2 MT paddy and 148.48 MT rice.

Ill health is a major issue in Nuapada. Malaria and Tuberculosis are considered as fatal in the district and most of the households succumb to these diseases. In 2011-12, infant mortality rate was 52 per cent and in 2012-13, it was 49 per cent (OES 2014-15). In 2017, infant mortality rate was reduced to 24.29 per cent. In Nuapada, every block has one community health centre and only Komna block has two community health centres. Similarly, each block has three primary health care centres and 14 to 24 health sub-centres (DSHN, 2018: 69). But only 55 doctors, 41 staff nurses and 575 beds and 989 Asha workers have been employed in the district. Each block has 4-5 doctors, 2-3 nurses and 40-45 beds (ibid: 70). In regard to the drinking water facilities, the district has 10, 018 working tube wells and 126 piped water projects.

Nuapada's economy is primarily based on agriculture and forest. The district has different types of trees, wild grasses and bamboos in forest. It has 48.02 per cent forest of the geographical areas (DCHN, Part XII-A, 2011:5). The district records 1286.4 mm as normal rainfall. In 2008 and 2009, actual rainfall was higher than the normal. The district avails huge natural resources but has scarce mineral sources. Resources have miserably failed to provide employment to the people due to several natural factors as well as man-made factors. The Economic Survey 1954-55 shows that "about 98.2 per cent of the adivasi families were dependent on forest and agriculture for their livelihood". In 1965, Bijakhama forest provided food to the nearby villagers during the starvation deaths in tribal dominated Komna block. Bijakhama had huge Bija tuber plants and the tubers were collected by people to survive the drought (Sunani, 2021). Tribal people mainly depend over the non-timber forest products such as "Mahua flower, Char, Harida and Bahada, Tol" for consumption and selling. Nuapada's forest provides occupation to the poor people for about four to five months in an year. Distress sale of forest and agricultural produces has made poor lives miserable.

The Census 2011, identified 85.47 per cent people belong to agricultural classes, and out of the total non-agricultural families 20 per cent are labourers (ODGN, p. 204-206). Nuapada has 9779 landless households and it has 33861.02 acres available land for the purpose of agriculture (SR, UNDP, 2008: 66). The district also has 1505.37 acres of

undistributed Bhudaan land (SR, UNDP, 2008: 67). “Less than two per cent of the households occupy almost 95 per cent of Bahal or low land or in other words 98 per cent of the population own 5 per cent of the lowland or the best land” (ODGN, p. 217). The socio-economic assessment of Odisha government in Nuapada states that a household can manage to live a normal life with available of 8 to 12 acres of non-irrigated land in active possession during abnormal monsoon year. A family cannot live below 8 acres of active cultivable possession of land and the family has to supplement the income from other sources. Households having less than 5 acres of land cannot live normal life in Nuapada district (ODGN, p. 217). However, in Nuapada, best lands are under the possession of feudal elites like gountia, sahuakar, zamindar, Brahmins, and Karanas. These classes enjoy control over land in the name of homestead, orchards, and Debottar lands. Moreover, their conjunction with the government officers also helps them to hold on to their control. The district has implemented land ceiling acts and also distributed ceiling surplus land among adivasis and dalits but real land possession has not been given to them. It gives opportunities to landlords to ignore the ceiling rules and enjoy the dominance over lands. The settlement has also failed to reach out to the landless poor. Furthermore, restrictions have been imposed over tribals accessibility to forest, NTFP collections have been denied, collection of fire woods are refused and wildlife sanctuaries have been made nearby tribal habitations. Many villages in Sunabedha plateau come under the area of wildlife sanctuary. In this region, tribals have been facing continuous threat of displacement. Demands for land and forest rights have been continuously ignored by the district administration. Tribals and peasants have also been agitating for “forest rights, implementation of Forest Dwellers Act, proper support price for food grains, irrigation to their land, and compensation for displaced families”. In 2020, villagers decided that “no forest official would be allowed in their villages unless their community rights under the FRA are settled in accordance with the 2019 agreement. The officials are, however, allowed entry into Nuaguda as that village had received its community forest rights certificate. Posters saying no entry of forest department can be seen in several villages” (Sunani, 2015). Jami Jangal Mukti Andolan is the frontrunner struggle of tribals and forest dwellers in Nuapada. In 1990, the Paharia community started their movement to get back ST status.

Despite large tracts of natural resources, Nuapada is “industrially most backward” district of Odisha. There is not a single large-scale industry and also no medium scale industries existing in public or public sectors (BIPN, 2019-20: 8). “Only 32 kms of broad-gauge single railway line passages through the district, providing 3 railway stations” (ibid: 20). Government jobs are only alternative opportunities. Jobs in private sectors mainly confined to flour-mills, hullers and saw-mills. Consequently, Nuapada has turned to be a district of massive human migration from post-harvest to early monsoon. In some villages, total tribals and dalits population migrate to neighbouring cities leaving their respective villages empty (Panigrahi, The Sambad). Villages like Tileimala, Kandamupta, Sharadhapur of Sinapali block are known as “daadana gaaon” (migrant village). According to the Nuapada District Gazetteer, every year as soon as harvesting season gets over, more than 20,000 households migrate to neighbouring states in search of employment. These labourers face serious life threats and health hazards in working sites like exploitation, unrest, sexual harassment, trafficking, murder, death, and fatal illness. The Nuapada district administration does not keep record of these migrant labourers and never bother about their security. Personal debts and loans compel labourer class to take advance money from contractors before the commencement of Nuakhai festival. Shortage of food in families during the celebration of cultural functions like Nuakhai and Chherchhera are very common in Nuapada. In fact, Odisha government has implemented several development policies like “20-Point Economic Programme, MGNREGA, BIJUKBK, WODC, and Long-Term Action Plan”.

The irrigation facility in the district is inadequate and insufficient too. “Out of 1,89,170 hectares of cultivable land only 33623 (17.77 per cent) hectares have irrigation facilities”. However, only 45, 000 acres of lands are irrigated by Upper Jonk, Sunder dam, Saipala and Lower Indra Irrigation projects (ODGN, p. 205). “So far ground water development in the district has been meagre. The overall Stage of Groundwater development of the district is 19.12%” (GWIBND, 2013: 10). As a result, the district still persists with severe problems of drought which leads to poverty related problems like child selling, starvation deaths, farmer suicides and massive migration. The famine of 1965-66 is the root of all

these problems which made people poor and landless. The situation was mishandled by administration and it was resulted in massive starvation deaths. During this famine, “people started mortgaging their land, properties, themselves and selling their animals even their children”. The famine of 1965-66 made moneyed class and big land-owning class more wealthy, affluent and powerful in the district. It disadvantaged the poor tribals, landless, labourers, small and marginal farmers who sold or mortgaged their lands to survive the starvation deaths. The moneyed class got “cheap labour, easy terms for saheji or leasing out of land, kar or annual lease with fixed share, also enjoyed the benefit through distress sale of labour, crops and even land”. Moreover, in 1985, Nuapada was gravely affected by food scarcity which led to malnutrition, child selling, and starvation death.

In Independent India’s Nuapada district, several colonial-feudal rules have been legally abolished. The Orissa Estate Abolition Act, 1952 abolished zamindari system from the district. Likewise, Bethi-Begari system in 1923 and Bahabandha Pratha in 1928 were also abolished to improve the living standard of people. In contrary, the colonial-feudal structure continues unabated in the district. Royal families have maintained their dominance over the political power structure and electoral politics. Various progressive laws such as abolition of zamindari system, and land ceiling acts have not been able to dismantle the colonial-feudal-caste structures in the district. Feudal groups such as zamindars, gountias, and moneyed class have been exercising their unchallenged authorities over villages. “They remained arbiter of agriculture wages for long in the rural area of Nuapada district”. Consequently, the Maoist extremism emerges and governance deficit espouses their growth in the region. Several areas are under the control of red rebels especially Sunabedha plateau is one of such areas. “Since 2004, more than 63 Gram Panchayats of Nuapada district have been affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE). The Odisha Government is trying to approach and solve the LWE problem through four-flung

approaches: public perception, development, administration and security” (ODGN, p.61).

### **Nature of Colonial Oppression in Nuapada**

In 1817, the British East India Company got the possession of Nuapada’s Khariar Rajya from the Raja of Nagpur. The Khariar King made an alliance with the Company to remain loyal to the British government. The Bengal model of Zamindari System was adopted in Khariar region “equating the local Raja with Bengali Zamindar”. In 1863, the King of Khariar was reduced to merely a revenue collecting zamindar. The adivasis were subjected to the Bengal pattern of revenue collection and administration which ignored the structure of agrarian relation in tribal dominated Khariar state. Tenants had no occupancy right on land and they were asked to pay regular Bheti. Tribal gountias (village headmen) were forced to collect more revenue from their fellow adivasis. The Zamindar of Khariar arbitrarily imposed tax on land while counting numbers of “ploughs and hoe and seed-capacity of the land”. There were two types of tax system in Nuapada during colonial period: “Ryotwari” and “Mustajari”. However, “Jirayati” lands were “administered partly on Ryotwari system and partly on Mustajari”. The Mustajari system of rent collection was widely prevailing in most of the villages of Nuapada. In this system, agents of zamindar used to collect rent from tenants. In contrary, under the Ryotwari land tenure system, the landlord was directly involved in rent collection from Ryots (tenants) through his officials. Under the Ryotwari system, rights of Ryots were recognised. But in the Mustajari system, there was no legal recognition of Ryot’s rights over land and it was more oppressive in comparison to Ryotwari system.

In 1869, more complicated revenue policies were implemented in Nuapada. The Thekedari System (auction of villages) was introduced by replacing Khudkatti (first clearer of forest right). Large amount of Salami (presents) was collected by thekedars from new settlers and bethi-beggari (free labour) was extracted from peasants. The tribal gountias failed to compete with thekedars in collecting Salami and lost their influence over tribal society. As a result, the new administrative system advantaged the moneyed class by replacing tribal dominance. Tribals

and peasants were severely harassed and humiliated by thekedars when they failed to pay Salami and their lands were also forcibly grabbed. Moreover, Nazrana system (tax collection by Zamindar at the time of theka renewal) was introduced in Nuapada between 1869 and 1891. Tribals failed again to compete with non-tribals in paying Nazrana. In the meantime, erratic weather caused drought and crop failures from 1877 to 1886 and was finally struck by the great famine of 1899. The price of food grains was highly increased and the great famine resulted in massive starvation deaths. To survive from the famine, people mortgaged or sold their lands and also migrated to other places. But the landlord of Khariar remained loyal to the British government and the colonial-feudal axis continued to exploit tribals and peasants.

### **The Political Character of Saliha Satyagraha**

The colonial misrule aroused discontentment among tribals, dalits and peasants against the local representatives of colonial rulers and also against the colonial-feudal tax system such as “revenue tax, forest tax, thekedari, nazrana, salami, bethi-beggari”. Nuapada had two major anti-colonial movements: first, tribal upsurge in support of the great revolt of 1857 and, second, mass participation in Gandhi’s national freedom movement (1920-1947). In both the movements, Nuapada’s tribals, dalits and peasants bravely fought against British despotism and provided strong leadership against the colonial oppression.

While supporting the revolt of 1857, Veer Surendra Sai strongly fought against the British East India Company in Sambalpur. His powerful opposition to British rule was initially supported by the King of Khariar. Similarly, tribals, dalits and peasants also extended their active support to the anti-colonial fight of Surendra Sai in Nuapada. Narayan Sah, a tribal chief of Sunakhan took the leadership in the fight against colonial ruler. He provided shelter to Surendra Sai and other rebels in his region. Narayan Sah was hanged and his son Gobinda Sah was arrested by the British Company in 1857. The Company announced rewards and warned local rulers to immediately arrest the rebels. Despite, Gond tribal chief of Tanwat, Lal Sah and his associate Chait Sah extended support to the

anti-colonial movement in Maraguda Valley and gave shelter to Surendra Sai.

In May 1860, British General Cockburn along with armed military force marched towards Maraguda valley to arrest Lal Sah and other rebels. Lal Sah's guerrilla warfare and stiff resistance from local tribes with bows and arrows forced British army to retreat from Maraguda Valley. Lal Sah was a great warrior and a strategist of guerrilla warfare who led 50 guerrilla groups at a time in the valley. His warfare technique, war related arrangements, organisational skill and mobilizational ability surprised British commander and military troops (ODGN, p. 46). General Cockburn failed to move further towards the valley and did not capture a single rebel. In August, General Cockburn wrote a letter from Maraguda to the Deputy Commissioner by stating that Manikgarh-Maraguda valley was fully under the control of Lal Sah. The repeated failures of British army in arresting Lal Sah compelled British officers to declare Maraguda Valley as "Rebel Valley". Lal Sah was declared as "Badmas" by the British government (NAI, File No. 35-37, p.173-189, Feb.,1864). Frustrated British army, brutally harassed villagers to put pressure over Lal Sah. They captured the cattle of local tribals and brought to the British camp at Pihapara. Three tribal villages in Maraguda valley were also burnt by British army. In order to save the villagers from the British harassment and torture, Lal Sah and Chait Sah surrendered before the Khariar King on November 22, 1860. The King handed over them to the British Commander Vallanse (ODGN, p.47). The contribution of Lal Sah and Chait Sah to the revolt of 1857 was very significant and inspiring. Despite adversities and scarce resources, they fought an armed resistance for seven months against the powerful British force.

### **The Saliha Satyagraha, 1930**

Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha (1930) deeply influenced Indian masses and freedom fighters. The forest satyagraha in Raipur district paralysed the British administrative machineries. During this time, peasants revolted against the Darbar rule in Kalahandi which had supported Kulta immigration from Sambalpur and patronised Kulta for their agricultural growth in the region (Roul, 2021: 227). The people of Nuapada were inspired by these protests and they came out in large number against

the tyrannical rule of Khariar feudatory state. The King arbitrarily imposed taxes on tenants without looking at their socio-economic conditions. It compelled the people of Khariar feudatory to organise a satyagraha against the taxation (MPDG: Raipur, 1973: 81) in Saliha village which is known as Saliha Satyagraha.

The Saliha Satyagraha was a forest satyagraha organised by tribals, dalits, peasants and women of Nuapada against the oppressive colonial-feudal rule. It had inspired and set an example for both the masses and classes to follow later on in the district. Saliha is a village where the people of Khariar estate assembled in large number on September 30, 1930 and protested against the arbitrary taxation on tenants. The place is popularly called as "Salihagarh". A pillar of freedom fighters has been constructed to remember the satyagrahis and their sacrifices for the Independence of India. Archaeologists urge that Saliha village "seems to be an ancient settlement, because two pieces of sculpture arts are found on the bank of the tank. One is a rectangular Sakti. At present, Konabhaira deity is worshipped as presiding deity by the villagers of Saliha which was once a site of Shiva-Sakti worship" (quoted in Yamin, 2010: 53). Saliha village is located in Jonk Tehsil of Nuapada district. It is surrounded by dense forest and Rocky Mountains. According to the Census 2011, "the total geographical area of the village is 467 hectares". Saliha has total 266 households and 1,006 population. Male and female ratio of the village is 502:504. It has become a Gram Panchayat now. Saliha village is only 8 km away from the Nuapada district headquarter.

From 1920-47, Nuapada's people actively participated in Indian National Movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. Leaders of Odisha Congress and Praja Mandal supported the movement against the misrule of the Khariar feudatory. Besides, Congress workers were engaged in the "Gandhian constructive work like construction and repair of village roads, digging of village ponds, spread of education, campaign against liquor and untouchability". On March 16, 1921, Gandhian leader Ganesh Prasad Mahapatra led a protest march to the Darbar Hall of Khariar feudatory with some demands like "exemption of land revenue, abolition of plough and festival tax, exemption of grazing tax and to stop eviction of farmer in case of failure of payment of tax" (ODGN, p. 58). In January, 1922, a demonstration was organised where police opened

blank fire at the protestors which provoked people to intensify the freedom movement. Nehru hoisted the tricolour flag on the banks of river Ravi and demanded Purna Swaraj on December 31, 1929. In the similar spirit, the tricolour flag was hoisted in several schools by students and teachers on January 26, 1930 in Nuapada. Teachers who participated in this ceremony were strongly punished and many of them were also imprisoned by colonial authority.

Nuapada participated in the Civil Disobedience movement on March 12, 1930. On the same day, a large number of people came out against the oppressive colonial rule. The protestors criticised the “extraction of forest cess, pandri (octroi), restriction on forest rights, collection of salami, Chari (grazing tax) and use of bethi-beggari system”. Series of meetings were organised in villages to create awareness. It received wide response from the general public. Looking at the unprecedented public support to the anti-colonial movement, it was finally decided to hold a protest meeting on September 30, 1930 at Saliha village. People peacefully came out in large number from more than 20 villages. It is said that more than seven hundred people assembled at Saliha “to protest against arbitrary extraction of taxes, exploitation of the authority and to demand Purna Swaraj” (ODGN, p. 56). The zamindar of Khariar feudatory secretly informed the police. Heavily armed police force marched to Saliha. At the time, a peaceful meeting was going on under the presidentship of Keju Das Baba who belonged to Chuhuri village. “A resolution was passed in the meeting not to give taxes and to revolt against imposition of taxes” (Yamin, 2010: 54). Suddenly, police gheraoed the meeting venue and ordered the gathering to stop the meeting. Arbitrary disruption of a peaceful meeting by police annoyed the protestors. They started giving slogans against British government and also against their local agents. Police indiscriminately charged lathi over the august gathering. The peaceful ambience turned violent. Angry people retaliated and burnt police lathis. When a police sergeant was injured, police indiscriminately fire over the crowd. In the firing, Keju Das Baba and tribal leader Kartik Sabar of Saliha village received bullet injuries. Indiscriminate firing over the crowd at Saliha brought physical injuries to many Satyagrahis but, fortunately no one was killed in the incident. Injured Keju Das Baba and Kartik Sabar were carried to the Saliha village by satyagrahis. In this agitation, more than 50 Satyagrahis

were arrested including leaders like Ramlal Debangon (Parkod village), Ramu (Saliguda village), Kundu (Chanbera Kundri village), Ganda Rai (Saliha village) and Laxman Das (Khariar Road). Kartik Sabar was a key leader of anti-colonial meeting in Saliha. His daughter Demathi Dei Sabar remembers the incident and said that she was working in the paddy field along with other women. A young girl informed her that the British force was “attacking the village, they have assaulted your father. They are torching our homes”. Demathi Dei Sabar raced back to Saliha with 40 other young women and saw her father Kartik was “lying on the ground bleeding. He had a bullet in his leg”. She lost her “temper and attacked that officer with the gun. As she attacked the officer, the 40 other women with her turned their lathis on the rest of the raiding force”. Demathi Dei Sabar is known as “Salihan” in Nuapada district (Sainath, 2015).

In spite of police repression and arrests, Satyagrahis continued protest against the British misrule in Saliha. It forced British police to withdraw from Saliha but next day i.e., on October 1, 1930, police returned to Saliha with more armed forces. They arrested two injured leaders-Keju Das Baba and Kartik Sabar- and took them to Raipur. Saliha Satyagraha rapidly spread to other villages-Choulsara, Patparpali, Khuteru and Ranadabri. Despite the absence of their leaders, people continued the Saliha Satyagraha in the form of “picketing before liquor shops and burning foreign goods” in Nuapada. Meanwhile, Gandhian leader Jagadish Prasad Joshi of Karangamal village took the leadership of anti-colonial movement in the district. In 1930, he was also arrested along with other leaders and was kept in Raipur jail for more than one year.

**Conclusion: Saliha Satyagraha espoused the idea of Participatory Democracy, Distributed Development and Decentralised Governance**

The Saliha Satyagraha was a strong public discontentment against the oppressive colonial rule and its exploitative feudal agents in Nuapada. It was a Gandhian Forest Satyagraha against arbitrary taxation and for the cause of land and forest rights. It was primarily led by most oppressed communities-tribals, dalits, peasants, women and poor-to liberate tribal society from colonial domination. Saliha Satyagraha aimed for democratic freedom which encompasses the rights pertaining to

individual's emancipation in society, participation in politics, and entitlement of resources.

The Saliha Satyagraha sends out five strong messages which have made it more relevant in present day politics and development of Nuapada. First, Saliha Satyagraha was a popular movement against colonialism and feudalism which were tentacles of poverty and exploitation in British India. Second, Saliha Satyagraha was not only a movement for political independence but also for socio-economic independence of downtrodden people. It probes that poverty undermines freedom and democracy and it leaves people vulnerable to domination and oppression. In fact, Philip Pettit argues that promoting freedom as non-domination will require promoting the socio-economic independence of citizens. Third, Saliha Satyagraha firmly stood for participatory democracy, distributed development and decentralised governance. Fourth, Saliha Satyagraha was a collective fight of tribals, dalits, peasants and women for freedom from domination and oppression. Finally, Saliha Satyagraha illustrates that the idea of freedom was not separate from the poverty issue and the Indian freedom movement linked and led both the issues together.

Since the freedom movement days, poverty has been a significant political issue in India. For the first time, Naoroji estimated India's poverty and wrote a paper titled "Poverty in India" (1877). Naoroji linked poverty issue with India's freedom struggle. Gandhi's Sarvodaya and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya's Antyodaya founded a strong political vision to combat poverty. Similarly, Dr. Ambedkar challenged the socio-economic power structure of rural India and demanded for the abolition of Mahar Watan and eradication of Khoti system.

Independent India was born primarily with three significant political missions like "securing national unity, bringing dignity and justice to those at the bottom of the social order, and eliminating mass poverty". Rajendra Prasad rightly said that the government's aim is "to end poverty...to abolish distinction and exploitation". Likewise, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan urged "for the removal of all social disabilities...of man-made inequalities and injustices and to provide for all equality of opportunity". In the similar spirit, the post-colonial Indian state adopted

several measures to fight against poverty. Millions of people have been lifted out of poverty since Independence to till day. Thousands of policies and schemes have already been enacted but still there is no succor for the poor. A large section has been the victim of a kind of 'permanent poverty' and a tiny section is beneficiary of all benefits. Meanwhile, tribal poverty emerges as a challenge to the democratic stability and constitutional authority of India. Poverty rate among rural tribes is 47 per cent and 30 per cent among urban tribes. Each second tribal family lives in extreme food insecurity with low calorie and protein consumption. Consequently, the Left-Wing Extremist groups take advantage of tribal's vulnerability to poverty and marginalisation.

As fastest growing economy, India has also been able to set an impressive annual growth rate. But the solution to the problem of India's poverty lies with two significant factors: redistributive role of the Indian state and democratising rural India. Higher rate of economic growth alone cannot achieve the target in the fight against poverty. The Indian state has to strongly intervene in reconciling growth with distribution. The redistributive role of the Indian state can be defined with the policies relating to land reforms, inclusion of small farmers in economic growth and the landless people must be given proper wages and employment. Democratising rural India will facilitate the redistributive role of the Indian state. Even after 75 years of freedom, rural India has been persisting with inequality, continuity of colonial-feudal power structures, and governance deficit. A tiny section of the propertied class has accumulated land, grabbed power and benefited from state policies. The unholy nexus between propertied class, political regime and local bureaucracy has not only strengthened the undemocratic and dominant power structures but it has also helped in accentuating rural poverty in tribal India. The nexus has also 'neglected and unimplemented the redistributive policies of the Indian state'.

Tribals in Nuapada thought that freedom from colonial feudalism will provide an opportunity to protect and promote their socio-economic rights. Alas, Nuapada district continues with the same exploitative colonial-feudal power structure in Independent India in a little revision. The local power structure has deep rooted socio-economic fusion with colonial-feudal order like zamindar-thekadar-gountia-sahukar and

bureaucracy. However, Nuapada's poverty, and food insecurity is the effect of this undemocratic local level structural power relationship between various types of landholder class and also daily transaction between the landholders and landless communities. Bob Currie argues that the reason behind the extreme undernourishment of people is 'substantial extractive powers' upheld by the local dominant economic class even after decades of independence. He argues that poverty of the Nuapada is very much linked to the stiff increase of land revenue, land alienation and labour bondage system. Land, forest, agriculture, irrigation, and distribution are under the control of this unholy power structure with the support of district administration. On the other hand, poor people of Nuapada are forced to live as pennilessness which compels them for distress sale of crops, land, and labour. Huge migration and hunger are unabated. People are averting starvation deaths by selling their children. Sadly, even after seven decades of successful democracy millions of tribal people consume toxic mango kernels and tamarind seeds as the primary source of food security to satiate their hunger.

The state must promote participatory democracy at grass root level to challenge the dominant power structure which is responsible for abject poverty and inequality in the district. Community level participation must be ensured through Panchayat Raj system especially for the wider purpose of food, water, health, education, public services, and development processes. Indeed, the greater political participation of destitute tribal people in democratic process will empower them to challenge the oppressive dominant structure of Nuapada and will certainly pave the way for a progressive and egalitarian society. In June, 1990, Nelson Mandela said, "to deny people their human rights are to challenge their very humanity. To impose on them a wretched life of hunger and deprivation is to dehumanise them".

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# China-Russia Relations in the Post-Cold War Period: Revitalization of Brotherhood or Friend of Compulsion?

Shiv Poojan Prasad Pathak\*

## Abstract

The paper covers the relations between China and Russia after the end of the Cold War. The objectives of the paper are to find out what are the Chinese perceptions about Russia, and its national interest with regard to it. What is Chinese policy and strategy to achieve its national interest? It also inquires same set of information from Russian perspectives. What are the Russian perceptions about China, its national interests and policy and strategy? In addition, the paper also tries to identify the areas of cooperation and divergence in their relations by answering that why would they cooperate in near future.

**Key Words:** Perception, Interest, Policy and Strategy, China, Russia, Post-Cold war

## Introduction:

The phenomenon of the rise of China and the decline of Russia erstwhile Soviet Union is a classical example of the rise and fall of great power in history of the sovereign state system. China is hoping for its golden future while Russia has a glorious past. They are not superpower, but their friendship alarms the decision-makers in different countries especially, major powers. They are permanent member of the UN Security Council. Their objectives seem to achieve high status and prestige in international system. So their policies and strategy would make a major impact over international political institutions and financial and economic organisation. The relations between China and Russia are quite interesting and relevant for understanding the configuration of new world order, hegemonic politics, regional security in the East-Asia. The interesting things are that they are sharing same set of international order unlike US and China which have different

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notion of justice and order in international society. Moreover, both powers support matching ideological premise. If they work together, the power structure in international system would be reconfigured, and if they go against each other, the regional and global stability would be jeopardized. The close understanding of development between China and Russia relations is essential for Indian desire for greater role in world politics. The normalization of Sino-Russian relations would introduce a new power structure and influence India's strategy. Any positive or negative development in relationship of Sino-Russia is directly linked with India's national interest.

### **Background**

The history of their relations during the Cold War traveled a journey from close friends and allies to staunch adversaries that resulted in the East-East Cold war. It proved hypothesis that in international politics, national interest is more important than the missionary work based on ideology. The reason for deviation was the lack of ideological consensus, search for power and denial of nuclear technology. Further, the national identity issue complicated the relationship for both powers. They ought to

“demonstrate the unique relevance of its own revolution and subsequent national-building experience to other developing countries, in the process launching complex encirclement and counter-encirclement drives, that complicated Soviet strategy with the prospect of a two-front war, diverted Chinese efforts from modernization to a massive( and, in retrospect, wasteful) defense buildup in its interior and forced Third World countries and parties to make irrelevant choices in fine points of doctrine" (Dittmer, 1994:94).

The era of Cold-War ideological rivalry like 'revisionism', 'socialist imperialism' and 'hegemonism' has gone. They are in search of the formula for 'progressive equilibrium', where the different factors should reinforce each other and heighten stability, a basis for cooperation the two countries can be created much more easily than in the past (Voskressenski, 2003). The normalisation of relation was initiated by Gorbachev but later his successive made better result. The 1996 the two

countries learned from history and acting in the fundamental interest of their two peoples decided to establish between them a strategic partnership of coordination. This relationship has grown into a mature, stable and sound state-to-state relationships as evidence by their political mutual trust, which never been so close (Jintao, 2009). After that, they never look back and their relations have been deepening, intensifying and wide-ranging.

Their bilateral relations have been upgraded from a “position of ideological rivalry within the communist world to coexistence between the two largest states on the Eurasian continent (Bin, 2009, 81).” Unlike earlier security alliance cum ideological partnership of the 1950s, the new relationship is both pragmatic and limited (Levine, 1992:26-38).

During President Putin’s visit of China in 2019, he said that “both countries enjoy an unprecedented high level trust and cooperation” and Xi Jinping visited Russia with same connotation. China and Russia has celebrated 2020-21 as a year of “scientific, technical and cooperation.” The friendship treaty of 2001 was renewed on 28 June 2021.

### **Their Understanding of New World Order**

The vision of new world order from the Chinese and Russian perspectives can be learned from their joint statements and friendship treaties. They are not sharing the vision of new world order rather than have shared visions. They highly converge over the strategy of multilateralism with restructuring the United Nations. Their new security frameworks are based on the mutual trust, mutual benefit equality and cooperation. At the norms levels, both countries uphold the idea that all countries should have an equal opportunity to enjoy the profits of globalisation in such fields as economy, society, science, technology, information and common development. Going the opposite of the Huntington thesis of ‘clash of civilization’ their argument is diversity in cultures and civilizations should not be the source of conflict, but rather resources from which all countries can learn. Both states believe that "people of every country have the right to choose independently, in the light of their respective national conditions and

free from outside interference, their social system and course and mode of development" (Joint Declaration, 1996)

China and Russia signed the joint statement on the international order of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in 2005 (Joint Statement, 2005). They also clarified about their bilateral relations and show that they have mutual respect to each other and believe in equality of relations. They believe in the burning of the past and beginning of new story with assumption that "their mutual contacts leave neither China nor Russia with a feeling of humiliation" (Jingjie 2000:528-29). The countries have successfully resolved the border as strategic partner, they no longer see each other as latent military opponents or look to military forces as the primary means for maintaining their security. China and Russia's new security outlook and jointly established security model make a clean break with Cold War logic and contrast sharply with the current direction of American strategy. Mutual benefit and joint development are principles of cooperation in trade, science and technological arena (Jingjie 2000:531-32). Both countries believe that they have common interests and aspirations in promotion of international law (Joint statements, 2016), safeguarding national sovereignty and security, keeping stability and social order and opposing foreign interference (Joint Statement, 2019). Again on 23 March 2021, they extended same spirit for global governance.

### **China's Perception about Russia**

Chinese perception about Russia has been adjusted with changing of reality. Ideology was a dominating factor which shaped the Chinese thinking and brought these two communist countries nearer during the Cold War period. The loose bipolarity tightened international structure and power politics of the Cold War left very little strategic space for any country to shift their allegiance from one bloc to other blocs or one alliance to other. The post Cold-War period structural relaxation in international system has offered new spatial-time dimension to view the reality of international politics from different perspectives. At present context, China sees Russia as 'a friend and strategic partner' and ready to forget the era of ideological hegemony. As Marxian paradigm believes that contradiction always remain in every stage of

society; the relations between two countries enjoy the absence of any fundamental contradiction. China does not look at Russia in antagonistic way (Chang, 2009). It is also learning from the Communist reform of Russia's shock therapy which led towards its disintegration. Russian economic reforms worked as a reminder for Chinese statesman to move slowly so that it can survive a successful communist country. In my sense, China visualise Russia as a 'business partner' in economic sphere and a 'closet ally' for the shaping the new world order as it defines.

### **Chinese National Interests with regard to Russia:**

As a rising power, in present international system, China is a larger stakeholder in world politics. As of now, China is a regional power in Asia-Pacific and highly active with aspiration of a great power status. It seems that it's policy is to fill the vacuums created by the USSR in the region. Rising China needs two things specially energy and technology for sustaining high rate economic growth. The alliance with the West taught a lesson to China that they would not cooperate and transfer the advanced stage technology to it as honestly as it was being done by USSR previously. China consciously or unconsciously is racing with US where it lags in respective field-science and technology achievements. Russia has a great superiority in the field of energy and high technology and leads in many aspects like national defence technology and civilian aviation and aerospace technology (Lijiu, 2000).

The 'peaceful rise' of China necessitates it to have good relations with Russia because it need political stability at regional and global level (White Paper: China's Peaceful Development). Russia might be a pillar of that stability. In addition, Russia is a neighbouring country and former superpower where it is sharing largest boundary. Russia geographical expansion constitutes the geo-politics interest of China. Its expansion in Asia and Europe would influence the rise of China in Asia. The friendship of Russia is essential for China because regional conflict minimise chance of power projection of state beyond its periphery. Conventional wisdom tells us who is not being respected in his corridor, would not be

respected on the road. Another imperative is China's energy wishes. Russia is the largest supplier of gas and second largest source of reserve. In addition, China knows that Central Asia cannot be incarcerated without help of Russia which contains a large amount of energy.

Again, China is aware of the fact that it cannot poise any real counterweight against the US by acting individually. The utility of cooperation with Russia is highly acceptable for Chinese governments. It requires an ally that can counteract the US preeminence in global system (Larson and Shevchenko, 2010:63-95). China alone can't do that, as it has been seen in China-US relations context that there is highly asymmetry of power exists between China and US. Russia still has formidable force and second largest nuclear stock piles. Both forces have the capability to jointly handle the NATO forces. For China, 'cooperation with Russia can be a factor for preserving the balance in the region and a counterbalance to an external factor" (Voskressenski, 2003:185).

### **Chinese Policy and Strategy**

China's policy is to ensure its accessibility over the Russian natural resources, technology and market and make Russia a partner in global affairs for regional and multilateral cooperation. It advocates the multilateralism where Russia can be a better player. Its strategy is to create regional institutions for involving Russia and support Russian induction in multilateral agencies. It created bilateral engagements through regional organisation, bilateral forum such as commerce or trade areas, convening Shanghai Expo or military exercise and regular visit of high dignitaries. China has adopted the policy of cooperation with Russia and creating institutional mechanism to make relations durable. The creation of SCO and BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) are the examples of desires who want to have new world order. The entry of Russia in APEC is an example of Chinese favour whose meeting

is going to be held in Russia in 2012. China had gained a lot from Soviet Union in building of its national powers in fraternity of the Communist brother. China remembered this benefit. It is said that the industrialization and economic development and military modernizations were based on the Russian cooperation in the early 1950s. There is also an argument that China is using "a buck-passing strategy" whenever possible, allowing others such as Russia to constrain the US in cost free ways (Nandkarni, 2010:52).

### **Russian's Perception about China**

Russia visualizes China as a rising great power. Modifying its earlier stance, it does not identify China as a younger brother, rather than it depicts as an equal partners in search of a multi-polar and democratic world. The fear of psychosis is over. Russia has a stake in international politics and want to be an active manager of global affairs; however it's domestic compulsion denies that role. It sees China as a country therewith it could cooperate in multifarious issues and arena for shaping the new world order in their own favour. Russia views China today as friend, good neighbour and partner and close ally. However, there is a view in Russia that China is still threat. Alexeander Khrmchikhin, the head of Analytical Department of the Institute for Political and Military analysis subscribes to the view. In his argument, Chinese demographic expansion and it's resource deficit press for territorial expansion (Salin 2021: 60-74).

### **Russian National Interests with regard to China**

Russia had lost its ally, territory, prestige and economy. With the exception of its nuclear capabilities, Russia has been reduced to the status of regional power (Voskressenski, 2003:183). However, the ambition of great power is intact. In its own self-conception, it is the largest country in the world with a long history and rich cultural traditions. Despite the difficult international situation and the difficulties of a domestic nature, it is because "of the significant economic, scientific, technological and military capabilities, unique strategic position on the Eurasian continent objective continues to play

an important role in the global process” (Concept of National Security of Russian Federation, 1997).

In this context, Russia identified its national interest, in summary, as a "realisation of constitutional rights and freedom, to ensure personal safety, to improve the quality and standard of living, physical, spiritual and intellectual development of man and citizen, to consolidate democracy, to create legal societal state, to achieve and maintain social harmony, the spiritual renewal of Russia" (Concept of National Security of Russian Federation, 1997). The national interest of Russia in international sphere is to “ensure the sovereignty, strengthening Russian positions a Great Power-one of the most influential centers of multi-polar world, in the development of equitable and mutually beneficial relation with all countries” (Concept of National Security of Russian Federation, 1997).

The first and foremost, Russian national interest is how it can consolidate its national economy and how it can ensure its territorial integrity. Transformation of communist society into liberal democratic society and adoption of a market economy in place of command economy is a real challenge in front of Russian policy maker. The alliance with China raises the hope for a premier role in world politics. Russian national interest converges with Chinese national interest during this period. Whatever Russian material capability residue is its ideational capability declined. Russia is no longer claiming its superiority in any sphere of ideational achievement. Russia needs Chinese cooperation in economic, technological security and political sphere. Its domestic compulsion and desire for a greater role in international politics are playing the major role in coming closer to China. China is the fastest growing economy. It wants to make Sino-Russian economy interdependent. Russian defence industry complex needs a market for its own survival. Russia is not a member of WTO. The induction of Russia in this multilateral institution is beneficial for its national economy.

Not only is the economic sphere, internal instability is also a prime concern for Russian security interests. It was declined because of, with

adding all other dimension, ethnic nationalism emerged during that period. The process of national-building and state-building have not been completed in Russian federation. The military is engaged in domestic assignment to curb the ethnic nationalism. The US preeminent role in international politics, its method to wage war on terror and expansion of NATO towards the border of Russia are other major factors that are driving force for coming closer to China. Russia clears that "the plan to expand the military infrastructure of NATO to its borders is unacceptable to it and attempt to make it a global responsibility that is inconsistent with international laws" (The National Security of the Russian Federation Until 2020).

### **Russian Policy and Strategy**

Russian policy is to create a favorable international environment for Russia economic development (Donaldson and Noguee, 1998). The primary survey of document related to it's foreign and defence policies suggests that it wants to abide by the laws, treaties and agreement signed by the its predecessor and build a relations of state and societal interest free of any ideological consideration, except those of relevance of its national interests. In order to protect its national interests, "Russia, remaining in the framework of international law, will conduct a rational and pragmatic foreign policy that excludes costly confrontation, including a new arms race" (Concept of National Security of Russian Federation, 1997). Russia believes in multilateral engagement with other states. The Collective Security Treaty is considered as the main interstate instrument to confront regional threat and challenges to political-military and military-strategic nature including the fighting against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substance (The National Security of the Russian federation until 2020).

It's priority rests on the economic aspects of cooperation reflecting the rising role of economic factors. The primary cementing force in China and Russia relations is military cooperation and energy. Russia desires to utilize the Chinese foreign exchange reserve which is second largest in the world. Its priorities are also how it could use Chinese chief labours for construction of infrastructure development.

## Defence Cooperation

The three main areas of the bilateral defense relationship are military exercises, military technical cooperation and high level military to military contact (Stent, 2020:4). China military has great debt to Russian military cooperation. China is the second largest buyer of Russian military hardware. It was USSR that had provided military infrastructure and built up Chinese military. However, the east-east Cold War debar the further cooperation. Military-technological cooperation has revived when Mikhail Gorbachev visited China in 1989. This visit started a new era in China and Russian relations. Boris Yel'tsin's government willingly took the baton, opened the flow of military hardware and know-how to China by selling 24 fighters Su-27. After the disintegration, The Yel'tsin regime was moving a show of adherence to democratic principles and the values of the civilized Western world but military cooperation were not on the agenda at that time (Bakshi, 2004: 180-84).

The whole picture of bilateral ties between Moscow and Beijing began changing when Putin came to power. The turning point in Sino-Russian relations came on July 16, 2001 when, in Moscow, the Russian and Chinese Presidents signed the 'Treaty for Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation'. It was reunion of Sino-Russian cooperation. Russia started the demarcation of disputed border with China and supplied arms technology.

Since 1992, military sales by Russia to China have reached at least \$20 billion. Russia has managed to sell China enough military hardware to arm a medium-sized European country. The lion's share of the goods went to aviation.

The PLAAF (People's Liberation Army Air Force) and PLANAF (the air arm of the Chinese Navy) received about 200 multi-purpose fourth generation fighter-bomber Su-27s and Su-30s of various modifications, along with a license to produce 200 Su-27s and 250 Su-30s domestically. As for the latter (a considerably modernized version of the Su-27), - both purchased and manufactured - China is planning to have over 500 of

these aircraft. Further it is purchasing 40 Il-76 heavy air transports and Il-78 air tankers (Verbitz, 2006).

The Chinese Navy has not been left out of the arms contracts; its inventory increased by 12 Kilo class diesel submarines (Projects 877EKM, 636 and 636M), and 4 *Sovremenny* class destroyers.

In addition to the fact that the submarines are considered as possibly the most capable and quietest such vessels in the world, the destroyers are equipped with arguably the most lethal anti-ship cruise missile, the supersonic SS-N-22 *Sunburn* (or according to the original Russian nomenclature, R-270 *Moskit*). The *Moskit*, even by admission of American naval experts, poses a serious threat to US ships (including, possibly, aircraft carriers). China's air defense capabilities also have been greatly enhanced by the acquisition of 12 battalion units of S-300 PMU-1 and 27 complexes of *Tor* M-1 SAMs (SIPPRI, 2009:308-310).

Since 2019, Russia is helping China in missile attack early warning system to detect ICBMs.

### **Military Exercise**

The joint military exercises are a part of strategic partnership and represent a significant deepening of the military relationship between two powers (Aliyev, 2020). First joint military exercise between Russian-Chinese military carried out in 2005 after a long gap with code name 'Peace Mission 2005' after the peaceful resolution of border conflict. It encompassed 10,000 military personnel, 70 ships and submarines. On the Chinese part around 8,000 personnel participated and sea vessels (some 60 ships and submarines) and Russia was the main contributor of advanced air assets (Hindu, 2005). Another joint military exercise conducted on July 2009 at Shenyang military training base.

In September 2018, both countries have performed the largest military exercise at Vostok. The purpose of exercise was to show togetherness. The joint military exercise extends to air force and navy. The PLA Air

Force and the Russian Air Force conducted long range aerial patrol in Indo-Pacific region in July 2019. For the first time, China and Russia conducted naval exercise in the Mediterian Sea that was continued in the South China (2016) and the Baltic Sea (2017).

China and Russia signed military cooperation roadmap in June 2017. The military cooperation between China and Russia are mutual beneficial and advantageous position for both. On part of Russia, Russian military industry requires resources to sustain it in the world arms market; while on the side of China, its military modernization largely based on the Russian technical and equipment cooperation. In other words, the Russian defense industry is running on the principles of military-industry complex. Badly needs economic resources to survive, on the other hand China needs arms supplier who can provide advanced weapons at reasonable cost without any string attached.

China receives forty percent of total Russian arms export and it constitutes ninety two percent of China's total arms imports (SIPPRI, 2009:304-08).The military modernization programme of China has high support from Russia. The devastated Russian economy has been revitalized by China's military import. In this contest both need to be with each-other whose interests highly converge than any other country in the world.

The significance of amicable ties between the Chinese and Russian military establishments extends beyond the realm of military-security affairs into that of domestic politics. This period also witnessed some remarkable change in their military relations. Military cooperation moves from buyer and seller to partner in research and development and production and distribution level in sphere of military technology. Taking into account the Covid 19 issues they made joint statement to strengthen the cooperation on prohibition of biological weapons, (Joint Statement 2021a)

### **Economic Cooperation**

Politically intensive engagement of China and Russia has given the room for economic cooperation. China's economic size is eight times larger of Russia. Energy and trade shape the agenda of Sino-Russian economic

relations. The energy sector play an important role in Russia's economy and energy export is a major source of the governments' income (Join Statement, 2004).

### **Oil and Gas**

Oil and Gas is major area of economic relations. The engine of Chinese economic growth and its development is depending on the supply of energy. Russia has largest reserves of natural gas. Supply of Oil and Gas play same role as the transfer of nuclear technology during the Cold War. At present, like the military sphere, the cooperation in energy sector also equally benefits China and Russia. Russian energy technology is suffering from the outdated syndrome which has no money for further investment. Chinese desperate needs of energy resources satisfy by it and in returns, Russia getting money to revive its economy. Geo-strategy also facilitates the cooperation because they do not need the territory of third country for supplying pipeline (Join Statement, 2004).

### **Nuclear Energy**

They are also cooperating in nuclear energy sectors. Russia is helping in building of Chinese nuclear reactors and uranium enrichment. Recently director-general of the Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom, Sergey Kiriyenko has said in 14th session of Russia-China Sub-Commission for Nuclear Energy Cooperation that all the previously agreed plans of nuclear energy cooperation has been completed and Russia and China intend to continue cooperation to start the construction of the third and fourth units of Tianwan nuclear power plant where first unit has been completed (World News, 2010). He recalled that in July 2010 China successfully launched its Experimental Fast Reactor built with active participation of Russia. He informed that they are going to cooperate in building of commercial fast-neutron reactors BN-800.

### **Trade**

China is the largest trade partner of Russia. 58.8 billion dollar was in 2008 that has reached 107 billion dollar in 2018. They have planned to raise the level trade at 200 billion dolors up to 2024. China receiving

the oil and natural gas from Russia. Russian timber is major source for its paper industry.

### **Common Concerns**

China and Russia relations are propelled with need of domestic and international interests. Their common concern is to develop their national economy and to maintain stable international order. In pursuance of these objectives, they find the friendship of each other helpful and beneficial. China and Russia deny through their bilateral treaty and joint statements that their strategic partnership is not directed against any third party. The post Cold War period witnessed some events which were not auspicious for China and Russia. The Gulf War, Taiwan Strait Crisis, NATO expansion, bombarding over Chinese Embassy in Belgrade which is strategic located, Chechnya, unilateral withdrawal of the US from the ABM treaty, development of TMD and NMD that logically undermines the security of China and Russia. They jointly issued statements about US military strikes against Iraq, the NATO intervention in the Kosovo crisis and US plan for theater missile defence and national missile defence (Wishnick, 2001:800).

NATO's military intervention in the Kosovo, the Chinese Governments believes that this action was illegal and immoral. It was illegal because it breached established international law against use of force against a sovereign state and by passed the UNSC. It was immoral because it caused additional bloodshed as well as suffering of the Yugoslavian people (Force, Intervention and Sovereignty). These events stimulated deep introspection for their policy of both countries. The Asian-Pacific region is a domain of Russia and China, and no one else should challenge their influence there.

### **Where would they go together?**

The convergence of interests establishes the base for relations of both countries. This is the closest relation in today's international relations where the convergence of interests is higher than the divergence of their national interests. They agree over the norms of international politics, regional security and issues of international system. China and Russia are highly against the unipolarity and seeks multipolar world. In

their new world order, the UN need to be restructured; it does not represent the politics of today's world and play an active role. The joint statement 2005 expressed the view that the United Nations is the world's most universal, representative and authoritative international organization, and its role and functions are irreplaceable (China Russia Joint Statement, 2005).

They are against the unilateralism and want multilateralism especially war on terror. In their approach, terrorism is not the problem of individual country, but it is global issues, so it must be supported by all states and action should be taken by global institutions with legitimate authority like the UN in broader framework rather in selective manner. China and Russia are suffering from terrorism or religious extremism in external politics. At the norms levels, their arguments are that respect for sovereignty must be restored and no domestic intervention would allow on the name of promotion of democracy and protection of human right. Both sides support the policies on the issues of defending the national unity and territorial integrity (Artilec-4, 2001).

### **Where would they diverge?**

In theoretical underpinnings, partners are competitors; the nature of competition might be healthy and cooperative or cut-throat, too large extent, it depends upon the circumstances. The China and Russia relations are known for the establishment of supremacy in the region. They are neighbours. China is Russia's principal partner and its main gateway to the Asia-Pacific region, but strategic competition and potential security threat aspect can not be denied. Acquisition, maximisation and demonstration of power are basic instincts of the states. The race for power never dies. The national interest defined in terms of power as realist believes, however identity of state also shape the national interest. The position and strength of states changes, the variances in interests are inevitable. The current state of bilateral relations developed and was enhanced at a time when Russia is weak and disoriented after the disintegration of the Soviet empire. Now Russia is "coming on its way back-not necessarily to the levels it attained as the core of the USSR, but to its traditional status as major power on the Eurasian continent. China will perhaps more than anyone else-have to deal with and adjust to such as changing reality" (Bin,

2009:83). Nearer and dearer takes the most benefits and advantage at the time of cooperation but pays the high cost at time of clash.

Russia considers Central Asian region as its backyard because it was integral part of USSR and reluctant to presence of other player regions without its accent. Central Asian country also looks Russia as savoir in any crises and approach to it first, then UNO or other institutions. China and Russia have diverged over Central Asia. Now China became the largest aid donor in the regions. The politics of aid has larger consequence replacing Russia. This reflects the Chinese intensity for search of energy resources, as it has done in Africa. For time being, China reluctantly accept the Russian role in the region but due to rapid rise of Chinese economy and its impact over Chinese military modernization would bound to change the geopolitics in favour of China.

An energy factor is areas which raise concern about relation and where they are uneasy in terms of cooperation. Russia intends to diversify its oil market in European countries and hike the oil prices which are purely against China national interest. The denial of natural resources may repeat the history of denial of nuclear technology. As Chinese blue navy not capable to protect the sea line supply of the energy through the Indian Ocean, it much interested into gas pipeline from this region where it is capable to construct and protect.

### **Demographic problems**

In search of better live conditions, Chinese national is illegally migrating in the Russian territory. These illegal migrations are cause of worryness in Russia. If it is not the matter of general knowledge, then surely it is subject of general studies that the natural resources of Siberia and the Russian Far East are enormous and diverse. To get protracted access to those riches at reasonable prices would be a coup for any serious aspirant. It might be easier to obtain the permanent possession of these resources by means short of military force.

Despite the effort of both countries, the trade relation is unbalanced or it is lopsided towards China. It mainly concentrated on the defence

product. The economic cooperation also suffers with absence of investment in each other countries.

The treaty of 2001 promise that both “parties respect each other’s choice for the course of political, economic social, and cultural development in line with their nation’s actual conditions so as to ensure a long-term and stable development of relations between the two countries”( Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation). It shows ideological convergence but their political and economic moving difference direction. Chinese economic reform is learning from the USSR’s ‘Perestroika’ and ‘Glasnosts’ policy to save its political system but Russia is moving towards multiparty democracy and freedom of individual that instigates the demand of changes in political system. The main difference between Russian and Chinese societies today lies in the disputing between the rates of their social and economic transformation and political democratization (Voskressenski, 2003:190).

The military cooperation by Russia raises the eyebrow of right being nationalist parties of Russia. It is deep concerns among the skeptics in Russian domestic constituencies. Those who are opposing Russia military and technology cooperation with China argue that China is Russia’s strategic enemy. They believe that selling arms to China is “feeding the tiger” (Bakshi, 2004: 175). It is capable of attempting different forms of northward expansion, including economic and demographic expansion and the realisation of Chinese’s historical claims. It is called that Russia is transferring so high grade technology to Chinese army which is even not available to Russian army itself. The quantity of arms that has been supplied to China and the amount which has been possessed by the Russia really proves their concerns.

### **Why would they cooperate?**

There are hardly any bilateral relations in today world politics which national interest so much converge, think same kind of world order than China and Russia. The reason to cooperation is based on the understanding of stable equilibrium the position of both side are generally similar and their national interest, to a large extant coincides. The national security dilemma of China and Russia which was the bone of contention is diluted and transformed. Earlier, they perceive each

other as enemy that singled in the deployment of active military forces on the border. China and Russia thoroughly completed the boundary demarcation work between them in 2008, and ratified the Action Plan to Implement the China-Russia Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Cooperation (2009-1212) (China-Russia Joint Statement, 2009). The new relation is grounded in certain broad understanding between two sides concerning the limits as well as the potentialities of the relationship. They are overriding the establishment of any military treaty or alliance, but closely engaging other on security forum. After the issuing the joint statement of 2000, President Jiang Jemin said that 'with regard to bilateral ties, China and Russia will continue to deepen their relationship and will become "good neighbours, good partners and good friends" (Jiang, 2000). The level of engagement and intensity of the visit by dignitaries provides the strength to relations. The positive trends in relations are that new relationship is pragmatic, deep and comprehensive.

### **Revitalization of Brotherhood or Friendship of Compulsions**

It seems that there is the element of compulsive friendship. Russian policy maker has less strategic choices in present international system particularly in Asia. Neither Japan nor India can work together with Russia as China is working against the US hegemonic. Same way, China needs Russian technology than any other countries. The rising of nations depends upon its innovations. China is not as highly equipped with advanced technology as per requires for sustaining its rise economic. No other country would go to cooperate to such as extant Russia is ready to do.

The post-Cold War relationship of China and Russia is purely motivated on serving of their national interest. It is neither run on the syndrome of brotherhood nor a friendship of compulsion. This may be one perspectives of looking the relations; however the relation has its won dynamics. They have the history of both intensive cooperation and conflict. Sino-Russian strategic partnership is an equal. It is because it is based on mutual support and common political concerns (Wishnik, 2001:799). The current strategic partnership is guided by pragmatism pure and simple. Rajan Menon notes that

“while the partnership is partly attribute to common opposition to Pax-Americana and the attendant unipolar international system, it represents an accretion of achievements that resulted form the determination of Chinese and Russian leaders to put an end to decades of enmity, quite independent of the state of their relationships with Washington. It has a logic and dynamic of its own" (Menon, 2009).

This is social fact that no single country's interest converge between two major powers than the convergence of interest between China and Russia. They are sharing common values; common national interests either it be security issues or search for multi-polar world. Their relationship is best characterised as one of strategic convergence, involving multifaceted cooperation and a convergence of views and interests on important question of international security. It is sustained not by trust and goodwill alone but by calculated self-interest and a desire for leverage vis-à-vis third parties, especially the United States (Menon, 1997"101).

In overall perspectives, both countries are engaged themselves over domestic consolidation whether it is political or economic issues. Their priorities seem to build national economy and ensure political and societal instability but are cautious over territorial division of country. For achieving these objectives, they are coming closer throughout the period and extending helping hand to each other. This cooperation further propelled by a confluence of shared strategic view on protecting territorial integrity; limiting the translation of American power and influence into policies unfavorable to each courtesy's interest; formulating mutual opposition to the application of “double standards” in the war against terrorism; and calling for a world that operated according to a multi-polar logic (Nandkarni, 2010:52).

## Conclusion

China and Russia is a shareholder of same company. Any bull or bear activities in sense of world politics would massively influence their payoff, so they are bound to play win-win game, in place of zero-sum-game. It seems that they understand the logic of cooperative competition. They have developed the basic approach of establishing relations which have mutual benefit. A China and Russia relation is trustful, absence of apprehensions and doubts over the intentions of each other. The domestic and external factors are working as impetus for coming together; the comity in relations shows the longevity.

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## Book Reviews

**N Chandrasekaran, N, &, Purushothaman, R. (2019). *Bridgital Nation-Solving Technology's People Problem*. Penguin Random House Year. 344pp. Rs. 639.**

**Background:** The major challenges that India faces are of 'lack of jobs' and 'access to services'- to healthcare, education, legal system, to name a few- which the books terms as, *India's Twin Challenges*. Through this book, the authors N Chandrasekaran and Roopa Purushothaman offer the idea of 'Bridgital' to help create jobs and also improve access to services using technology.

**Introduction:** Technology is a driving change around us- a change that keeps reinventing itself, and we do not know where it will halt. The digital world has not only changed the way we work, learn, communicate, contact, do business but also the way we live. And the more acquiring of technology has become affordable, the more the tendency for organizations and governments alike to adopt technology for technology's sake. This approach has to be abandoned (changed); no more technology for technology sake but technology for need of technology and the use of technology in context.

All technology led transitions get with it the feeling of insecurity and uncertainty, a fear of the unknown and the unforeseen wherein loss of job is a major fear. There could be a future with (only) automation and a future without automation; but a future where both co-exist and also complement each other is often not thought of (therefore the insecurity that is experienced). *Bridgital Nation* suggests this future. The book *Bridgital Nation* provides a new approach to technology; it is about re-imagining automation. It sees technology not as not a replacement for human but as an aid for human.

The authors identify the challenges India currently faces in various areas ranging from healthcare to creation of job and from education to entrepreneurship. The authors analyse problems and also provides suggestions for moving forward with the urgency India requires. It says that neither human nor technology alone can solve the problems that

India faces; but a mutually beneficially relationship is what India should focus on. The book, through anecdotes, illustrates this.

### **What is Bridgital?**

Bridgital address the challenge of access by intelligently and creatively re-imagining tasks and process that make a job and using technology to enhance and support the workers involved in the tasks. It has three elements: Bridgital Processes, Bridgital Technology, and Bridgital Workers.

**Bridgital Processes:** Introduces a process to address the problem of access and thus a lot of work which was in the purview of the formal sector would shift to the formal sector. In other words the traditional approach is abandoned to re-think who would do what in the service delivery value chain.

**Bridgital Technology:** Devises delivery models using technology to save time of skilled workers.

**Bridgital Workers:** This refers to engaging digitally literate and technology-augmented workers in newer tasks (often of higher value). These tasks could be those which were performed by highly skilled people (like doctors) or tasks that involve working like an intermediary.

**Focus Healthcare:** The book begins with a driver in Silchar (Assam), Nikhil Burman, who has no medical training, but who ultimately provides Indian healthcare services for the poor. He empathizes with the plight of a poor patient in an unknown and unfamiliar city, for instance, a patient from rural area seeking medical help in a metropolitan city. Nikhil provides all kinds medical services to the poor patients right from obtaining doctors' appointments, arranging for their lodgings at affordable costs, transportation, medicines and all the help that any patient would require in an unknown city.

Thus Nikhil works like a middleman (an intermediary) between the patient and doctor and charges a modest sum for his services. Providing guidance to these patients ultimately becomes a full-time occupation

for Nikhil. But all he does could have been achieved in a much better, faster and cheaper manner if Nikhil was aided by changed processes using technology.

The authors suggest that the health care sector could use the existing resources more efficiently and identify and tap the potential of digitally enabled systems to create new resources. They suggest that roles could be re-imagined, a new cadre of health administrators could be given role of administrative tasks, EMRs could be used, and as in the above case informal roles like Nikhil could be brought in the formal fold. Their contribution to the healthcare delivery be acknowledged and documented, their capacity increased by establishing proper protocols and providing training, and also their income and job security improved by affiliation with a formal institution.

Bridgital suggests the use of technological advances around India's most affordable resource, its human capital to multiply its capabilities and change how they work. Therefore, Bridgital is essentially about marrying people with technology. Those who are employed in Bridgital roles will gain vital skills in working and interacting with new-age technologies. These workers with these transferable technology skills will increase productivity across sectors. This will create a bridge (therefore the term Bridgital) for one to move from the informal to the formal sector\*, and from the unskilled to the skilled.

India healthcare system needs to be fixed from 'bottom up' and this could be by using the human capital it already has rather than wait for new doctors to emerge to fill the demand supply gap. This is how the access challenge could be addressed.

**Focus Education:** The access challenge has been addressed to a large extent by the education sector. In the past, someone living in a rural area (village or small city) had to travel long distances to the metro to the nearest 'test center'. The metropolitan city nearby or often the state capital served as testing centers for entrance exams. The candidate had to bear the cost of travel and boarding in the city. This was because the task of testing was highly centralized and dependent on the physical presence of the testers. Technology has replaced this. TCS iON, which is a strategic business unit of TCS, *re-imagined the*

*process* of conducting assessment. Examinations centers which are connected to a digital platform have emerged in small cities and towns and therefore aspirants do not have to travel distances. This solved the problem of lack of access. Also more than 20,000 jobs were created or jobs were made more productive, like that of test center managers, invigilators and evaluators. This also addressed the problem of lack of jobs. Thus Bridgital Nation provides a new approach to technology. It is about re-imagining automation. *It sees technology not as not a replacement for human but as an aid for human. It believes in* redefining certain roles and creating a new set of technology-enabled semi-qualified workers and thus creating jobs.

**Healthcare at AIIMS:** The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) caters to nine thousand patients everyday in its forty eight OPDs. The demand (patients) supply (doctors) gap is bridged as a result of a project entitled 'Transformation, executed by TCS, which streamlined patient movement in the hospital reducing the waiting time from six to two hours (a reduction in 66.66%). This was achieved through small changes and adjustments and redefining roles and also creating new class of workers whose major role was to co-ordinate between doctors and patients.

**Project DiNC:** This example of AIIMS was replicated in Kolar (in Karnataka). Replicating the example of AIIMS which was housed in one building to the Kolar, which was spread across a district, was a challenge; but it was successfully achieved. This was called the Digital Nerve Center (DiNC) model which worked in two ways: first by redefining some roles and second by creating a class of Bridgital workers. Earlier, specialist doctors like oncologist surgeons divided their time between clinical and non-clinical work. A part of their time was spent in treating patients and a large part was spent in handling non-routine tasks like filing paper work, developing checklists, writing notes for the operation theatre and also explaining the modalities of diagnostic tests to patients. All this non-clinical work was now shifted to others thus creating jobs. It was noted that by just shifting one task that of 'writing notes for the operation theatre', doctors saved time to treat

patients; which translated to nearly 4,000 extra doctor hours every year. Therefore a small change could have far reaching impact.

The TCS team which undertook the (DiNC) project, basically re-imagined the process of India's largest public hospital and created a national network that linked cancer hospitals.

**Project ASHA:** This project enrolls women health workers who visit house to house asking questions, offering guidance and taking notes and keeping these details on the tablet. They are given the task of immunizing every child in the locality, and of sending every expectant mother to the doctor. They were given training to screen people for non-communicable diseases like diabetes, heart disease and cancer. The data were recorded and maintained on tablets and clinical medical history of each patient was maintained. Whenever a patient interacted with a doctor their central health record was updated. These records were available on an app called the Clinicograph, which provided doctors a comprehensive view of a patient's medical history. The Clinicograph arranged a patient's health data in chronological order, the most recent being kept at the top, and it was accessible anytime anywhere. It benefitted the patients as they did not to maintain medical records in paper files at home nor did they need to travel long distances for medical advice. At an instant all details of a patient could be gathered. The ASHA project created new roles and jobs titled DiNC Coordinator, Non-communicable Diseases Coordinator', Mother and Childcare Coordinator, Patient Care Coordinator, Speciality Care Coordinator' to name a few. Each had a well-defined role. For instance, a Patient Care Coordinator liasoned between various doctors, hospitals departments, and staff so that patients moved smoothly and quickly through the hospital. In their absence these tasks were handled by doctors. DiNC Project also had a videoconferencing facility which connected Sri Narasimharaja (SNR) hospital's doctors (SNR is a district hospital) with patients at distant health centers.

The Deliverables: The ASHAs equipped with tablets regularly visit homes, record symptoms, give advice and create patient records and store them in the cloud. The nerve centre acts also as a local health call centre which is used both for outreach and to answer to regular and

routine queries. It also connects people to doctors and also deals with simple requests like setting up hospital appointments. Thus in a short span of time, the primary health centres in Kolar have been transformed, meaningful jobs for semi-skilled people have been created, precious doctor time has been saved, and health care services have become easier and more convenient to navigate for the people.

ASHA project also by redefining certain roles and creating a new set of technology-enabled semi-qualified workers (class of Bridgital workers) created jobs. And by using technology creatively could address the issue of 'access'. The model from healthcare which were successfully implemented can be replicated in other sectors too like judiciary or logistics or agriculture.

Bridgital Healthcare: At present India has seven lakh practicing doctors and still it is a doctor scarce country. It is estimated that it would require 1.5 million doctors by 2030 when it would still be short by half a million. A Bridgital transformation could however help to free an equivalent of 3,70,000 doctors. Also Bridgital transformation could also help to create a million jobs and make an additional million productive. With gain in productivity, these Bridgital workers would also experience a 15-20 percent increase in wages. A win-win situation for all.

**Conclusion:** Bridgital Nation suggests that India should solve its problem of 'jobs' and 'access' by using its existing resources (human capital), supported by the power of technology. It provides a new approach to technology. It suggests a future where technology and human both co-exist and complement each other.

Note\*: It is to be noted that India has a high-productivity informal sector and a low-productivity informal sector; but missing in the 'middle' is an 'intermediate-productivity and mid-skill sector. India needs a bridge between the two—a bridge by which lower qualified workers can acquire the digital skills required to participate in India technology led growth story. And this was done efficiently by Nikhil.

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**Bluhm, K . Pikhan ,G. Stypinska, J., & Wierzcholska, A. (2021) *Gender and Power in Eastern Europe : Changing Concepts of Femininity and Masculinity in Power Relations*. Springer, 269pp. Rs. 11,196.**

Gender has become a astonishingly interesting topic in the last few years which has drawn strong lines in political and social scenarios of states and different regions. Gender relationships and female empowerment have changed power dynamics in Eastern Europe since the fall of communism and the growth of new conservatism. This book examines the evolution and path of gender roles in Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia. Western feminism in the 1990s has led to a conservative turn, with an emphasis on power systems/configurations and gender. The book is split into four parts: the first part "*Feminism in Eastern Europe Revisited*" The author examines the history and current waves in feminist movements in East Europe, while the second part "*New Conflicts and Empowerment Strategies*" identifies the dynamics and conflicts that developed in post-socialist countries after neoconservative parties gained power. In turn, the third part "*Work, Money, and Power*" explains new empowerment policies and changes in gender relationships. The final part '*Changing Concepts of Masculinity and Fatherhood*' provides insight into the identities, roles, and concepts of masculinity that are made within the socio cultural and political arena of Eastern Europe.

The authors have used a qualitative approach that involves semi-structured interviews, nonparticipant observation, document analysis, media reports and secondary data analysis. In the first two parts interviews and personal experiences have been taken as a major source of information. There has been a detailed analysis of the topics discussed with data and sources.

In the initial chapter the authors (Kristen R Ghodsee, Agnieszka Graff, Andrea Peto, Olga Sasunkevich) discuss about how populist leaders have started refuting western notions of feminism and gender equality and have asked women to move back to homes and focus on falling levels of birth rates throughout the region. Women would be preferred in administration if they have at least three children. This started in late 1880s when the western women started movement for the suffrage rights in USA and Britain and there was another movement in Russia

and east Europe where they believed that working men and women should struggle together for political, social and economic rights. After the end of cold war the falling down of socialist state, men went back to the traditional roles of patriarch and women to the roles of care givers. Women voluntarily left jobs thinking that the bright democratic future would help their families survive with the income of only one which would be patriachs. But lowering women's paid work is fundamental to making post-communist societies a part of capitalist framework and economic quasi-privatization. As the economy failed work for everyone diminished. Women's NGOs and western fund giving agencies found place in this society to support women's right. There has been a constant tussle between the western model of feminism and the socialist feminism where women did not individually fight for their rights but got rights as a public entity through the state such as maternity leaves and equal pay. With time this tussle has grown and nationalist leaders have asserted that "feminism" and "gender" are part of a "Western plot" because liberal feminists demand reproductive freedoms for women, which will depopulate and weaken East European nations. So, an anti-feminist sentiment has emerged from an anti-capitalist emotion in Eastern Europe.

The authors have argued that feminism and capitalism needs to divorce for it to work in that region. Since a transitioning economy from welfare to liberal market economy completely left its welfare policies, the whole part of care taking came upon the shoulders of women at home and it increased unidentified labour. Women's movement also went downhill with the banning of gender studies and assault on academic freedom in Hungary.

Olga Sasunkevich suggests in the book that the post socialist phase needs a rethinking of feminism for it to accept by people. A grassroots ground-level feminist activism is stirring in the country. The new scenario of feminism in Russia, which is related to other post-socialist countries as well as beyond, allows the feminist agenda to be reframed in terms that make sense and sound desirable to women from a wide variety of social groups and seems more acceptable. The liberating project of feminism should encompass struggle and striving for the freedom of identities, ideas and bodies. But, This freedom just should

not be taken individually and as a personal choice but should be seen as a struggle for recognition of issues and redistribution in society.

In part two the authors (Rebecca Barth, Ioulia Shukan, Elena Korowin, Jennifer Ramme and Claudia Snochowska-Gonzales ) tell the readers that many women were drafted into the Ukrainian Army and unofficial volunteer battalions during the 2014 War in eastern Ukraine. So empowerment is a multifaceted concept and process that relates to individual and collective consciousness both and view and behaviours. Women went out of traditional roles in the open men dominated areas thus empowerment was not an individual asset but a collective action and breaking of stereotypes.

In the third part the authors ( Julia Kubisa, Gergana Nenovs, Alya Guseva and Dilyara Ibragimova) are trying to examine Polish trade unions active in care sector and focussing on different ways of organising women in the care giving profession. There are various ways of understanding care work and calculating its worth and social worth known as the politicization of caring. Increasing participation of women in Polish trade unions is the politicization of care. Three C's are managed by women which are cleaning, cooking and child care. Care work in a public sphere is a standardised service which is subject to regulation by specific institutions. Care is seen as emotionally charged vocation in the public sector as well. It is also seen as an unskilled work because it's related to emotional work in private sphere. Care while transitioning from private to public sphere becomes underestimated in terms of wages and working conditions. There is also exploitation in this sphere in spite of the fact that care is a needed industry now. Productive labour of public sphere is totally dependent on reproductive labour of household.

The authors have given examples to state that women workforce is more in Polish care sector because it is considered their innate quality. According to the "National Chamber of Nurse in Midwife" 2,88,774 women and 6,707 men were working as certified nurses in 2018. They were paid such less wages that they had to seek involvement forms of income. Although Nurseries were introduced on a very large scale in 1950s but even after this the quality of care and working space situations has worsened. So trade unions were established to put forward their demands. All the trade unions were dominated by men

except for trade unions operating in health care and social assistance where participation of women was higher.

This book mentions Bulgaria's interesting case at the same time when dual-earner models co-occur with highly gendered divisions of unpaid work. The main motive is to understand pain and unpaid work in Bulgaria. Retraditionalism term was coined after the collapse of socialism in Bulgaria. This means returning back to traditional values. Although economic necessity made it impossible but there was visible decline in women's position in society. Author claims that Statistics do not agree with the fact that there was steep decline in employment for women after the fall of socialism but then it went upward. Bulgarian women have always worked even before the advent of socialism. Bulgaria has most maternal leaves etc. This part examines the gender divisions of paid and unpaid work in post socialist Bulgaria. It finds that all the contradictory theories and complexities they cite show that the retraditionalization thesis does not correctly represent the lives of men and women in Bulgaria after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Russia becomes an interesting playground for research of intra-household power because of its communist history where the women were given all the resources to stand at par with men and the post-communist capitalist era where the gap between genders widened. Various types of powers are explained in this overt, covert and latent power. The post-communist era has disrupted the course of male being the primary earner in the two - earner household. The huge gap between the male and female earning capacity has made the female wages nonessential to household needs which they use on their own needs and is called "separate purses". Over the course of their marriages, most couples have changed from an egalitarian to a hierarchal relationship of power.

In the fourth part of the book the authors (Boris Knorre, Peter Hallama, Sylka Scholz, Elena Rozhdestvenskaya) talk about Russian orthodoxy and fatherhood. Sociologists who work on Russian orthodoxy have this firm belief that Maximum number of church goers is of women. Due to this various kinds of development have taken place like 'dear mother matronushka' which is a cult started by a single woman. Russian sociologist Tarusin argued that men take part in worship service more in

2006 in the late soviet period which exhibit levelling of gender disproportion in the church attendance. In the consumer era which would be post-soviet Russian orthodoxy a new masculinity has emerged which is determined, prepared and nurtured by the globalization and democratic changes in the world. Masculinity has become liberal democratic type (focussing on own identities, career and economy) from primordial type of masculinity (which focussed on violence and dominance). New masculinity values education, intellectuality, consistency and indulgence towards others. It is also marked with financial and material benefits and career success. All these things coming together form the consumerist attitude. According to the ROC (Russian Orthodox Church) an ascetic lifestyle is much better and is a virtue compared to this new consumerist lifestyle. This is how masculinity has changed in Eastern Europe over time.

The book very illuminates us on how the elite class and state of Russia is promoting religion and asserting it to be as a luring idea and this can be called as 'consumerization of church'. This elite class is organising activities like global imperial project which glamorises Militarisation, violence and physical force. This phenomenon is called "orthodox theology of war" which reinforces old beliefs of masculinity and legitimising them. Due to this old patriarchal society is re-emerging in current time where manlihood is connected to military and eulogising violence.

The authors try to examine power structures in many countries including Poland, Hungary, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Russia but it only creates a complicated theorization and not a clear picture. There seems to be no coherence of phenomenon's in all the countries. It would rather confuse readers and their understanding of facts about Eastern Europe as a whole. In the second part the politics of care becomes repetitive and monotonous but there is less or no link in between the four parts. They discuss all different aspects of gender and power. There is no holistic idea driven by the book. The compilation of chapters does not lead to any single thought which do not give us any euphoric knowledge. It talks more about factual things and how policies and politics have affected gender and power over a time in Eastern Europe. This could be a new revelation but they do not add to the feminist

theory/ thought of an area. This book's writing style is easy to understand and gives a enjoyable and knowledgeable read to even a reader who does not have any previous idea about gender issues in eastern Europe. There are positive and progressive aspects too like integrating homosexuality and discussing other aspects of gender. The book nevertheless helps in understanding gender and powers complex perspective in Eastern Europe and gives deeper insights on certain topics like care and how religion is shaping the new idea of masculinity.

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**Shani, S. (2021). *Indigenous Elites in Africa: The Case of Kenya's Maasai*. New York, USA: Routledge. 216 pp. Rs. 12,012.**

Indigenous elites in Africa: the case of Kenya's Maasai is a detailed anthropological analysis conducted by Serah Shani, an Associate Professor at the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Mercy College, USA. The author herself belongs to the Maasai community which helped her in providing us with an in-depth understanding of the challenges and developments taking place in this indigenous ethnic group after the formation of modern nation-states. The book contains detailed anecdotes of various modern generation Maasai indigenous elites who fought for their way up towards success through their ethics of hard work and resilience. Unlike the general idea of Elites as middle class taken in various sociological studies, the author throws light on a rather less explored area of study, understanding of indigenous elites in an African society. Her study focuses on Maasai indigenous elites of Kenya who were left behind without any government support for development after the independence. But with the support from NGOs, Missionaries and Tourism they were able to access education and development through global capital inflows. This inflow of global resources paved the way for better opportunity, social mobility, and elite formation for the Maasai community. Through her observation and interview findings, her study of Maasai elites helps the reader to see the struggles and importance of little support in leading towards success not just for an individual but a whole community. The writer being a woman herself also shares how through education and opportunity women are equally becoming elites in the rather Patriarchal Maasai community who traditionally only favored male elites and their authority.

The author has taken the Narok Town of Kenya for her study where the Maasai people are the dominant population. According to the author, here the term 'Elite' means, "a group of political, professional, religious, and economic elites". She has divided her focus of Elites into four categorizations of elites namely; political elites, professional elites, religious elites, and economic elites. Her methodology of this study includes snowball and selection sampling methods with face-to-face structures and unstructured interviews. Through this, she has tried to

bring out their challenges, support system, and genealogical information for these elites. The book contains three anthropological approaches as a lens to understand the position of Maasai elites. These theories are human capital theory, globalization, and the social reproduction theory. In the human capital theory, she explains how when the human is equipped with skills and knowledge, they contribute to building Human capital. Under this view, western education to the Maasai community helped them in the economic development of their community and region. Through her reference to the United Nations Human development index (HDI), she explains how countries with high HDI are more developed in the world. While focusing on the role of Globalization the writer has taken the reference from Arjun Appadurai's five "scapes". On how the world is connected and how does it impact the developing countries. Following are those five scapes namely: mediascapes (flow of information); ethnoscapes (movement of people); technoscapes (advancement of technology); financescapes (international flow of money); and lastly, ideoscapes (flow of ideas). The author finds the presence of all these factors in the Maasai elites and uses them for understanding their growth and mobility. The global capital flows are a major factor in the development of the Maasai community which was isolated from the government but was home to many international NGOs and missionaries.

The third approach is the Social Reproduction Theory of Pierre Bourdieu. According to Pierre Bourdieu, there is an intergenerational trend of social reproduction of class status. The people who are rich dominate the language, culture, and resources of a community, and their next-generation benefit from that. In this phenomenon, the role of education is important as it perpetuates the dominance of children of privileged families over the 'have-nots'. This way the cycle continues to benefit a generational elite system. But, in the case of Maasai elites, the technological advancements, global capital flows, religious and secular development helped the poor in breaking this cycle. The formation of the indigenous Maasai elites challenges Bourdieu's theory of predictability of future elite formation. The writer mentions the study of Abner Cohen's study of African elites, Tijo Salverda's study of Franco-Mauritian Elites, and John Vincent's study of Gondo in Eastern Uganda. All these three works on African elites were focused on elites who were

elites because of their family wealth but Shera Shani's works focus on first-generation elites of indigenous Maasai group who did not have family wealth instead they used global resources to achieve this status.

In the first chapter on "Maasai Historicity", the author focuses on the development of the Maasai community taking into account the legacy of colonialism. Here the focus is on the colonial period which played a crucial part in elite formation. The geographical location, western education, and missionization all these factors were important to know which African region would be exploited or developed. The Maasai region saw the development later than other central African regions. The policy of sending only one child for education helped people of the Maasai community to get access to education who later paved the way for many more generations. This chapter explains how early missionary policies help in elite formation for today.

The second chapter named "Global Capital Flows" includes the importance of NGOs, Missionaries, Tourism as means of global capital flows which helped in elite formation in the Maasai community as opposed to the family wealth. This chapter takes into account the social capital theory of Bourdieu for the intergenerational elite formation and challenges it with the importance of Global capital flows. Being a minoritized community makes it difficult for the Maasai but it does not take agency away from them. In this chapter it structures and nature of NGOs present in the region are explained where they are religiously affiliated, internationally sponsored, and environmentally focused. These factors proved helpful for Maasai people as they live near many game sanctuaries and reserves surrounding the Kilimanjaro which puts them into proximity to these organizations. These NGOs work in many ways example not only educating the children of rural areas but the adults as well. They played a crucial role in the education of the community in spheres of both social, economic, and environmental development; and their trajectory is illustrated in detail.

Chapter 3, "Gender and Elite Formation" focuses on the role of gender in elite formation and how in the traditionally patriarchal Maasai community the modern female elites came up. In this chapter, the author focuses on the importance and influence of global capital flows and international trends in empowering the Maasai women to break the

conventional inequality to the level where they acquire an elite position. There have been studies on women's representation in powerful position but women belonging to indigenous communities also needs to be studied. The writer uses the reference of United Nations organizations like UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) and UNPFII (United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues). Organizations like these help in creating a platform for voicing women's issues and creating a basic standard for all women. This chapter explains how funding, empowering, and informing the Maasai women contributed to their growth towards elite status. During the colonial period mostly, the men were able to get western education which left women stuck to traditional roles but with access to education and resources, modern Maasai women are operating at influential positions.

In the following chapter on "Religion as Elite Capital," the writer tries to focus on the role of Religion in elite formation. She further explains how Christianity as a universalizing religion worked in elite formation. In Kenya majority of the population is Christian and it is important to look at the development of Christianity in culmination with traditional Maasai culture. The already established Maasai community has its own traditional gods, cultures, and rituals but the dominant culture has been Christianity in the region. Religion plays important role in what is legal or not and it affects the policy formation and representation of people. The spread of Christian missionaries in the Maasai region shows how religion can be a major catalyst in elite formation.

Chapter 5, "Education as Capital in Elite Construction: The Symbolism, Prestige, and Security of Higher Education" focuses on education as a major factor in elite formation. Formal schooling plays an important role in creating a basis for strong education but with the increasing access to education, it is not enough to get into important ranks of positions. Getting into higher studies is a crucial task. Earlier most of the universities were centered in major cities like Nairobi which made it difficult to access for children of rural backgrounds. This chapter explains how with the technological advancement in the education sector like online degrees and colleges, access to higher education is not limited to privileged people anymore. This technoscape is an important

development in the elite formation from the Maasai community and many more indigenous groups.

In the last chapter, “Elite Agencies and Challenges” the author talks about the individual factors including both acquired and inborn talents that aspired people to fight the challenges. The ethics of hard work and perseverance with the push from global resources helped them in elite formation. Here, the author explains how this elite status is not a result of westernization as there were pre-existing elites in the Maasai group. This chapter helps the reader in understanding what were the particular qualities from which a person belonging from the small town of Narok was able to gain elite status on a national level. This chapter focuses on those personality traits like networking, hard work, and perseverance which played a crucial role.

In her concluding chapter, the author points out the major summarization of her study. Factors like how the global capital flows problematize the social reproduction theory of intergenerational elite formation. The first-generation elites of Maasai challenge this theory. This study shows how global capital flows provided an alternate source of resources for the development of Maasai people. How it provides ways in which resource distribution can be provided to every section of society if their governments fail to reach them all. Another major contribution of this study is how it is not only economic gains that should be the standard for measuring the development of a nation and human capital should be the focus of development as it can be more useful in the inequitable development of all.

The book is a seminal work for providing a new dimension in understanding the elite formation in Africa. The study of Maasai development through this new lens helps in finding out the focal points of development which could prove helpful in the development of other indigenous communities. The author covered many dimensions like gender, religion, capital flows, personality traits, etcetera which provides us with valuable insights. The personal experience of the author combined with various anecdotes of many first-generation elites

provides one with an understanding of all the struggles and importance of persistence in achieving this status which in the end creates valuable precedence and hope for other people of the community.

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