



Vox Populi

X edition
2015-2016



Department of Political Science
Miranda House, University of Delhi



Faculty of Political Science Department



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From the Chief Editor's desk

Deepti Sharma

II year

So here it is, once again with an all new look and insights to delve upon. The 10th edition of our much awaited department magazine, VOX POPULI , will engage with issues which concern all of us.

The India as we see today is a nation which is attracting global attention. It is an emerging economic power with phenomenal potential and prospects of growth. We are a nation with a young population and are set to lead the world. The recent ventures of the Centre in the form of 'Make in India', Digital India and smart city hash tags are alluring enough for global investors. Foreign policy with the idea of 'Neighbors first' is yet a commendable approach in the way forward.

But, we need to pause and reflect on policy issues. Actually there are a plethora of such concerns. But we as students of a premier college in Delhi University must think of our role in Policy analysis in national development. How can we contribute to a better India? How can we bring the policy focus back on agriculture, poverty alleviation, security, transparency and corruption free governance..

Keeping in mind the theme 'Governance, Participation and Policy Formulation', the students and faculty have explored issues through their own varied ways . VOX POPULI has emerged as a beautiful mélange of expressions, be it poems, articles or funny yet powerful caricatures. The magazine contains intriguing topics like gay rights, sedition, insecure majority and such the like.

The magazine is a teamwork and would not have been possible without the hard work, innovation , and constant support of the editorial board. and also the insightful and creative illustrations of the graphics team . .A sincere thanks to Pushpa Ma'am, Sonali Ma'am and Shruti Ma'am for their constant guidance and inspiration. I also thank Ashita Nagar , President of the Department. We have not used the editor's scissors on ideas that the articles contain. This is a forum for free expression. The contributors own the responsibility for their ideas.

With this, I extend a warm welcome to this exciting and intriguing edition of the VOX POPULI.



Note from the Teacher-in-charge

Dr. Jayashree Pillai
Associate Professor

It's a matter of pride to the department of Political Science, Miranda House that with this issue we are bringing out the Tenth Edition of Vox Populi, the voice of the department. This annual reflection of opinions, views and experiences of students of the department and faculty, contributed, edited and brought out by the students is a landmark in our academic calendar and I am glad to present this Tenth Volume of Vox Populi to the readers. It has been a fulfilling decade and let us hope that in the coming years we will see this collective expression of our department getting better and better.

We organised a collaborative programme COLAB POL 2015 with the students and faculty from the department of Women's Studies, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, USA on Feminism and Indian Politics from 5 January 2015 to 23 January 2015. Two faculty members, Prof. Asha Sen and Prof. Teresa Kemp and twelve students from the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, participated in it. In September 2015, two faculty members and two students were invited over to Wisconsin University, Eau Claire on an exchange visit. Bijayalaxmi and Jayashree from the faculty and Shrishti and Deepti from students participated in the Transnational Feminism and India Study Abroad Project from 14 September 2015 to 5 October 2015. This faculty – student initiative was a great international immersion experience.

In this academic year, Prof. Radhakrishnan Pillai, author of Corporate Chanakya, Sh. Sanjay Maini, currently working with the British High Commission as Legal Advisor, Prof. Gurpreet Mahajan, Centre for Political Studies, JNU, Prof. P.K. Dutta, Department of Political Science, DU, Prof. Ujjwal Kumar Singh, Department of Political Science, DU and Prof. Shefali Jha, Centre for Political Studies, JNU participated in various seminars conducted by the department.

On a positive note, this year marked the beginning of a Certificate Course in Indian Foreign Policy, with Purnima Roy as the course coordinator. A series of lectures on the subject was delivered by prominent experts such as Dr. Ashok Sajjanhar, former Ambassador of India to Sweden, Latvia and Kazakhstan, Dr. Sanusha Naidu, author, academic and specialist in the integrated rural and regional development and Prof. Achin Vanaik, an eminent Political Scientist.

I would like to take this opportunity to announce that the department of Political Science will also conduct a certificate course on Governance and Policy from the next academic session 2016-17. This has been decided after several faculty meetings of the department and constant interaction with students. The course will have the advantage of several intellectuals, bureaucrats and people from the grass root level sharing their views. The objective of the course is to expose students not only to theory and classroom lectures but also to field experience.

The theme for this year's Ecclesia 2016 of the department is Governance, Participation and Public Policy Processes. Several prominent persons like Prof. J.B.G. Tilak, Vice Chancellor, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, Dr. Pankaj Mittal, Additional Secretary, University Grants Commission, will be a part of the programme which is our department's annual celebration of academics and cultural activities.

This edition of Vox Populi is not based on any particular theme. The idea is to encourage a variety of thinking and writing. I hope this step has led to a more vibrant Tenth Edition of Vox Populi. The views and opinions expressed in this are of the individuals.

I would like to congratulate the student union led by the president Ashita and the student editorial team of Deepti, Annu, Prerona, Soumya, Prachi, Pooja, Ambi, Nitmem, and Dolly who have worked under the guidance of faculty members Pushpa, Sonali and Shruti to bring out this magazine better and livelier.

Thank you.



President's Note

Ashita Nagar

President

Department of Political Science

एक बार पुनः हमारे समक्ष हमारी वार्षिक विभागीय पत्रिका वॉक्स पॉपुली अपनी संपूर्ण प्रतिभा के साथ उतरी है। यह इस पत्रिका का दसवाँ संस्करण है। यह पत्रिका विचारों की मुक्त अभिव्यक्ति का सशक्त माध्यम है। इसके निर्माण में संपूर्ण विभाग की भागीदारी रहती है। इस वार्षिक पत्रिका दृभाषीय है। शिक्षार्थी होने के नाते हम लोगों के समक्ष कई ज्वलंत प्रश्न हैं। भारत एवं विश्व के विकास में हम लोगों की क्या भूमिका है? क्या हम लोगों को प्राप्त स्वतंत्रता के साथ दायित्व का भी विचार करना चाहिए? हमारी जड़े क्या हैं? हम जिस आकाश में विचरण करने की इच्छा रखते हैं उसकी कोई सीमायें हैं? इन्हीं एवं इनके जैसे प्रश्नों से हमारी पत्रिका भरी हुई है।

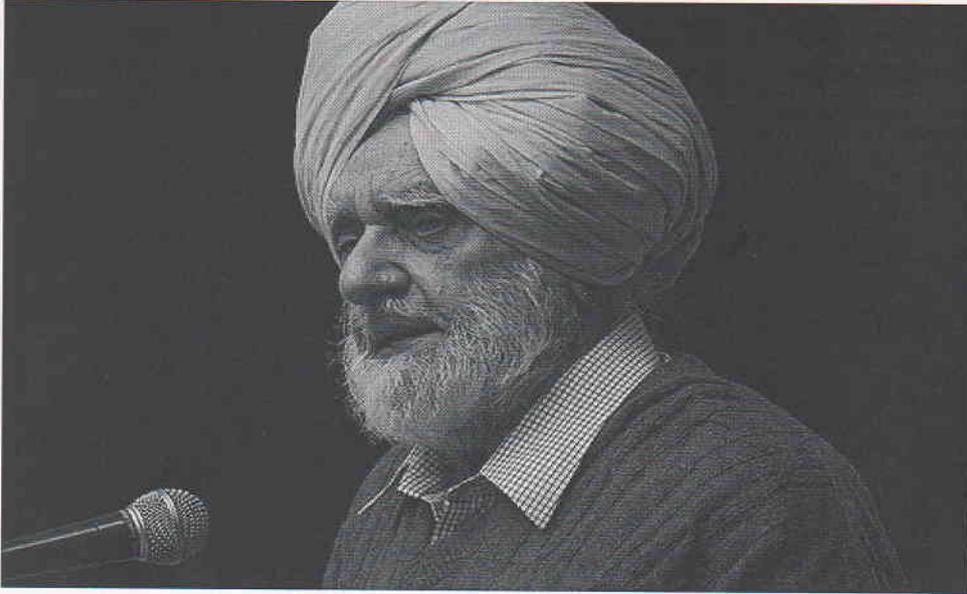
इस पत्रिका के प्रकाशन में कार्यभार संपादकीय मंडल के अतिरिक्त माननीय विभाग अध्यक्ष जयश्री पिल्लई मैडम, आदरणीय अध्यापिका पुष्पा सिंह मैडम, सोनली चितालकर ने संभाला है। मैं इन सबका धन्यवाद करती हूँ। हमने इस पत्रिका में विचारों का संपादन नहीं किया है इसमें प्रस्तुत प्रत्येक विचार के लिए लेखिका का उत्तरदायित्व है। मैं आशा करती हूँ कि प्रकाशन व संस्करण पाठक वर्ग में नई अभिरूचियाँ उजागर करने में सक्षम रहेगा।

A Tribute to Prof. Randhir Singh

(1922-2016)

Pragya Pandey

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science



A renowned Marxist scholar and distinguish teacher of Political theory, Prof. Randhir Singh, unfortunately passed away this year on 31 January. The passing away of the man immensely loved by generations of his students and others whose lives he had touched has left a void in the Indian academia. Apart from a brief stint at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Prof. Singh had spent his entire academic career at the Department of Political science at the University of Delhi. His lectures were popular for the sheer brilliance of their content, delivered with passion and engagement it attracted the students from diverse disciplines. He has been associated with the communist movement since his student days in 1930s. He had taken a keen interest in issues of trade unions, Kisan Sabhas, human rights groups and supported the cause of women, tribal communities and the minority nationalities of the country. An insight of his life can be found in his engaging autobiographical essay, "In Lieu of a Biodata". Prof. Singh has been one of the most internationally acknowledged public intellectuals India has produced in the last few decades. An era has come to an end with the passing away of this great scholar.

Activities of the Department of Political Science 2015-16

In a bid to provide space for critical engagement, the department of Political Science, Miranda House has hosted a series of lectures, seminars and panel discussions to develop the capacity for reasoned arguments among students. A seminar on “Kautilya’s Arthashastra” by Prof. Radhakrishnan Pillai, author of Corporate Chanakya, organized in collaboration with TULA, MH Consumer Club on August 12, 2015 was well received. Another seminar was organized in collaboration with TULA where Sh. Sanjay Maini, currently working with the British High Commission as Legal Advisor, spoke on “Women and the Digital World” on 3rd September 2015.

In light of the recent migrant crisis in Europe and the worrying rise of religious intolerance worldwide, a public lecture was delivered on “Why should we care about cultural diversity?” by Prof. Gurpreet Mahajan, Centre for Political Studies, JNU moderated by Prof. P.K. Dutta, Department of Political Science, DU on 13 October 2015. Another lecture was organized on “State and Democracy in Contemporary India” by Prof. Ujjwal Kumar Singh, Department of Political Science, DU and Prof. Shefali Jha, Centre for Political Studies, JNU on 19 October 2015. A field trip to MCD Civic Centre to acquaint students with urban governance was also organized.

We organised a collaborative programme COLAB POL 2015 with the students and faculty from the department of Women’s Studies, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, USA on Feminism and Indian Politics from 5 January 2015 to 23 January 2015. Two faculty members, Prof. Asha Sen and Prof. Teresa Kemp and twelve students from the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, participated in it. In September 2015, two faculty members and two students were invited over to Wisconsin University, Eau Claire on an exchange visit. Bijayalaxmi and Jayashree from the faculty and Shrishti and Deepti from students participated in the Transnational Feminism and India Study Abroad Project from 14 September 2015 to 5 October 2015. This faculty – student initiative was a great international immersion experience.

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Prof. Ganga Vadhavkar from Wisconsin University, Eau Claire, USA conducted an Interactive session on Management and Communication with the students and faculty of the Department on January 20, 2016.

Ecclesia 2016, the annual festival of the Department of Political Science is being held on April 12, 2016 which will see interactive sessions on Governance, Participation and Policy Formulation. Several prominent persons like Prof. J.B.G. Tilak, Vice Chancellor, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, Dr. Pankaj Mittal, Additional Secretary, University Grants Commission, will be a part of the programme.

Through these seminars and interactive sessions, which witnessed active participation from both faculty and students, a platform for critical thinking by gaining access to fresh perspectives on relevant themes and issues were provided.

Back to Basics: The Need for Bureaucratic Accessibility.

Hena Singh

Assistant Professor

Department of Political Science,

Miranda House

**(on study leave, Doctoral Fellow at
University of Birmingham, UK)**

I am quite awestruck by two sentences from Chetan Bhagat's first non-fiction, 'What Young India Wants'. In his introductory letter to the readers Mr Bhagat says 'The system changes with better policies and ...Society changes with better values'. The sentences indeed are an undisputable and undeniable fact of our collective existence, however, the question that needs to be begged to be asked is whether policies exist independent of social values or does one beget the other. The question assumes immense importance because policies are products and by-products of our collective social requirements, needs and demands. However the manner in which they are churned out and executed successfully depends, to a large extent, on the value orientations of the policy makers both elected and appointed. For long it has been argued that policies of the system are most effective when the deliverers operate in sync with values that characterize the social setup.

So far as the value orientations of the elected representatives (policy makers) are concerned it must be noted that a democratic setup has mechanisms embedded in its structures to ensure that those who govern can take the governed for granted only at their own perils. This is not to say that all elected representatives are very sensible and humane in their approach towards their people but then the governed at least have the required ways and means to set them right. While the electoral accountability of the representatives to their electorate ensured through a resilient civil society as well as an ever expanding influence of the media both conventional and social ensures that the elected policy makers remain within bounds and accessible (or at least appear to be) to the public at large, the absence of any apparent parallel or countervailing mechanisms vis a vis the bureaucracy makes it prone to arrogance, more often than not resulting in usurping of power over the people and for itself. In fact, the attitude and value orientations of the appointed officials have been and remain one of the biggest concerns in all post-colonial societies. Even in the context of developed societies aphorisms such as 'trained incapacity' and 'overload' have been used to describe bureaucratic inefficiencies. The noted American sociologist, Robert Merton in his seminal work *Social Theory and Social Structure* (1957) was very emphatic in pointing out to what he called 'trained incapacity' of the bureaucracy which he saw emanating from its tendency of 'over conformity'. Merton believed that bureaucrats have the tendency of prioritising their personal interests over that of the organization. He also saw them as being resistant to changes in established routines. Most importantly Merton argued that because they emphasized formality over interpersonal relationships, and had been trained to ignore the special circumstances of particular cases, they appeared 'arrogant' and 'haughty'.

All these points assume renewed significance in the Indian context for the obvious reasons that the newly elected government in India has chosen to follow the bureaucratic model of delivery. The government is well within its legitimate rights to choose the delivery model that it thinks would best serve the interest of the people and if it goes with the bureaucratic delivery mechanism so be it, however it must ensure that not only the deliverers deliver but they do that with a sense of ease, humility, and respect towards the public. Accessibility of the governors to the governed is of utmost importance in this regards. Right from his victory speech at Vadodra and Varanasi to the national address from the historic Red Fort and many such addresses later, Mr Modi has been forthright in dovetailing his visions of a resurgent nation with that of an inclusive one and he for sure knows that it is impossible to achieve that unless the administrators have a real understanding not just of the social realities but also of the norms and values that inherently, characterize us. For instance, his idea that the elected representatives adopt a minimum number of villages in their respective constituencies is laudable and remarkable for it is one way in which the representatives can in humble ways remain in touch and bonds with their electorates.

As far as the bureaucracy is concerned, with loads of administrative experience behind him Mr Modi is well aware of the clogs that could possibly hinder his designs. Though, one needs to appreciate the way he has gone ahead disciplining the bureaucrats not just through clear instructions but also by walking the tight rope of punctuality himself yet, he must ensure that they remain accessible and within bounds. One way to do that could well be by making the higher bureaucracy get a feel of the real India and that may require a relook at the codes and the service conditions of the bureaucrats especially those under the coveted banner of All India Services. Assigning them responsibilities to oversee and coordinate the developmental works in the villages that are to be adopted by the members of legislature (as per the call given by the Prime Minister) is an idea worth examining. It is an axiomatic that many of our career bureaucrats at top levels of their career are today cut off from the harsh realities of our social existence. The vertical mobility of their careers could plausibly be a reason for that. It is not being suggested that vertical mobility must be stopped but it also needs to be ensured that complacency does not creep in them and that they remain in touch with the social realities despite moving up and high in the service ladders. Sending high officials to live in districts once in a while could be another idea worth having a look at. Being amidst people would surely rekindle modesty and humility in them. It would also reequip them with the much required hands-on approach of problem solving. Most importantly, being in sync with social norms and values would plausibly make them more humane, humble, civil and efficient.

*Views expressed are personal and have been developed in deliberations with Chandrachur Singh.

The Political Economy of Development of Indian State¹: Some Critical Reflections

Pushpa Singh
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science,
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Introduction

It is always a matter of great interest to analyze the political economy of development of any state as it illustrates the vivid manner in which it engages with its politics, economy and society. Studying the political economy always provides us with the apt understanding of that society as it highlights the logistics of strategies of development, the preference for specific paradigm, thrust for certain key areas and the interplay of power dynamics affecting all these processes and producing very specific outcomes in specific contexts of different countries. The Indian State and its political economy, which is the centre of analysis here, present a curious case. Hierarchy, divisions, inter-community and intra community strifes mark the social and political characteristics of the society, whose effects inevitably flows to the domains of economic engagements of the state.

Historical Legacy

The new India forged after independence had all the political, social and economic disadvantages that are typical of any postcolonial society.² The country was in very bad shape. The political structures were in its infancy and economy was in shambles due to prolonged period of colonial exploitation and society was rife with internal bickering on caste, class and communal lines. Extreme backwardness, diseases and epidemics were stifling the society. As the country was grappling with these problems, it appeared a gigantic task of nation building and development that lay in front of our founding fathers. Even though government floated numerous policies to handle the situation, but it appeared as highly insufficient. The facilities created remain woefully meagre in proportion to the total minimum needs, even though the funds earmarked for such programmes constituted a significant fraction of the government budget every year (Bardhan, 1984)³. It was realized that such a mammoth goal of creating stable structures and indigenous economy can be achieved in a gradual and sustained manner. Under the rubrics of the Bombay Plan of 1944⁴, it was decided the arrangements were made in such a manner so as to shield the indigenous market from the foreign players. As consequence, along with other policy initiatives, the founding members decided to pursue the planned and regulated economy and came up with Five Year Plans, the first Five Year Plan starting in 1951.

¹One of the first in its lineage, there is excellent work by Pranab Bardhan by the title *The Political Economy of Development in India*, (1984), Oxford University Press, discussing the political and social constrains of the process of development in the Indian scenario. This piece of writing derives many arguments from this scholarly work.

²Kumari Pushpa (2016) 'Industrial Policy of India' in *Development Process and Social Movement in India* (ed) Abhay Pd. Singh, Pinnacle Publishing, (second edition), New Delhi.

³ Bardhan Pranab (1984) *The Political Economy of Development*, Oxford University Press, London, New York

⁴For details of the background and detailed discussion on the plan, please refer Amal Sanyal (2010) "The Curious Case of Bombay Plan" *Contemporary Issues and ideas in Social Sciences*, Vol 6. No.1. also available on <http://journal.ciiss.net/index.php/ciiss/article/view/78> accessed on 10-01-16.

Agriculture and industry were identified as two key areas in the project of building economy and bringing in development. Since India primarily has been an agrarian society, huge population has been dependent on it. Therefore, it was important to create an alternate productive sector to ease out and divert this immense pressure from land and agriculture. Unquestionably, industrialization became the utmost priority for the policy makers. The exercise of industrialisation was to stimulate and sustain the vast agrarian sector by supplying more power, better transport facilities,

marketing and creating more income earners.⁵ The economic history of most of the nations in the west have shown that the shift of working population from agriculture to industries brought great advancement in their economy. On the other hand, those societies that remained industrially backward had little autonomy in terms of their foreign policy and also were written off and treated as non-existent in the world economy.

The Period from 1950s-1980

Most of the Five Year Plans and the Industrial Policy Resolutions outlined highly interventionist state policies. From the beginning till 1980s, our leadership clearly steered the path of socialist production system. Formidable public sector were created to cater to highly guarded defence, arms and ammunitions, oils sectors. The government and state acquired a pro active role to become the harbinger of development process. The industries were classified into different categories depending on the role of state played in them: some to be kept exclusively under public sector, some in which private sector could join in and some were left for private sectors without any direct government interference in it. Six sectors were identified as basic like coal, iron, steel, aircraft, shipbuilding, mineral oils which were completely owned and managed by the state. The rest fields of investments and management were left open to private enterprises on the condition that state may intervene whenever required. All our plans and industrial policy from Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 to that of 1980 have maintained a clear divide between public and private, prioritizing the prior over the later in terms of economic space, budget, mode and extent of production and responsibility. The Second Five Year Plan (1956-1961) inscribed absolute interventionist economy under the aegis of Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis⁶, the key economist of Second Five Year Plan.⁷ To supplement the economy, small enterprises such as cottage industry, village industry and small scale industries were given discrete space in the national economy.

It is interesting to note that, all these arrangements of developmental state benefitted three interlocking groups: India's rich farmers (who blocked agrarian reforms), industrial class (capitalists who took advantage of state induced scarcities and blocked competition and innovation), and the leading bureaucrats (many of whom earned large rental incomes from the "permit-licence-quota Raj" and almost all of whom enforced unproductive rent seeking behaviour on smaller business and ordinary people (Frankel 1978, Bardhan 1984, Bhagwati

⁵ Kumari Pushpa (2016) 'Industrial Policy of India' in *Development Process and Social Movement in India* (ed) Abhay Pd. Singh, Pinnacle Publishing, (second edition), New Delhi (forthcoming).

⁶ Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis was designer of India's Second Five Year Plan (1956-61). He was a distinguished statistician and a scientist. He strongly advocated for prioritising industrialisation in the Second Five Year Plan to resuscitate the ailing economy.

⁷ Refer Government of India, *Second Five Year Plan 1956-61*, New Delhi.

1993).⁸ Some times it appeared as if the state has been dissipating its resources and subsidies to keep this tripartite coalition comfortable. At the same, such arrangements also fuelled the increasing sense of unease inside and outside the system, indicating the exigency of drastic changes. Eventually, our love affair with the welfare economy stated faltering as the systemic errors started becoming more visible and uncontrollable.

The Neo-liberal Paradigm and the New Economic Policies

Apparently, since the time of independence roughly till 1980, India retained the scheme of state controlled regulated economy, best portrayed by the policy “Licence, Permit, Quota Raj”. In India, by mid sixties, there grew increasing disillusionment with Mahalanobis style centralized, protectionist, capital intensive development strategies that bred proliferating controls and overvalued currencies.⁹ The stagnancy of decades further debilitated the economy. The control started loosening up by 1980 due to the newer dynamics ushered in by the domestic compulsion, compounded by international pressure. Globally also, the orientations of finances even in close guarded economy were inclining towards change as many erstwhile socialist systems gradually shunned the rigid and regulatory arrangements in favour of open market.¹⁰ The rigid MRTP Act of 1969 gave way to Competition Act of 2002, in order to facilitate the business process. This galvanized the state to proclaim its shift towards LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) economy under the guise of World bank.

The year 1991 proved to be land mark as the government went for complete overhauling. In order to address the balance of payment crisis, the Congress-led government of Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao, prescribed a new economic policies for India, which marked sharp departure from its previous orientations. In 1980s India borrowed hugely from outside for various development initiatives. As there were insufficient funds to repay these loans, India was compelled to borrow more from international agencies like International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to avert the crisis. Consequently, a new era begun, leading to series of changes in economy most remarkable of that has been the structural reforms and adjustments which were overdue from long time otherwise also. Industrial licensing system was abolished and only those sectors having crucial strategic, security and social concerns, like arms and ammunitions, atomic energy, railway transport etc. were to be continued directly under the government. Foreign investments were highly encouraged. Public sector shrunk saddling private sectors with many opportunities as well as responsibilities. Special economic Zones were created to help the industries flourish.

The Challenges and the Way Ahead

As it is now already two decades of globalised economy, we can engage with the problems and prospects of the neo-liberal paradigm. There have been mixed responses to India’s experience with liberalization. Many scholars have point out how these new policies have failed to heal the insipid economy. Jayati Ghosh feels that it had accentuated the problems of

⁸ Quoted in Stuart Corbridge (2010), ‘The Political Economy of Development in India since Independence’ in *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics*, Routledge, New York, Canada, p.309.

⁹ Lewis, John P. (1995) *India’s Political Economy: Governance and Reform*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York. p. 132.

¹⁰ Kumari Pushpa (2016) ‘Industrial Policy of India’ in *Development Process and Social Movement in India* (ed) Abhay Pd. Singh, Pinnacle Publishing, (second edition), New Delhi (forthcoming).

lives of women by making it more informal, poorly paid with long working hours.¹¹ There has been feminization of casual labour and feminization of poverty.¹² Pupapre Balakrishnan stresses that the economic policies followed since 1991 has failed to bring in inclusive growth and make society more equitable. Along with Jean Dreze, Amartya Sen argues that India's preoccupation with economic growth makes no sense without recognizing how that wealth is used and distributed and what is its impact on human development.¹³

On the other hand, we have scholars like Bhagwati and Panagariya who hold different views. They reflect that while some critics on the left have contended that the reforms were imposed by the United States and the Bretten Woods Institutions, which extended funds to tide over the payment crisis forthwith, it is wrong to entirely assume that these reforms had not long been seen as desirable within India itself if India was to begin delivering on its promise of superior economic performance.¹⁴ And in fact, the greatest achievement of the country lies in the fact that economy has grown within the framework of a democracy, unlike its East Asian counterparts.¹⁵ However the challenge lies in the fact that whether the state will be able engage with all the stake holders in the society in its projects of development and deliver on the front of social justice. The task of progress must be a balanced one so as to ward off the risk of asymmetrical development and must be inclusive of all sections. Additionally, considerate and humane approach towards the weak and vulnerable like women, dalits, adivasis will make the saga of development truly egalitarian.

¹¹ Ghosh Jayati (2009) *Never Done and Poorly paid: Women's Work in Globalising India*, Women Unlimited, New Delhi.

¹² Feminisation of casual labour or informal labour means that with the neoliberal policies and free market, the economy has shaped in such a way that more and more casual unorganised workers happen to be women. Feminisation of poverty indicates that between the two sexes, women's population happen to be poorer in the society.

¹³ Refer to <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/16/amartya-sen-india-dirty-fighter> accessed on 12-01-16.

¹⁴ Bhagwati Jagdish, Panagariya Arvind (2012) 'Introduction: Trade, Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy' in Bhagwati Jagdish, Panagariya Arvind (eds). *India's Reforms: How they Produced Inclusive Growth*, Oxford University Press, London and New York, p.5.

¹⁵ Kohli, Atul (2006) 'Politics of Economic Growth in India, 1980-2005', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 41, No. 13, 1 April 2006, pp. 1251-59.

Kashmir gets Azadi in Jawaharlal Nehru University

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The second week of February blasted into sub-continental consciousness with Kashmir getting Azadi in Jawaharlal Nehru University. As a teacher of an intrinsically debate- based subject like Political Science, in Delhi University the fire is singeing me and my students.

In an average class of sixty I have students from practically every part of India. The State of Jammu and Kashmir is represented- there are Ladakhi's, girls from Jammu and from Kashmir. As a university teacher I handle diversity of region, religion, language and politics as a matter of daily business. One of the first reactions I had to the JNU incident was one of relief that both Kanhiya Kumar and Umar Khalid are not Kashmiri.

It's not that Kashmiri students outside the valley have no right to voice dissent. However there is a logical distinction between dissent and threat. Replace Kashmir with Bharat, or your own name, in the slogans that were raised in JNU and my point is clear.

What does the common Indian think about Afzal Guru? The name brings home images of the Parliament attack of 2001. It also brings up memories of his interview to Aaj Tak where he lays bare his role in this attack. But TV interviews are not court evidence. The death sentence awarded to Afzal Guru was upheld by Supreme Court. Three core points have emerged- that Afzal Guru was not given due legal aid, that the evidence was circumstantial and that the courts may have been influenced by the pressure of 'collective conscience'.

All three points have been debated intensely and the debate has now degenerated into rhetoric. No one who supports Afzal Guru says that he was innocent, but they argue that he was not given due legal rights. So he is a victim, but is he a martyr? The Constitution of India gives citizens the right to believe so. That's dissent and free-thinking.

But when that goes further to claim that 'Afzal hum sharminda hai, tere qatil zinda hain' and 'Har ghar se Afzal niklega' things tip over. The first slogan looks like an inspiration for the attack on the Delhi high Court in 2011 and a call for further attacks while the second looks like Gazwa e Hind. This is an open declaration of war on lawyers and the Indian State, and looks like some version of the Marxist class war. And it is happening in a premier University campus in the national capital.

Things have turned ugly for students since February 9, 2016. The JNU administration recorded footage and police action followed. This has set the cat amongst the pigeons. Students from JNU are facing the heat as people with varying shades of politics descend on the campus to wave national flags and shout slogans. They also are being profiled outside the campus.

Kashmiri students in Delhi are facing the heat from locals, landlords and communities where they have stayed. The social media has blown the lid off many facts that might otherwise have escaped public notice. Citizens who normally do not care are asking uncomfortable questions. How subsidised is the campus at JNU? Who is Umar Khalid? Was his father associated with the

banned SIMI? Is his father a member of the Jamat e Islami e Hind, whose core vision is to turn India into an Islamic state? The hysteria is building at an incremental rate. Common citizens don't interact in the virtual world with a copy of the Constitution as a reference book.

In all this probably the worst sufferers will be Kashmiri students outside the valley. This incident will re-imprint the terrorist mark on their foreheads. It is a punishing world for job-seekers today. Students from very disadvantaged socio-economic sections also populate JNU. Empowering them with requisite skills, filling the gaps left by historic discriminations, should be the focus of the university. Kashmiri students should be wary of being drawn into vulture politics on university campuses. After ten days, on 19th February 2016, a small step in the right direction has been taken. JNUSU has condemned the incident of February 9, 2016.

It was there, it will be there
But let me talk of 'India Today'
It's been long, it made its 'Tryst with Destiny';
ushering in the dawn of freedom , leaving behind the subjective pain and agony.
But was this 'Tryst with destiny', the one for all?
May be 'Yes', may be 'No',
and this what we need to know.
From 'starved and famished 'to the 'Cola', 'KFCs 'and 'Mc Ds ',
from being naked and robbed off to 'Zara,' 'Gucci', 'Nike', 'Armani '
From the catacombs of hinterlands to the grandiose of skylines,
From being completely nearly illiterate to the degrees of being hi-tech ,
From being nothing to going on Mars.
Yes it made its tryst with destiny, catapulting in the race of development, but,
by calculating the Gross National Income and production and not caring about 'Gross National Happiness'.
Hyphenated development enabling few to be enlisted in the list of global billionaires,
and forcing others to spend nights on streets.
Some dying in Siachen, some due to debts and failing rains, and yet few of the institutional discrimination and '
structured ' pain.
Let me Talk of India Today ...
Where the bad gaze and touch is not a problem but the way of dressing is,
'where Dissent is Sedition' but there is no problem with 'Gendered' citation.
Where a particular sexual orientation and food habits is a crime
where the values are degrading with minds bracketed,
where for the victims the bystanders and bypasses have no time.
Where some are killed before their birth,
and where Caste, community matters, and merit is of no worth.
Where the 'Chosen' are busy passing salvos for the worthless reasons;
and where exists 'a clash between Nationalism and Patriotism', for which we all need lessons.
Where we all shut our eyes, ears and mouths in course of injustice and atrocities,
where something true but blunt is censured ,
But where we never are disturbed by the cozy hypocrisies .
So was the Destiny deceptive?
Or were it 'We the People of India' who deceived ourselves?
It's time, let us 'Question' ourselves and talk of India Today ,
Let us together strive to make it a better, safer , and 'India for All' , and most importantly ,
Let Nobody stop us from 'talking ' it out today.

The Insecure Majority

Niti Jha

B.A (H) Political Science (I year)

I belong to the majority community. My family didn't vote for the governing party and even if it did it is as normal as any other community member voting for the party that represents its community. So does it make me a supporter of majoritarian rule? I suppose not. As every other community, we have the right to support and promote the interests of our community. Now that does not mean that we want to demean other communities, instead, we, like everyone else, want dignity and respect for our community and religion in our country. Why, when we talk about community rights, do we only refer to minority community rights??

We are insecure because only a few years back we used to be normal Hindus going about our business in our daily lives without caring much about what's written on our holy books. Nowadays, we are met with judgmental looks tagging us as extremists, intolerant and insensitive towards minority. To be honest most of the Hindus had never touched their holy books, Savarkar's stand on Hinduism was unknown, and they only knew that they are Hindus because that's what they have been told since childhood. Only when we were met with criticism did we actually make an effort to check what Hinduism is really about. I personally didn't go around spreading intolerance against other communities and neither did my friends and family. Likewise, people around me don't specifically feel threatened by us. And, I am sure this opinion is shared by millions of people across the country. Then, why is that a few events have been highlighted so much so that my religion and my religious text needs immediate revision? Isn't it like all religions need revision? Isn't it like the concept of religion itself needs revision or rather transformation?

The environment has suddenly become so charged, they say. It might have. So whom should we blame? May be the politicians who are politicizing religion! Or maybe those petty officials who are trying to monopolize power in the name of the government! But no, generalizing and blaming the entire Hindu community seems much easier. The other day, I was found defending the current government, mostly because I am impressed with their foreign and economic policies, but the general assumption was that my support is based on my caste and religious identity. Is it really that difficult to see me as a rational individual rather than a Hindu Brahmin? Would you simply kill the possibility that I can make an unbiased choice?

The other day, I met a guy on tinder. Now let me tell you to be a Hindu and have a thing for surnames' is a huge deal, especially these days. But, even then out of curiosity, I asked him his full name. He said 'Dash Nagar' and told me that he happens to be a Gujjar. Immediately after that he asked 'does that make any difference?' I took a few seconds to reply - 'no, not at all'. I mean come on now; of course it does make a difference. I belong to an orthodox Hindu - Brahmin family and naturally I respect my parents and a little afraid of them. I know my constitutional rights but that doesn't mean that, I will use them against my parents for marrying any other person. Now of course I would fight for our relationship in future if it's worth fighting for. But all I wanted to do was to get familiar with the ground reality as to how difficult would it be with you and whether or not you really deserve a chance. And let me tell you in bold letters that I am not looking down upon your community. It's just that there are few boundaries in my life irrespective

of all the freedom provided in our Constitution: (credits - beloved parents). And I am very much ashamed to admit that all the education till now hasn't yet been able to build the courage in me to go against these stupid boundaries. Now these are my individual failures, stop calling them my caste or religious pride.

Now after reading my opinion, people can simply say that Hinduism is 'entrenched' in me. But wait, when a Muslim comes forward to say that all Muslims are not terrorists and that terrorism has no religion, would you say that Islam is entrenched into him and that is what is making him defend his religion...., would you? I am just saying try not to judge a part of my identity, try not to highlight it and most importantly try not to generalize... because for all I know I can be a chauvinist communitarian hungry for power and domination, rather than just a Hindu!

Centre and State: A Political Dichotomy

- Anjali Mathur

- B.A. (H) Political Science(I year)

On the world stage India is a land of immense cultural and regional diversity. But on a whole this country is viewed as having a uniform political tradition and distinct political legacy all over. However, as one takes a closer look at the deep reaches of its political tradition one cannot help but notice several co-existing arenas of politics that amplify its democratic nature. For most of the Indian voters political parties have created a single formula of election campaigning and propoganda catalyzed by invoking and provoking. But it is necessary to acknowledge the change in the nature and intensity of dynamism as one move from the Centre to the state.

Most regard caste politics as integral to the Indian electoral processes. But an important point to ponder upon is the complexity with which the caste factors are at play. A party competing at the national level exercises great caution while invoking caste sentiments especially since the Mandal Commission controversy. Most parties prefer silence than disturbing the explosive issue of reservation. A very clear evidence is the 2014 election manifesto of the competing political parties including Congress and BJP. But the state level politics experiences blatant exploitation of caste sentiments especially on issues of reservation. This is very much evident from the recent Jat reservation controversy in Haryana and constant demand for reservations from groups like Gujjars in Rajasthan and Patidars in Gujarat. Such states might also experience a continuous vicious cycle of political promises and use of violence by the masses to achieve their political ends in the absence of fulfillment.

When questioned about the scope of gender parity in the elections at the Centre and state level the mass opinion would usually give an upper hand to the central politics. On the contrary, the state political processes have demonstrated greater equality by granting greater chances to female candidates to compete and acquire positions of power. At present four states in India have women chief ministers and Mehbooba Mufti is soon to assume chief minister's office in Jammu and Kashmir.

Another striking dichotomy between Centre and state politics is that while the dynastic politics is being challenged at the national level (one of the major attacks on Congress in 2014 elections) it still finds solace and propagation at the state level politics. Therefore, we see the Scindia family in Madhya Pradesh, the Pilot family in Rajasthan, the Yadav family under Lalu Prasad Yadav in Bihar and many more continuing in power within their respective states parties. Although the trend of dynastic politics is greatly denounced at the Centre level politics it continues to foster at the state level.

Therefore it is easy to conclude that India is not only culturally diverse but has great diversity in the political arena as well. There exist stark and often conflicting differences between the union and regional level politics. With Vidhan Sabha elections in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Assam around the corner, it would be interesting to note the novelty with which these elections would be fought , won and the contributions it would make is yet invisible dichotomy.

The Role of Students in Removing Illiteracy

- Prachi Mahajan

- B. A (H) Political Science (II Year)

Gandhi said “Mass illiteracy is India's sin and shame and must be liquidated”. Illiteracy is the biggest curse we have to face in a developing country with the second largest population of which more than 50 % is illiterate as it effects the growth and development, creating hindrances and roadblock in becoming a developed and fastest growing economy. Therefore the role of students in removing illiteracy becomes a major tool for the development of the society and the country.

“What is really needed to make democracy function is not knowledge of facts, but right education”. In this regard they can awaken the illiterates in living skills, proper hygiene, childcare and nutrition which will prevent them from falling to diseases and improving their living standards. Also they can remove very much the social evils from mind of illiterates like blind faith in superstitions, religious beliefs, communalism and narrow -mindedness. It is unfortunate that even after sixty years of our independence we have not been able to eradicate illiteracy from our country. In fact, illiteracy is the root cause of all the major maladies that afflict India today. If we wish to be counted among the top leading countries of the world, we have got to eradicate illiteracy. Besides, education is necessary for personal growth of any individual. It helps to promote self-respect of a person. It increases participation in the democratic processes by bringing about awareness about rights and duties as the citizen of our country. Something surely has to be done on war- footing to see more and more literates in our country.

The responsibility, however, doesn't lie with the government alone. It is the moral duty of each and every citizen of India who is fortunate enough to be educated to offer his voluntary services to promote literacy. In fact, students in schools and colleges can play a very important role in this direction. They should voluntarily offer their service in taking literacy classes by sparing at least two hours every week. They can form teams for different age groups by identifying some adults/children in their neighborhood and organize classes in a common hall in the locality. Even in school teachers can organize some groups and allot the willing school students the duties to teach the illiterates after school hours.

Another way to contribute to this literacy mission is to follow the concept of 'Each one Teach one'. Every student should take on himself or herself the responsibility of teaching at least one illiterate person — possibly the domestic help or a vendor. Nothing is impossible and with the earnest efforts and strong will power of the youth a lot can be achieved to bring down the rate of illiteracy in our country and to improve the quality of life for the illiterate counterparts of our country. Illiterate parents are at a severe disadvantage in ensuring that their children are well-educated, thus perpetuating existing inequalities. This implies that even if the poor have capability, they are deprived of opportunities that are enjoyed by the richer. The children of the poor do not get a chance to study in good schools, or get good health facilities and employment.

Literacy, will in turn, alleviate poverty. This will reduce the gap between the rich and the poor. Students should organize street plays, put posters depicting the importance of literacy. We need to spread awareness regarding the benefits of being literate as house wives, elderly people in the villages are cheated in day- today practices. If the lady of the house is educated, the whole family gets education free of cost as the mother nurtures the child and hence, she is the best teacher for a child. We can increase literacy by organizing campaigns, educating the people of the slums as well as the villages and giving them an opportunity to explore the outside world.

Issues of the Transgender Community in India

- Aishwarya Dhar

B.A (H) Political Science (I Year)

India is a country full of diversity, where people belonging to various cultures, ethnic groups, languages and religions are accommodated. However, when it comes to the transgender community, India fall a little short in accommodating them. This article is going to delve into the perspectives of the transgender community in India, how they feel about their identity and the treatment meted out to them in the Indian public sphere.

To understand the plight of the transgender, first, we need to know who they actually are. A transgender is an individual whose gender identity or gender expression is different from his/her assigned sex. This means that a biological male may feel comfortable with a female identity or a biological female may feel comfortable with a male identity. Transgender, as a definition, is independent of one's sexual orientation. The most important thing to note when we talk about the Indian perspective is that there is a difference between a Hijra and Transgender. While a transgender could be any individual whose biological gender and gender identity are different from one another, Hijras are primarily males who have a feminine gender identity. In fact, Hijras are a part of close knitted communities in South Asian countries. The Hijra community has a certain set of norms which are followed by all members. In the eyes of the common people, Hijras are castrated males. It is believed that to become a Hijra, a male has to undergo castration; however, this is untrue. Within the Hijra community, castration is strictly optional. Hijras may or may not opt to undergo castration, breast implantation or hormone therapy to look more feminine. It is left entirely up to an individual what they feel comfortable with.

There are a lot of problems faced by the transgender community in India like ostracism in society, no provision for education, no employment opportunity and a general lack of empathy towards their community. The government of India has recognized Hijras as a "third sex", granting them the basic civil rights entitled to every citizen of India. In April 2014, Justice KS Radhakrishnan declared transgender to be the third gender in Indian law, in a case brought by the National Legal Services Authority (Nalsa) against Union of India and others. The ruling said:

"Seldom, our society realizes or cares to realize the trauma; agony and pain which the members of Transgender community neither undergo, nor appreciate the innate feelings of the members of the Transgender community, especially of those whose mind and body disown their biological sex. Our society often ridicules and abuses the Transgender community and in public places like railway stations, bus stands, schools, workplaces, malls, theatres, hospitals, they are sidelined and treated as untouchables, forgetting the fact that the moral failure lies in the society's unwillingness to contain or embrace different gender identities and expressions, a mindset which we have to change." [1]

Although the Nalsa judgment has been crucial in providing the Hijra community with an identity as the third gender, it has fallen short in providing them with much else. The Hijra or the transgender community in India still remains ostracized from the society. They are not allowed to cast votes without identifying themselves as either male or female. No proactive action has till date been taken by the government of India in providing this marginalized community with education, jobs, healthcare facilities or even the right to vote. The question remains that how will this minority, with no access to education or employment whatsoever, earn their living? Hence, with no other alternative, they resort to begging, sex work and dancing at night clubs. The colonial-era law known as "Section 377" makes gay sex a crime in India and is used to target the Hijra community. The Hijras in India are constantly exploited by the police forces, face sexual harassment and are denied justice for the same. In a conversation with a woman belonging to the

Hijra community I learned about how she had once been unlawfully arrested and raped by 5 police officers. Such is the extent of horrors faced by the Hijra community in India.

Although the Supreme Court of India in the 2014 judgment directed the government to frame welfare schemes to benefit the transgender community, the government has not shown any interest in doing the same. Only being able to identify themselves as “E” (standing for eunuch) on their passport and certain government documents will not help the transgender community in being able to live a dignified life. The only way they can be uplifted in the society is by being accepted and accommodated by the people themselves. Hijras in India are regarded with discomfort and derision. The society needs to shed the stigmas and superstitions associated with the transgender community and give them the recognition they deserve, i.e., that of a human being.

References

[1] *Supreme Court of India, National Legal Services Authority versus Union of India and others*, 2014.

A Feeling Hard to Ignore

Smriti Misra

B.A. (H) Political Science (II year)

To love and be loved is what we ought to live for
The crude essence of life, of existence
It is like the wind, you feel it like a wind
It brushes past your face, your hair
Makes the veins of the nature dance
If it wouldn't have been, there would
Be hatred, bloodshed
With it, there would be none
Revenge owes its existence to it
So do others, like it or unlike
With conscious or without
For it conquers all
All through itself, by itself
It is a feeling hard to ignore
An emotion hard not to follow
Anything can triumph none without it
And be at peace, feel joy, contentment
What do we brawl for, come back for, for whom, for what?
A mystique element it has
For it cannot be seen through the naked eyes of yours, but felt, in one's soul
One's heart.

The New Radcliff across the Oceans

-Garima

B.A Programme (II Year)

They shared a common neighborhood,
Even they were best friends since childhood
For their innocent eyes it was beyond their imagination,
All the conflicting religious ideologies were nothing but a social creation!

As the religious tensions amongst the communities widened
The aura in and around became more tensed
Their families too stood against them and their untainted bond of their friendship
And the unknown fundamentalism now, became a hardship

Religious identity was never a limitation
But for the friendship of boys of 12,
It became a Restriction!

As their religious communities far across the oceans and seas
Were seen,
In danger
On the small television screens!
And the Conflict in their mother land
Of the people whom they have forgotten before hand
Has now risen the religious consciousness!
Living thousands of miles away,
For these Indo-Americans tackling the situation had no other way!

There in India religious conflict was day-by-day increasing,
Here in US, the tiny Hindu Muslim,
The Indian Pakistani friends were also suffering!
Religion again stood tall for separation, for antagonism,
For what not!
Even, in the so called
Western, Modern & Developed American Society!

Yes the scenario here was not like there!
It was quiet, it was calm!
But somewhere deep, in those innocent hearts,
Religious consciousness cropped up in a very wrong way.

In the battle of religions,
No religion turned out to be victorious
As the battle is never ending, it's continuous!
Rather it was Humanity...; Which died!...; The spirit of humanism

This died!

Mercy to the Guilty is Cruelty to Innocent

Ruby Dabas
B.A. (H) Political Science (II Year)

Since childhood, one observes that each time our wrongfull conduct is ignored, it tends to become reinforced. Patriarchal mindset of Indian society today is often attributed to the male centric values instilled in the course of bringing up. Had it been checked at the very initial stage, it would not have acquired the monstrous dimension witnessed today? Deviant conduct, similarly, needs to be monitored and prohibited. This is not only to foster good conduct and social order in the society but also to do justice to the victims. However, man has been characterized by such a dynamic and multi-faceted personality, making it difficult to derive straight answers on questions of guilt and innocence and those of mercy and punishment.

A readily available example is that of juvenile offenders. The questions of punishment to be meted out to children less than 18 years of age accused of offences, sometimes heinous in nature, pose complicated issues. While on one hand, is the idea of justice to the victim and the society as a whole which also holds a stake in punishing deviation to sustain the social order, on the other hand lays the young criminals with their entire life ahead which appears dark as oblivion when viewed from behind the bars. In such circumstances, which value is to be prioritized? Justice through punishment or through reformation? In debates that are on-going, activists are divided while some argue that acquittal in offences of extreme depravity consolidates the criminal tendencies of a young offender at that impressionistic age, the others contented that it is in fact, harsh punishment which deprives them from the potential of leading fuller lives by course connection at that delicate stage of life.

In the Delhi gang rape case ,the juvenile, alleged to be the private perpetrator was let off with a mere three years sentence in a juvenile justice home which is the maximum permissible limit under the law . It incurred the wrath of the activists who claimed that the agency of the victim and its relations could not be compensated by anything less than death. The law, on the other hand, is based on the penuries that children may not be completely capable of understanding the nature and consequences of their criminal acts and thus of forming requisite criminal citations which collapses under the law. They must, therefore be given an opportunity to reform by provisioning a suitable environment in juvenile justice homes.

Another instance of this conflict lies in question of condition of death penalty awarded to offenders, sometimes on grounds of delay and even otherwise on humanitarian considerations. Among the various justifications for inflicting punishment on criminal offences, deterrence, retributions and reformation are the most prominent deterrence aimed at preventing repetitions of such conduct by the same individual. Retributions allow for averaging the loss caused to the victim by inflicting a similar experience on the offender- thus, murder is punishable with death penalty under the Indian criminal law. A relatively recent entrant to the word of criminal sentencing philosophy is the idea of reformation. Bihar jail conducts spiritual learning program, vocational tracing workshop to uplift the offenders for the conserved life of misery to a more fluffing journey with opportunities to realize their human potential

While this has been a completely offender-centric approach, it ignores the Victim as the sufferers of crime and thus, an equitable stakeholder. The recent controversy over revision of punishment of assassins of Rajiv Gandhi, the former prime minister, has again brought to the fore, how victims stand mute and ignored while law takes its course in respect of the offender. The plight of victims is worse where they are rendered physically handicapped or prevalently disabled in consequence of the atrocities perpetrated on them. Aruna Shanbaug was a vivid example of a single criminal act that can condemn a human being to mere animal existence – she was forced to a permanent vegetative state on account of rape, brutally committed on her while the offender was set free upon completion of his so called life sentence which lasted fourteen years to lead the rest of life without any limitations there was no way the victim could be brought back to life. These instances make the case stronger for severe punishment to further the end of retribution. However, retribution stands on weak grounds so far as its moral desirability is concerned. It reinforces the spirit of revenge in the society which makes way for slippery slope victims may tomorrow take law in their own hands to avenge wrongdoings thus subverting the entire social and political order. It is also reprehensible morally and condemned by many religions- for all human beings are equal, no one is entitled to take away the life and liberty of another even as a means of inflicting punishment for wrong conduct. The theory of karma is relied upon in Hindu philosophy to ensure justice both to the victim and offender-evil can never go unpunished, it claims.

Within this framework, nevertheless it is imperative that the interest of all stakeholders is balanced while upholding the moral standards of the society. While deterrence is a noble ideal, for it corrects deviance in a manner that also has wider social implications of reinforcing right conduct in today's "modern societies".

Whose Voice You Wish To Be?

Ambi

B.A (H) Political Science (I Year)

In a conversation with a fellow of the student community I got to know some of the “mainstream” views that completely appalled me. The person believed that people belonging to lower castes should die as they are a section who adds filth to our population because of primarily being poor and illiterate. And since he belonged to an upper caste Hindu community, he would never support a Muslim and was indifferent to Rohith Vemula’s suicide. The fact that he was going to an esteemed college and was very exceptional in his studies made me afraid that if an educated person like him has such double standards what would be the case of rest of the country. His views completely shattered all my beliefs in equality, justice, liberty and fraternity. Hence, this retrospection of India today that follows.

Flipping through the pages of a national daily one would get to know about how the country is gripped with some or the other devastating episode, there are news about religion vs intolerance, injustice done against the marginalized, increasing corruption, scams, questions raising at affirmative action policies, student’s agitation at its peak in most premier institutions.

Since generally human minds are prone to grasp pessimism first we might not get charged with the positive things we hear about our country – the recent would be in the field of medicine a new drug Bedaquiline, which treats multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), was launched in India on World Tuberculosis Day, March 21st, 2016. Such inventions takes places every day in every other field, might be on a small scale but is happening, not everything worthwhile gets politicized and publicized. T20 World Cup might have changed the game for Indian cricketers but then when Indian cricketers are talked about is the Indian women cricket team that you picture first or do they come in your mind at all? Such is the disparity and stereotype in India existing even in 21st century. Is this what India wants? Creation and re-creation of stereotypes?

India owing to its history has been known to have had diverse rulers occupying different regions that now form up India. Internally, there still exists angst, questions relating to regional aspirations being accommodated, the distinctions made between the mainstream north and south, skepticism still exists about the North-Eastern states and Jammu & Kashmir. For instance, Ladakhi culture undermined primarily because of being in the pertinent conflict-zone.

Different political leaders have added perspective and dynamism to the spectacle of leadership itself. Turning the focus now to policy-making, taking up recent examples of Make in India, Digital India, Smart-City plans are some of the new-found initiatives of the Modi government. An analysis proves that where they have been remarkable indigenous experiments till now there resultant values aren’t that profitable for the country on whole as the policies had expected to meet much a higher demand (taking in account that a year has passed by of the government in power at the Centre).

Why is it so? One of the factors is that corruption has drained our government machinery for past 69 years; that though we are in a better position from where we started we are still not a developed country whereas China that gained independence in 1949 is now not only a permanent member body in United Nations but also a developed country.

To draw a close to the abstracts that I mentioned above, the underlining factor of this article is that where we can't blame the government for every petty issue, we should understand the value of Fundamental Duties when we go out on the street raising slogans that our Fundamental Rights have been breached. Social movements surely keep the spirit of democracy alive but don't they at times overdo? The turmoil in Jawaharlal Nehru University would make a layman think that why did the responsible administration failed to take cognizance of what transpired in University premises, when the whole pandemonium took place? On the other hand, people who contest elections be it at the state or the Centre, should understand that they should preach what they practice because it is far impossible with the current treasury and the resources of the country accounting adverse factors against India like population growth, decline in sex ratio that we become as peaceful like the Scandinavian countries or United States in terms of economic growth if that is what the benchmark of competition is set.

A brief conversation with a rickshaw puller reflected the fact that he was not able to give his rickshaw rent cost which was fixed to Rupees 70 per day to his dealer and was living in debt of some 15000 with a family of eight members to feed, an amount which might seem less to most but for a huge section of our population it does matter a lot.

He doesn't know how the government comes in place, he understands no statistics but simply believes in anyone who promises him to relieve h his debts and help him get a quality life, one with dignity and respect. He is an average Indian the one talked about in every election, the hard-working Indian.

S/He makes the India that everyone debates aboutHave you met him/her yet?

Henceforth, going back to the adamant egoistical youth whose opinion I shared in the beginning of this article and now, the encounter with this rickshaw-puller both of them comprise huge section of the population.

Whose voice are you?

Primitive as it is in its means as well as ends for Gandhi has famously said,

“A tooth for a tooth and an eye for eye makes the whole world go blind”.

National Security v/s Human Rights

Annu

B.A (H) Political Science, (II Year)

Passed on 11 September 1958, granting special powers to the armed forces in what the act calls "disturbed areas" (all seven sisters states), the Armed Forces Special Power Act was extended to Jammu and Kashmir in July 1990.

These powers include powers to shoot to death, to arrest without warrant, to enter and search any premise in the disrupted areas, etc. The act also gives army officers legal immunity for their actions. There is no prosecution or any legal proceedings against anyone in civil court.

The human right activists regard this act as "shameful" and "draconian", and criticize it on the ground that it gives immense power to the army officers with zero accountability. They have a stand that it is innocent civilians who face interference, encounters, seen as suspects and end up losing their lives. Such a militarized environment creates unhealthy atmosphere, they argue which results into people protesting against state.

The United Nation suggested India to repeal the act describing it "outdated and colonial era law that breach contemporary international human right standards." However, Indian army strongly opposes any "major delusion" or "phased withdrawal" of AFSPA, as this would seriously affect the way military operates in militancy hit areas. This act gives military necessary powers to carry out counter insurgency operations efficiently in an environment where terrorists and insurgents are armed with sophisticated weaponry with communication devices. Without AFSPA we will come to a state where the army will be totally embroiled with legal cases fostered by anti-national forces, which will lead to loss for morale and increased unwillingness to take on the insurgents.

The official statement says that the Indian Army places high premium on preservation of human lives and guarding local people. "Iron fist in a velvet glove" doctrine of counter- insurgency emphasizes the use of least forces, people friendly operation and simultaneous development works to win the hearts and minds. However they too accept that it is not easy to always distinguish between civilians and terrorists. As a matter of fact deployment of military takes place when situation becomes worse and can no longer be handled by government, police or CRPF. Now under such circumstances, the military cannot be expected to function under the laws to which police is subjected to. The repeal or delusion of AFSPA will handicap the army. They need some special powers to tackle the insurgents and insurgency. Since 1990 the security forces have been accused of 1511 cases of human right abuse, out of these culpability was established only in 210 cases and 104 soldiers, including 40 officers have been punished so far. So the clashes between the viewpoint of the Indian Army and the activists for human right protection still remains and one can say that AFSPA is the enabling provision for Army to continue its fight against enemy forces and to safeguard our land.

India's democracy: Is it happy and "gay"?

AanchalManuja

B.A (H) Political Science (I Year)

In a Parliamentary democracy based on popular sovereignty, an idea or an inspiration for any kind of consequent action taken by the authorities necessarily should be derived from what people want. That would be true, in a utopian vision of India where the authorities and their policies work in tandem with the people or the general environment of what entails progress in the global world applicable to all countries.

Here is the most basic argument against this. This does not necessarily entail that every idea that the populous has automatically becomes rational enough to be implemented immediately. Sure alright, the predicament lies in levels much deeper than that. For example, when an unheard plea or the delay of a move is affecting a certain section of the society to an extent that it's hampering their identity and their ability to function as a contributing and actualizing individual in the world, it becomes extremely necessary for the authorities to listen.

Why? Simply because it is their duty to do so! It is the reason why they came to power, came to existence in the first place.

Add to that a dash of countries around you recognizing those pleas in their own jurisdictions and creating this positive environment towards that move slowly being accepted and proliferating everywhere.

Now that the question of the derivation of rationality of that move has been cleared up a bit, the only thing that is left now is this inconsistency and discrepancy between the stand of the authorities and the wants of the population. And that is something India as a country has been facing quite a lot recently.

The move or the policy in question here is Article 377 or the criminalization of homosexuality.

"377. Unnatural offences.—Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine"

In a landmark judgement in 2009, the Delhi High court declared that 377 is violative of several fundamental rights guaranteed to all citizens. However 2013, the SC struck down that judgement and re-criminalized homosexuality

Before moving on to breaking this down into several subparts, homosexuality as understood, is having sexual attraction towards the people of your own gender.

Now this archaic law has been there since the time India was a colony. Several interpretations through judicial decisions have come to one conclusion-Homosexuality is unacceptable here.

Not just unacceptable, it's a criminal offence to express your sexuality and identity unless it is done in the conventional way.

The arguments that have been in favor of 377 by several eminent politicians over the years range from the unnatural nature of these feelings to morality coming under scrutiny by the success of this move. Furthermore, comments of homosexuals not being able to produce life and thus contribute to the surroundings have been used to justify this stand. Certain religious sects are also

stringent about this move as it goes against their faith and the authorities, in a country like ours, with a complex weave of several religions together, feel it is going to aggrandize these sects and create disharmony and thus it is alright to compromise on the needs of this particular section to maintain the larger picture of the society,

One of the most controversial arguments given by the SC was that by the continued existence of this law, Sexually Transmitted Diseases would be curbed.

On the flip side however, several parties have come out in favor of homosexuality including the ruling party. The gay community in India has been struggling and protesting since time immemorial for this draconian law to be struck down and the protest is slowly gaining momentum and gathering consensus from all over the country. Several NGO's like The NAZ foundation have ardently supported gay rights. In fact this foundation has filed curative petitions in the SC for decriminalizing 377, the status of which is pending as of now.

Implications of this Policy on the Gay Community and Society

Very simply, the gay community of the nation gets phased out and marginalized further and that is hugely problematic.

The roots of this particular treatment towards this community and the taboo associated with it lie within the accepted norms of what sexuality is. The reason why there is a huge transnational movement in support of this community is QUESTIONING.

People have started questioning society, their norms, their ideas of morality and their own sexuality. From being told that it is okay to love only when the love is for somebody not belonging to your gender to the society deciding which moral code to follow, everything is under scrutiny. The gay movement is not just a movement in isolation; it's a part of a much larger agenda. The agenda to realize that morality is not set in stone and is definitely not a monolithic, simple structure that can be digested like your average morning breakfast being fed to you by the society. The agenda of being able to question your likes and dislikes, in this case pertaining to sexuality, and not letting them be coerced or manufactured choices that are ingrained into your minds through binaries of what consists of good and bad decided by the society; the agenda of being able to declare that you are different and still not being treated differently by society or the law. The agenda of having equal rights irrespective of how different you are!

There are several sects or people in India who are against this move. For instance in December 2011, a court in Gurgaon declared that a particular marriage that had taken place between two women was legal which was followed by death threats from several people, some of them being their own friends. By 377, these sects or people will not get to interact or understand why it is okay to not conform to the ideas of sexuality given to you. It will inhibit free discussions and will let unawareness prevail leading to this taboo being worsened without any reason whatsoever for it to exist in the first place making it even more controversial. This is not only lethal to the gay community but also to the society as such a move of inhibition of free speech doesn't restrict itself to one instance. It becomes a tradition, sets a precedence and is carried forward leading to a society where the idea of free speech or questioning things around you becomes null and void. This culture of silence propagates and spreads much further in the society.

It impacts the dignity and self-worth of the individuals belonging to this community. Their ability to function as a human resource is severely restricted. It is often seen that 377 is used as a tool by the police or people to harass, blackmail and molest homosexuals. In this scenario, they cannot even seek legal protection from these instances of attacks on them. Furthermore, they face constant rejection, discrimination and denial in public spaces, professional spheres and their own households. In such a hostile environment, the individual and his rights to equal access to

facilities and the ability to be himself are not given to him. These rights are however present for others which automatically makes the idea of these rights privileged or elitist as these rights are only given to those who accept norms and not to others which perpetuates inequality in society,

The idea is not just to give rights to people but to make them accessible too. The question we need to ask ourselves is whether we want to live in such a society where equality is talked about but is not followed and the obstacle to equality is not struck down.

377 also acts as the biggest impediment to health services for this community. The population remains hidden and thus all the sexually transmitted diseases, if any, are not treated or even brought to light. This leads to further spread of these infections within the community and does not fulfill the larger goal of having a healthy populous and equal access to medical facilities for everyone.

Coherence with Global Position

There have been many positive developments in favor of LGBT community on the international front. In May 2015, Ireland legalized same-sex marriage. The country which had decriminalized homosexuality in 1993 became the first country to allow same sex marriage a national level by popular vote.

In June 2015, the US Supreme Court ruled that same sex marriages were legal. Near home, Nepal legalized homosexuality in 2007 and the new Constitution of the country too gives many rights to the LGBT community.

France, UK, Canada, United States, Australia and Brazil have de-criminalized homosexuality. Other countries like Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and Uruguay allow either same sex marriage or a civil union.

India currently stands with a host of countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Mauritania, Qatar and Pakistan which criminalizes homosexuality

However, this law might prove to be harmful to India's interests globally. The countries which have decriminalized homosexuality are progressive powers in favor of the implementation of the idea of universal rights as enshrined in several charters and declarations of the United Nations. Thus the environment and opinion in those countries is in favor of the gay community. It is never a good idea to not join progress when it is taking place as the consequence is isolationism. The idea of rights is slowly being expanded and accepted in the global community and the sooner India joins the movement, the better it is, lest unfriendly treatment or disapprove.

Silencing anything that threatens this comfortable ignorance is our go to mode of action. However, if that is our go to mode of action, the days of silencing democracy aren't too far either.

Cries of the unheard: The Plight of the tea tribe's women of Assam!

Smriti Pathak

B.A. (H) Political Science (I Year)

While imagining the scenario of a tea garden, hers is the face that comes to mind. A cane basket on her back, picking leaves in a lush tea garden and smiling! Constituting half the work force, Assam's tea tribe women are a jovial lot, painting a pretty picture for cover shots. Behind their cheerful demeanor, however, is a story of ironies.

Tea is an important agro-industry of Assam, which contributes immensely to the state's economy. Tea garden population constitutes approx. 1/5th of state's population. Now, living in an era where questions are being raised for equality, freedom, rights, women empowerment and whatnot, then again there is always a "but"! And same is the case here. But we need to think that are we, in our country, really seeing to all sections of women or just focusing on some sections. The fact that improvements in many spheres of women's lives have been made cannot be denied. But that is CLEARLY NOT ENOUGH.

There are many groups that need our serious attention and one such community is the women of the tea tribes of Assam. While the condition of both men and women is really abysmal, women's condition is much worse. Even after being "empowered" in terms of work and equal pay, they are still not empowered in their ways of living, taking their own decisions etc... The commonest and unfortunately the deadliest problems, among the many, are the health issues faced by women. As being deprived of proper and healthy diet and hygienic living conditions, tea tribe's women and girls fall prey to anemia, tuberculosis, reproductive tract infection, worm infestation, etc... A study revealed that symptoms related to anemia and associated morbidities were present amongst 75.8% adolescence girls & 59% had past health related complaints. Many diseases occur due to unhygienic housing conditions, there is hardly any toilet in houses, and open defecation is common, clean drinking water is not available to them, also there is always a scarcity of medical helps in tea gardens. Another major problem is early marriage and motherhood. Child marriage is not uncommon. Girls, in some cases, are married off by her parents as a MODE of repayment of debt, although; in most of the cases girls elope on their own. Early marriages results in early pregnancies and it become perilous for both mother and child. Due to this reason, the infant mortality rates are very high in tea estates. Furthermore, early pregnancy also results in desertion of the girl by her partner. Alcoholism, mostly among men, is yet again a major problem, resulting in an economic drain, poor health, and even domestic violence. "He drinks to relax, but it becomes a drain on our little income...plus he misses work at times and suffers wage cut. But if I protest, he gets abusive," says a worker, about her husband. Now, a very large role in all these problems has been played by the lack of education and awareness. Most of the tea garden population, and especially girls, are illiterate.

Educational facilities are hardly available and even if they are, then also girls rarely continue their studies. Cases of school dropouts have been reported, especially in girls. This is either because of poverty, marriage or due to stereotypical beliefs and practices. Also, as both the parents are working, girls are often entrusted with responsibilities of sibling care and with domestic chores. Because of illiteracy the people of the tea tribes are not aware of the basic amenities like health etc. and it is becoming a major hindrance in the way of their development.

The problem of malnutrition has been a vital issue of tea gardens since the beginning and still, many more girls and women are eaten up at the hands of it. And as unfortunate and disturbing as it may sound, their plight has become a tool, a way for the politicians to transfer money in their pockets. In the name of "tea estate welfare" funds are being issued, but their whereabouts are UNKNOWN as always. During elections, visits are paid by the candidates, promises are made,

votes are secured and well as it has become the custom, after elections, their VOICES REMAIN UNHEARD! It is rather sad that we always consume tea with a feeling of contentment, while the producers of our favorite beverage remain to live in sorrow and discontent!

Public Policy on Education

Dharvi Goyal

B.A (H) Political Science (I Year)

As a student, a professor or any person associated with the education field, there are several kinds of doubts and questions that strike us. Being in Delhi University and looking at all the facilities in terms of not only the highly qualified teachers but such efficient staff along with all kind of materialistic facilities provided at such subsidized rates, the government makes sure that education is imparted in each student irrespective of the class, caste, religion or other kind of structural inequalities that obstruct a student's life. But is that enough, definitely no! There are many flaws with the public policy related in educational sector.

India is a country full of paradoxes. The elite in the country are forward-looking; they emphasize the need for re skilling but they conduct all this with backward-looking institutions. Looking at it from different angle, the country wants to be a knowledge economy without reflecting on the demands of a knowledge society. The educational institutions have adopted old institutionalized. As a result, we lack the institutions to be systematically innovative and our policies seem short run and erratic.

The Education sector is one of the fastest developing sectors worldwide and the second largest industry in India. According to the India Ratings report, India boasts of an education sector market size of nearly \$110 billion in 2015 inclusive of 1.4 million schools and over 36,000 higher education institutes.

Higher education system in India has undergone rapid expansion. Currently, India's higher education system is the largest in the world enrolling over 70 million students while in less than two decades, India has managed to create additional capacity for over 40 million students. At present, higher education sector witnesses spending of over Rs 46,200 crore (US\$ 6.96 billion), and it is expected to grow at an average annual rate of over 18 per cent to reach Rs 232,500 crore (US\$ 35.03 billion) in next 10 years.

As Benjamin Franklin once said "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." In this respect, the government has to give up on certain stringent policies that restricts the growth of this sector and let the private investors invest in this sector so as to bring development.

There are many reasons why private investors don't invest in this sector, one of them being the not-for-profit policy. So looking at the most basic reason for the private investors to invest in some field is to earn profit but, the policy mandates that 85 per cent of the profits earned are to be routed back into the sector. While, the very concept of entrepreneurship is to make money; questioning this philosophy will only likely keep investments away. Ironically, the not-for-profit rule has also been promoting immoral activities like corruption, creating charitable trust in the name of the educational institutions so that the money is flows back into the institutions and also leads to exemption from a major portion of tax.

In fact developed countries such as the U.S and UK have commercialized their education sector; thereby enabling multiple educational institutes to sprout up and cater to the needs of a growing demand. As per data provided by *National Conference of State Legislatures* in the US, the numbers of student enrollment among for-profit institutions has increased to 225 per cent in the past two decades. Currently, about 2.2 million students attend for-profit colleges.

India's education policy also has several other impediments. There are layers of regulatory bodies mandating overlapping rules and regulations. As education is a subject on the concurrent list,

policies at both the national and state level also don't correspond with each other. Not only this adds to the complicity in opening an educational institution but also includes huge amount of money and time investments. For example, to set up a private state university, it first needs to be legislated by the state government. Educationalists across India have suggested that the government should work towards coming up with uniform and simple policies that can be comprehended by all. It is in this context that a suggestion was made that a national higher education regulatory board be set up.

There are problems like there are certain universities in the country that do not even follow the proper guidelines for the Commission which looks into their proper functioning and syllabi structure, yet there are admissions taking place in such universities every year, many students are misguided and thus lead to wastage of potential youth power.

Irrespective of all the problems, the government of India is trying its best to improve this sector and initiating many policies.

Some of the other major initiatives taken by the Government of India are:

- Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi launched the Skill India initiative – 'Kaushal Bharat, Kushal Bharat'. Under this initiative, the government has set itself a target of training 400 million citizens by 2022 that would enable them to find jobs. The initiatives launched include various programmes like: Pradhan MantriKushalVikasYojana (PMKVY), National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015, Skill Loan scheme, and the National Skill Development Mission.
- PMKVY is the flagship program under the Skill India Initiative and it includes incentivizing skill training by providing financial rewards on completion of training to the participants. Over the next year 2.4 million Indians are believed to be benefitted from this scheme.
- National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015 is India's first integrated program to develop skill and promote entrepreneurship simultaneously. The vision of this programme is to skill the Indian youth rapidly with high standards and at the same time promote entrepreneurship thus creating wealth and gainful employment for the citizens.

India, which has the world's largest student population can directly benefit from such a move – from a restrictive to a more business friendly environment. Encouraging private players in this sector would also ultimately lead to stimulating employment and foster economic development of India.

In the Name of Good Governance

Medha

B.A. (H) Political Science (I Year)

In 2014, India witnessed a terrific, high-level political drama, a new style of campaigning, spending money like petrol and water (the point is we are short of all these three things... but who cares... we have billionaires to make things possible for us). Yes, there were few exceptional parties who couldn't match the level of pompous show but nonetheless, on the global level, India defeated the rest of the world in its unique and grand style of seeking for votes (majority of whom are poor and middle class).

And what was worth noting was that the political parties spent crores and crores for election campaign in a nation where about 60% of the population is near poor with about 35-40% Below Poverty Line families. Surprising thing was that instead of using those crores of money to combat poverty and to develop the rural India, the political parties chose to spend them on glittery things... things which could win them election. Again who cares for the poor... let them survive on their own!

The elegant dais, beautiful paintings and sculptures, visiting helicopters, airing of continuous vote seeking programs, running of autos with recorded tape playing in it, serving of free tasty tea... all made for the grand electoral battle but only catering a few.

The elegant dais, beautiful paintings and sculptures, visiting helicopters, airing of continuous vote seeking programs, running of autos with recorded tape playing in it, serving of free tasty tea... all made for the grand electoral battle but only catering a few.

The fruits were finally reaped by the party who spent the most, and the fruit was real sweet for the winning party swept the polls with a clear majority, a non-coalition government after two decades.

The solemn Indian function which kept the country going for months ended with mega- event, "the swearing-in ceremony", again unique of its kind, for the newly elected government invited the leaders of SAARC Nations as well. India witnessed such a thing for the first time. The new Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi thanked the dear Janta without whom nothing was possible and promised to them of delivering "GOOD GOVERNANCE".

This takes me back to the 1960's, in the age of Nehru where 'governance' itself meant something good, which could benefit the society at large. But the election of 2014 left me baffled with this new concept of good governance. Struggling through it, I presumed that may be a decade rule of UPA government could not deliver the type of governance that BJP had expected from them (of course, the scams and corruption was on high) and that all the more focus on Good Governance really meant ACHE DIN... AA GYE (I know it sounds amazing, this made for the party rhetoric). One thing worth mentioning here is that this election also broke the record made by Smt. Indira Gandhi in sloganeering. The Indian public witnessed some ear-pleasing slogans mostly by the BhartiyaJanta Party and it hereby also defeated the Congress Party in the art of sloganeering!

Well, too many other records were made and broken like the squandering of money, high-tech campaign, use of technology, and many more... all in the name of good governance (I won't go into all this because then the list may not end).

Getting back to the ACHE DIN, I must say that for most of the Indians the summer of 2014 felt like a new spring as the government really did some great job at least as far as our economy was concerned. Crude oil prices went down and the value of the Indian currency increased.

Also, the government launched back-to-back some very remarkable schemes and programmes like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana; Sukanya Samridhi Account; Mudra Bank Yojana; Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Beema Yojana; Make in India; Swachh Bharat; Kisan Vikas Patra; Digital India and many more.

All of this is worth appreciating but what took my heart is the unchanged picture of social reality, "the new is the same!" From 2015 itself, there has been a dismaying change in the air, where Indian economy prospered at the social cost.

The first six months were quite peaceful and prosperous, leaving aside the border issue which multiplied folds. But then one after the other, things went down the hill. The souring prices of pulses besides other things left poor without pulses in their plates (only source of protein for them). The situation was further aggravated by the long spell of drought which compelled small, landless peasants to suicide, especially in Maharashtra region (deaths could have been prevented but then government was too busy with other important things). The official figure states that during the period between 2014 to September 2015, the cases of farmer suicides rose from 1949 to 2016, highest in five years.

While the situation within the country remained tensed with all kinds of social problems, the leadership in India remained busy negotiating issues at the global level. Some crucial agreements were reached on the environmental front, but at large, tours and trips to different parts of the globe filled much of the space in the priority index of the new government.

Here, worth noting is that both the incumbent government and the previous government has given more priority to diplomatic talks, foreign policy, needless to say, at the cost of more important indigenous problems. This also shows a recent trend in party functioning which relies more on playing with words (of course... no political party talk of foreign investment and big projects like bullet trains during campaigns but rather focuses on grassroots reality, the local rural problems like providing 24x7 electricity, proper water supply and sanitation, giving employment and ensuring that nobody dies of hunger). However, remarkable is that whatever the case may be, our leaders have mastered the art of rhetoric.

While this situation prevailed (water scarcity, drought, starvation deaths, etc.), what off-late India also witnessed was rising polarization in the society. The BJP government which in the 1990s had gained the charges of being a communal party, a party aligned on Hindutva ideology tried hard but could not succeed in keeping its secular nature intact and the whole of India saw some violent and deadly upsurges.

The Hindu-Muslim divide is now all the more prominent because of incidents like dadri lynching, ban on cow slaughter, hate speeches, programs of ghar-wapsi and love-jihad. The controversy

related with Ram Mandir at Ayodhya is again making the News headline. All this has raised a serious question on the idea of the nature of Indian Secularism – or better would be to ask and introspect – Is India gradually becoming a deeply polarized nation?

Well this question has no immediate answer and for sure we will have to wait for two- three years to ensure that everything is well placed. However, it is important to note that India could not do without secularism – keeping in mind the rich diversity it has.

In 2016, one of the most contested and hotly debated issues is that of ‘Rising Intolerance’. Recent cases where goons of few political organizations lashed at renowned Bollywood actors whereby the screening of their movies was challenged and they were removed from certain prestigious position have justified vehemently about rising polarization.

What is remarkable here is that both the actors belong to the minority community. The question worth raising here is what was there fault, is putting up ones opinion wrong and also why, suddenly, people from the minority community have started feeling insecure in their own motherland? This point to the fact that there is something wrong with the governance of our country – might be that the new government has failed to put at eases the fears and reservations of minority communities in India.

One of the Fundamental Rights, guaranteed to us by the Constitution of India – freedom of speech and expression is endangered in the recent times. Whatever we speak, if doesn’t match the majority understanding or goes against it, is interpreted as anti-national and Anti-Indian. Not to deny that people today live in constant threat of getting arrested (of course not the commons but the one’s in power and position).

So, what I understand from intolerance is different from the general understanding. According to me, India is indeed becoming intolerant as we have stopped listening to the opinions voiced by others, suppressing their views by violent means, always tending to label statements as national or against the nation. Yes, we are growing intolerant because our freedom of speech and expression is slowly shrinking.

A testimony to my understanding are the recent cases like the violence that the goons of a youth political party created during the screening of a documentary ‘MuzaffarnagarAbhiBaki Hai’, death of a Dalit Scholar and the latest gossip issue of JNU.

Sitting here, reflecting on the current state of my motherland, I Wish...

To see the lost brotherhood;

To find the hidden peace;

That India not only exceeds in Gross National Product but also Gross National Happiness;

That Indians could look beyond religion to humanity and charity;

That people develop the art of acceptance, deliberation, and negotiation;

That be it any government, first must act to remove poverty;

Do less of talking and more of acting;

That rich could contribute on their own will towards the removal of poverty.

That the communalists could see that the colour of blood is red, it doesn't distinguish between a Hindu and a Muslim and perhaps between any other communities.

As Aristotle puts it, 'Man is by nature a political animal... politics is the way of Life' ... I wish that the elected representatives should aim at providing a minimal living standard to the poorest of the poor to keep in tune with their welfare goals (based on keeping to their promises, combining economic development with realized social and rural welfare) and of realizing good governance. For nothing in this world is unattainable, it is up to you, how much labour, pain and sweat you put in it.

Movement for Right to Information in India: Transforming the Rhetoric of Governance

Preeti Kumari

B.A. (H) Political Science (II Year)

People's movements across the world have defined and redefined societies in innumerable ways. The most lauded and acknowledged of those are the ones that had shown tremendous courage and consistency in struggling for the cause, the ones that have mobilized large sections of the population, those which achieved their goals and also significantly the ones that challenged the dominant structures of society in pursuit of the common good. The movement for RTI in India was one such movement which deserves appreciation for challenging the government institutions which espoused secrecy and unaccountability by denying the common populace access to information about its functioning. Secrecy in the functioning of the government has little validation in today's world unless in matters of national security and public interest. In a democratic setup like in India, people are ideally the primary focus in a government's functioning and thus deserve to know if they are being governed right, in their interest or not. The RTI was thus an impending need to match with our imagination of a truly democratic nation. The grassroots movement that started in the rural hinterlands of Rajasthan, seeking details of the Panchayat level expenditure eventually transformed into a larger movement that led to the formulation and enactment of the RTI legislation in India. The necessity of the law to ensure transparency and accountability in the government machinery is what makes the struggle important. In our consideration here in this essay, what makes the struggle so significant is that it challenged those dominant structures and patterns of governance which were deemed unquestionable by most people. The government carried the colonial legacy even after Independence and had offered rhetoric of administrative development where all information regarding its functioning was to be guarded and kept secretive. The administrative culture was one which was inward-looking, people-avoiding and guarded. The powerful institutions of the government and the dominant rhetoric that was offered to the people was challenged through the struggle for RTI in India. The success of the movement altered the narrative and established principles of open governance and accountability of public decision makers. We have significant lessons to draw in the trajectory of the movement, in the Jan Sunwais and the innovative methods of protest that the movement adopted. We shall also briefly explore how the implementation of RTI in India successfully established alternative set of principles that changed the extent and mode of people's participation in governance.

In 1975, Supreme Court of India rules that the people of India have a right to know. In *State of U.P v Raj Narain* AIR 1975 SC 865 was a case that found the then Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi guilty of electoral malpractices, Raj Narain in connection with his election petition summoned the State Government of Uttar Pradesh of India before the Allahabad High

Court to produce a document called Blue Book, which contained rules and instructions for the protection of the Prime Minister of India when on a tour or in travel. The High Court ordered the production of the Blue Book and the Supreme Court upheld the decision and said "In a government of responsibility like ours where the agents of the public must be responsible for their conduct there can be but a few secrets. The people of this country have a right to know every public act, everything that is done in a public way by their public functionaries. They are entitled to know the particulars of every public transaction in all its bearings. The right to know which is derived from the concept of freedom of speech, though not absolute, is a factor which should make one wary when secrecy is claimed for transactions which can at any rate have no repercussions on public scrutiny." This judgement was the first major landmark in the evolution of RTI law in India. In 1982, Supreme Court ruled that the right to information is a fundamental right and in 1985 Intervention application were submitted in the Supreme Court by environmental NGOs following the Bhopal gas tragedy, asking for access to information relating to environmental hazards. In 1989, the election promise made by the new coalition government to bring in a transparency law did not see the light of the day as in 1990 the government fell before the transparency law could be introduced.

Then in 1990, the grassroots movement for RTI in India started, when a mass based organization called the MazdoorKisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) in Rajasthan took the initiative in demanding records of famine relief work and accounts of laborers. The struggle was primarily for minimum wages which are fixed under the Minimum Wages Act that every State Government has to follow. In Rajasthan, given the frequent occurrence of famine, famine relief work is offered to provide respite through productive employment. However due to corruption and administrative inefficiencies minimum wages were not adequately paid. Thus began the struggle for minimum wages. The demands for minimum wages were met with arguments by the government that the work was not done by the people and their demand for the records were denied on grounds of government records being secret documents, not meant to be accessed by the common people. The MKSS sat on hunger strike, first in 1990 and then in 1991 struggling for minimum wages. They questioned the opaque system of governance and demanded the official records relating to their work. This was a legitimate demand after all. Why should people not have access to records that concern their interest? It has been universally accepted that people's right to information is the foundation of a healthy democracy. An informed and active citizenry should be a threat to totalitarian rulers, not democratic governments.

MKSS then achieved some success in its struggle in accessing records relating to work in Raipur Tehsil, Pali District. These related to the Panchayats of KotKirana and BagdiKalalia and related to infrastructural work aimed at preventing drought. A cooperative bureaucrat had allowed access to these records. The records revealed huge discrepancies. Names of fictitious persons were mentioned on the bills, dead people or those who had migrated from the place were shown to be paid. Amidst the outrage and pressure from powerful political leaders, the first Jan Sunwais was held in KotKirana on the 2nd of December 1994. In a very simple

setup, thousands of people who were defrauded assembled to state their complaint and seek redressal in the presence of State government representatives.

The Jan Sunwaiput forth four formal demands: for transparency of Panchayat functioning; accountability of officials; social audit; and redressal of grievances. These became the fundamental demands on which the campaign for the right to information was built. Social audit became important because many of the frauds were discovered after financial audit had been completed, and because it became increasingly clear that there would only be enforceable accountability when the controls lay with the people themselves. The Jan Sunwais was a huge step forward. It linked the poor population of a Panchayat in Rajasthan to the democratic governance of our country. It not only questioned the government over the proven inconsistencies in the use of allocated funds but also demanded redressal. In exposing a fraud of few lakhs of rupees in their Panchayat, they raised the issue of corruption plaguing the entire nation.

The response to the Jan Sunwais from the larger section of the bureaucracy and political class was one of dismay over the threat of loss of a certain power that ensures arbitrariness and unaccountability. While the bureaucracy responded its own arbitrary ways by refusing to providing information to all, the political class was caught in a different scenario. They had to respond to the people's demands and this also became an opportunity for many to gain political mileage. This issue thus made its way into the manifestos of political parties in two general elections of the Lok Sabha as well as the Rajasthan State Assembly elections. This was the next crucial stage in the movement which directly challenged the arguments of the government that held that the common people were not equipped with skills to comprehend government records, or the burden of providing information to the people would affect administrative efficiency and the theoretical advantages would be outweighed by the practical afflictions in the practical implementation of such an idea. In the success of the Jan Sunwais, the proof of discrepancies and in taking these issues to the manifestos of political parties on a national level, the movement had already proved its legitimacy and the fallacies of the existing system of governance.

After the first phase of Jan Sunwais in 1995, the Chief Minister of Rajasthan made promises culminating in a statement in the Rajasthan Assembly in April 1995, promising the Right to Information for the people of Rajasthan. The struggle for a proper legislation however continued and evolved into a prolonged struggle and created several alliances of people who believed in this grassroots initiative.

The movement had a small success when they could force an amendment in the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act to permit the public to procure certified copies of documents held by the Panchayats. The Panchayats were also required to publish on a board and in newspapers the budget, accounts, expenditure, policies and beneficiaries. In 1996 MKSS formed National Council for People's Right to information in Delhi to raise RTI to the status of a national campaign. From the formation of the National Campaign for Peoples' Right to Information to the cooperative role played by the Press Council of India and several committed bureaucrats, the movement now became a broader struggle for the right to information. Prior to that, the

Consumer Education and Research Center, the Press Council and the Shourie committee had proposed a draft RTI law. In 2002, a weak Freedom of information Act was legislated but never came into force; it was a half-hearted attempt which severely watered down the demands raised by the RTI movement. It was in 2004 that the RTI Bill was tabled and received presidential assent in June 2005. This movement is the manifestation of the power that people's movement hold within themselves and can effectively challenge powerful structures and the powerful ideas that dominate our society. In the case of this movement, those ideas are of secrecy and a system that was plagued by corruption and unaccountability. In tracing the trajectory of the movement we discover the power of the collective. The people engaged with Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan and the masses that the organization effectively mobilized did not belong to the highly educated class, or the higher echelons of our society. The point of significance is that they systematically struggled for their fundamental rights. What began as a demand for access to records in order to review discrepancies in minimum wages transformed into a movement for the fundamental right to information. The challenge was complex and required a robust response. The system of governance was hostile to such ideas of transparency which meant a certain loss of power for the bureaucrats and the political class. Their rhetoric of secrecy was effectively confronted through the persistent struggles of those leading the movement. The extremely untenable form of discrepancies brought up in the Panchayat Level expenditure through access to certain records was the beginning, and it proved the dire necessity of the right of every individual, to have access to information relating to them, and significantly to the decisions made on their behalf. The Jan Sunwais followed principles of democratic expression, openness and accountability, all that the movement was eventually seeking. In the evolution of the movement, the broad spectrums of people from across the nation were mobilized because the movement not only fought for a legitimate demand, but also followed an all-encompassing approach in its struggle. The movement did not belong to some but was one that was universal in nature, the necessity of which was gauged aptly by all those involved in the movement.

Transparency and Accountability were the major buzzwords in the field of administrative development by the last decade of the twentieth century. The people's right to official information was regarded internationally as an indispensable element of a functioning democracy. Yet for reasons stated in the essay above, legally establishing the right to information was a highly detested idea. However, with the enactment of the Right to Information Act in 2005, it was officially affirmed in its Preamble that 'democracy requires an informed citizenry and transparency of information which are vital to its functioning and also to contain corruption and to hold Governments and their instrumentalities accountable to the governed.' The objective, as stated in the act, is 'to provide for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizens to secure access to information under the control of public authorities, in order to promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority.' The culmination of the movement in the law thus theoretically and also to a large extent practically changed the very nature of governance that was followed in India. From secrecy and non-disclosure, the government established legal systems that

ensured transparency and accountability. The rhetoric of administrative development and governance processes transformed considerably and progressively.

2015 marked ten years of the RTI regime. In a practical evaluation of the implementation of the law, one comes across several inconsistencies like poor implementation, bureaucratic resistance, interference, absence of political and administrative support, threats against users, proven deaths of activists and attempts at dilution. Despite all these inconsistencies, this is one law that people have owned fiercely, one that has formulated a new breed of activism. The enactment of RTI radically transformed the fundamental arenas of engagement with the issue. It has transformed the norms of hierarchy that earlier shaped any interaction between the governors and the governed. It has empowered people with information that concerns them. It has enabled people to actively participate in governance and very significantly has now become internalized in our society. The law in itself was not a solution, but was a major step forward towards ensuring a substantial form of democracy as it institutionalized the right to information. The RTI equips us with information we can substantially use to bring to force the idea of accountability. The RTI sustains as the medium to guard the rights of the citizens.

“A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or, perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge.(1)” In this profound statement James Madison aptly states the essence of democracy and the necessity of access to information to the common masses in such a setup. The struggle for the right to Information in India was one ensure this access and add more substance to India’s democratic credentials by empowering the common masses. A struggle for minimum wages that emanated from the rural areas of Rajasthan, through sustained struggle, innovative interventions, able leadership and persistence led the struggle for the fundamental right to information and engaged citizens from all walks of life. They confronted the dominant secretive modes of governance and through their sustained struggle successfully proved the legitimacy, viability and necessity of their demands in ensuring the best interests of the public. (2) The rhetoric of governance has ever since transformed into one that asserts transparency rather than secrecy. The law has not only brought innumerable cases of discrepancies but also acts as deterrence for corruption. However, there is a long way to go for a far more fortified and effective RTI regime. Transparency as well as accountability should be established as the basis of the epitome of the RTI regime. This is a two-way process. Government institutions should make certain proficient and apt response towards RTI applications and evolve a more cooperative approach towards the process in general. This can be ensured through effective use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in governance and responsiveness towards RTI activists. There is also a dire need for stringent laws in order to protect the citizens involving themselves in the process... Citizens on the other hand need to be far more observant and vigilant and legitimately question the authority to ensure accountability and a system of participatory governance.

Source: (1)https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/James_Madison

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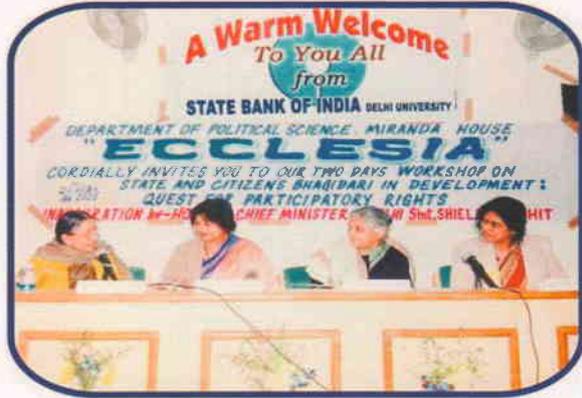
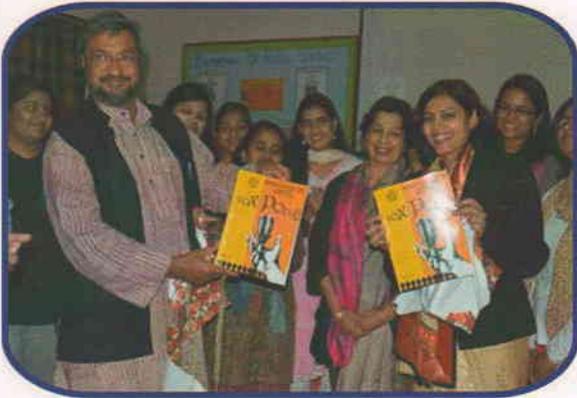
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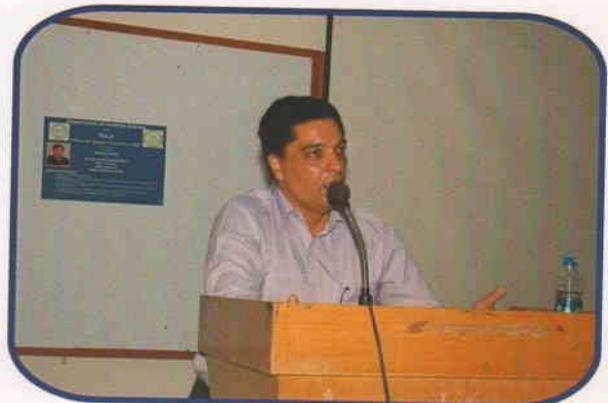
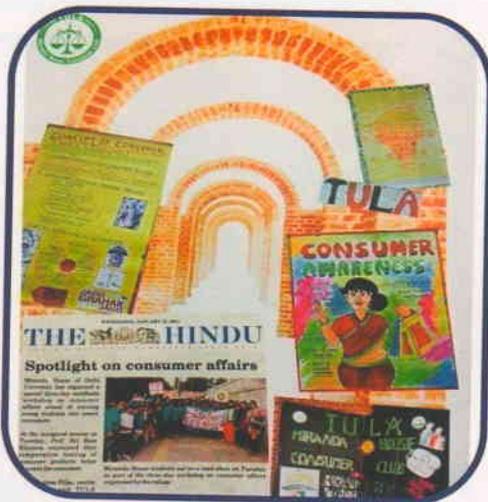
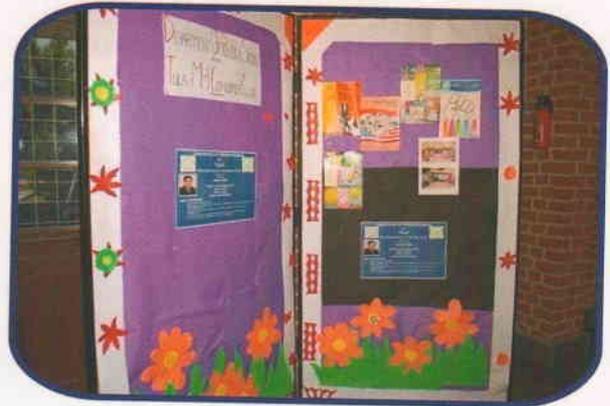
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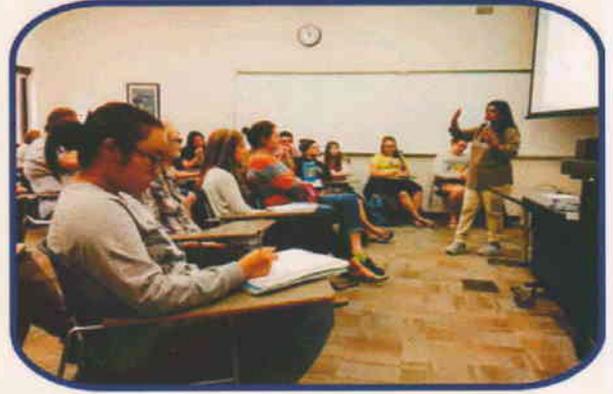
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ACTIVITIES OF TULA 2015-2016



A faculty · students initiative: Transnational Feminism and India Study Abroad Project at University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, USA



**Report on Visit to University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, USA for
Transnational Feminism and India Study Abroad Project: September 14 -
October 5, 2015**

Deepti Sharma

B.A (H) Political Science (II year)

Department of Political Science and Women's Development Cell, Miranda House College, University of Delhi provides for a certificate course on Feminism and Indian Politics which was used as a model to structure COLLAB-POL2015 Programme which was a collaborative programme between Department of Political Science, Miranda House, Delhi University and Women's Studies Department, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire. It was a three week long programme from January 5th 2015 to January 24th 2015 in which students of both the institutes along with the young people of the community participated in talks with the professors, experts from NGOs on the issues related to the women, gender, sex-discrimination, laws, gender question, field work which was a wonderful experiences and was also a three way learning process.

The understanding was that there will be an exchange programme, so two faculty members and two students from Miranda House, Delhi University, were invited to University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire for Transnational Feminism and India Study Abroad Project from September 14th 2015 to October 5th 2015. The purpose was to get an experience of the various facets of education and culture of the institution, place or the nation at large.

We came here with many expectations though we had no specified end to achieve. Our experience here was more or less was in proximity of our expectations. It was blissful for us to have financial support as the programme was fully sponsored and we were given honorarium, which made our stay easier. We were made to stay at Grand Stay Hotel, which was just like a dream stay with a safe environment. Though we were unable to get an experience living on campus, we were happy that we got to stay at a place which provided us an opportunity to use local public transit and explore the city while sitting in the bus. In this way we got introduced to all the landmarks be it Kohl's, Super Target, Woodman's, McDonald, Water Street etc.

THE PLACE

The moment we stepped in Eau Claire, we were moved by the unique beauty that the place has. The vast stretches of the green fields, the existence of beautiful flora and fauna in our vicinity was mesmerizing. The changing colour of the leaves in the fall, the drizzling, the rays of the sun falling upon us while waiting for the bus early morning, the cold breeze which we encountered, the family of deer with twinkled eyed little fawns in the backyard of the faculty housing and the agility of the squirrels, we were a witness of all the activities of nature which it bestowed upon us.

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Being students we were very happy to avail an opportunity to attend the classes, give presentations, to interact and engage in student activities and be a part of happening in the campus. In this way we gained an insight of teaching and learning methods practiced in the university.

Our professors gave lectures and appraised the classes about issues and concerns around gender and feminism in India and the students were interested and enthused about the same. Being a part of presentations, lectures was in itself an encouragement to our self confidence as this was an important lesson on improving self skills, how to engage with people and how to tackle with the complications of queries and deliverance of the solutions related to issues like Designing a Transnational Feminist study Abroad Experience, Reproductive Right, Feminism and Indian Politics, HIV Aids Policy, Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, Public Policy and Analysis, Constitutional Provisions, Communalism and Women , Gender and Development .Our professors and we, attended meeting with senior members of Administration to discuss possibilities of further collaboration.

The rigorous theoretical and intellectual churnings among the students, the professors and the experts resulted in coming up of new perspectives and theologies, which evoked a sense of self-inquisitiveness and the passion to delve deeper with the complexity of contemporary issues.

Moreover, attending the classes of professors of inter-discipline was a wonderful experience. Professors like Stephen M Hill, Professor Diane Detourney Professor Teresa Sanislo, Professor Ari Anand, Professor B.J Hollars, Professor Anchuk, Professor Asha Sen, Professor Theresa Kemp, Professor Ganga Vadhavkar, Professor Majula Joseph and our own Professors Jayashree Pillai and Bijayalaxmi Nanda exposed us to new ways of teaching and learning experience as we were made part of group based or ice breaker activities which were very interesting and thoughtful. We were engaged and were offered to put forward our own views and perspective.

While attending the classes such as Theories of International relations, Womens Studies, Anthropology, Creative Writing, Development in Third World, Transnational Feminism, Media and Communication, Education Processes; we learnt many things ranging from power dynamics existing between the states to the power dynamics between the gender in the society. We got to learn about the prismatic concept of culture, the various contentions and dimensions in the class of Culture and Languages in Anthropology which also made us to grapple with the issues of race, colour, ethnicity and the question of being the ‘other’. Attending classes also gave us the opportunity to interact with the students after the classes which helped us to broaden our views on the existing issues not only on the campus but also in the nation at large.

Slowly and gradually when we got immersed in the ongoing of the campus, we got to see the unseen, tacit and the unspoken things which inspired us to organize an event like “WALKATALK” in which we put on posters around the whole campus inviting people to engage with each other on an informal note, to bring the very self, and the voices which goes

unspoken. The event was a successful one and there was a substantial and rich engagement of one and all on the issues like What Is Feminism? What is Minority? the generalized and the specific concept of Gender, Race, Sex, Colour, Ethnicity, Communication, Connection, Accommodation and Assimilation. Besides this we also got a chance to interview one student from Liberal Arts Major and with whom we tried to look personally the issues that are impersonal. We got a deep insight of what it means to be a student who is a girl, what it means to be a women in this nation and her perspective on the gender question prevailing in the nation, bigotries existing regarding the political front and coming up of the elections and its impact on the contemporary issues of race, gender, minority, nationality and defending of Planned Parenthood.

Apart from this as a part of field experience we visited ARCW that is AIDS Resource Center of WISCONSIN and Family support Services center to have deeper practical experience of the community work. At the ARCW, we were introduced to the various mechanisms which the volunteers apply to deal with the patients, how they are treated and being made aware of the pros and cons of various living and sexual habits which make them vulnerable to fatal disease like AIDS. Also they talked to us about how they carry on their awareness campaigns regarding sex and drugs intake. Apart from medical care they also aimed at looking after the dietary needs of the patients as well, this is something which was new to us as these kinds of facilities are not available to patients in India. Their work is great as they are aiming at holistic care of patients.

Also, while our visit to family resource center in Chippewa Valley, we were once again introduced to very new and innovative methods of dealing with the victims of sexual assaults and domestic violence as there was shelter home available for the victims, playschool for kids and counseling centre for the families .It was a great experience as we learned new things which we can try to implement in our society as well.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Since we have had never experienced the feel of being on a foreign land, it was very interesting for us to be a part of new society, new culture, new norms and new working methods.

Eau Claire lies in the northern part of the State; it is a dwelling of majority of white Americans and minority of monk community, African Americans and Native Americans. We got to know about nitty-gritties of these communities.

Being in Eau Claire we got a feel of American town and observed the living culture of the inhabitants very closely.

We went to Farmers Market, which is weekly gathering of farmers, and people who are there in hand made production of ethnic goods. Various Eau Claires special things such as maple syrup, Wisconsin cheese, cranberries, decorative corn, beautiful wild flowers were on the display, which attracted the glance of visitors.

We also got a chance to visit International Fall Festival organized in the every fall of the summer and the beginning of the winter on the Water Street in the city of Eau Claire. There

were ethnic stalls of various nations put up on display, there were rides for kids, band performance from high school students and retired professors, which caught up the attention of the visitors.

Eau Claire is situated near two big cities, which are usually called Twin Cities - Minneapolis and Minnesota. Our first weekend was spent in a cabin situated on the bank of Carnelian Lake near Still Water Town in the beautiful of Minnesota. It was a unique experience for all of us be it the students or the professors as were exposed to the all new world of woods, lake and the minimal living. We explored our life skills and learnt American ways of living by doing things like mowing, tilling, drilling and making a small garden for vegetation with our cowboy hats on!

Our visit to Chicago on the second weekend helped us to get a sense of big American city. While being there we observed typical city pinups such as amazing and tremendous skyline, the smoke covering old heritage buildings, the traffic and the noise, all entangled with grandiose of magnificent towers and the stupefying the bean". As we walked on the streets of the windy city Chicago, we saw many emotions and colours of life struggling with the hustle bustle of the city and yet giving indelible impressions of love, separation, happiness, loneliness, richness and the poverty.

Also, everyday while travelling through bus in the city we used to see houses decorated with pumpkins, flowers, bands and lights, which reminded us of wooden toys, and houses which we used to see in our childhood on television in cartoon series.

The colours, the structures were so appealing that it made us feel we are just not a part of reality but a part of a beautiful dream in some unimagined land of stories and fantasies. It was the season of coming up of the harvest festival, followed up by the Halloween. We could see the witch s garb, the monster masks. Fairy wings, lights etc. a great attraction for children all set for Halloween in the stores and the supermarket.

We made friends with students belonging to various communities like white American, Mexican community; Hmong community etc. that helped us to grow our perspective and gave us an insight of their community.

Being a part of social gatherings like potluck dinner, which gave us an understanding of unique American culture.

Lastly, it was a great experience by having an access to the high tech facilities available to the students. The availability of all time wi-fi, big corridors having spaces for students to sit and work, the reading rooms, resource centres, canteens in almost every building and vending machines in every corner helped student to develop a better learning and working culture. Also, there were few things which caught our attention was two different kinds of dustbins which recycled the trash in various ways, the installed televisions and speakers and the collaborative labs with round tables which helped in student and institution development.

Our visit to University of Wisconsin was an experience through which we gained great social, cultural, academic insights .It will prove to be a great milestone in our life long learning process.

A Visit to North MCD

We were introduced to this school of democracy on 4th February 2016 at the Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Civic Centre in New Delhi. Even in the background of the protest of the MCD workers, the building - an architectural marvel - stood firm. It shows the strength of the foundation of the local government that is structured to withstand any amount of pressure.

However, the 'dharna' of the MCD workers had a serious impact on the attendance of the budget session going on in the local assembly. The Centre of the circular local assembly was adorned by the Deputy Mayor (as the Mayor had a meeting with the Deputy CM). She, who represented the ruling party, was questioned by the Leader of the Opposition, Mukesh Goel, on the first day of the budget session. He put forth in the house the burning issues affecting the MCD. His speech enlightened us about the current Urban Local Government Crisis. Mr. Goel did a critical appraisal of the inability of the ruling government to solve the existing financial crisis. Be it the collection of property tax, house tax, parking fee, he brought out the problems of revenue of the Urban local government. He criticized the financial policy of the ruling party which wasn't bearing any fruit. Thus, the financial crunch which the Urban Local Body was facing was brought out in detail.

After that heated session, we had a meeting with the Additional Municipal Commissioner, Mr. Pankaj Kumar Singh in a conference room where he familiarized us with the functioning of the MCD as well as the trifurcation of the MCD into North, East and South MCD. He told us about the resultant resource crunch and made us aware about the problem in collection of property tax due to the existence of unauthorized colonies. It also turned out to be the day when salaries were finally disbursed to the MCD workers. Therefore, this visit taught us about the practical and executive side of a legislative amendment i.e the 74th amendment. Our visit was, thus, a fruitful and eventful one.

The Good Old Days

Prerona Baruah
B.A. (H) Political science (II year)

Looking out of the window,
She sees a flock of birds flying towards their home.
The white birds stood out against the sky blue sky.
While, she, sipping tea,
Thinks about "home",
Which she left behind somewhere
In her quest to seek fame in this City of Fortune!

In the good old days,
Her buddies would hang out at the spot,
She would find solace in her mimi's lap-
It was her "whole world".
Now, she doesn't know her Gems
Or so it seems!
What happened? What changed??
She really doesn't have an answer.

It's not a wet place
And surely she misses the rain of her hometown
Now, she has only sweet memories of being drenched in the rain,
Her besties, who visit her often in her dreams, don't find time to talk to her now.
Her folks don't get to listen to her voice every day.
Her life has just begun...

What is this place?
Sometimes she asks herself;
A tear or two trickle down her face.
Oh, how she misses her Good Old days!!

Breaking the Shackles!

Medha Singh
B.A. (H) Political Science Ist year

Till when will you confine me,
One day I'll meet the dawn.
Till when will you commodify me,
One day I will create my own town.
Till when will you capture me,
For one day, I will break open all the shackles.
For ages you've manipulated me,
For ages you've imprisoned me,
That Age, when my body was not mine,
That Age, when my soul was not mine,
That Age, when nothing was mine,
Has Gone, Has Gone.
I was broken in and out.
I was torn into pieces, easily blown.
I was used as per your whims and fancies.
I was abused, who cares, just let it be.
You played with my feelings as if a video game, You conquered me for the sake of your
fame. You ruled over my mind as if your kingdom,
You demolished me like an opposition.
Now it is to tell you, O patriarchy I am a human entity, not a commodity.
It is to tell you, O world
You can't suppress me, forever and ever.
For all the injustice done to me,

For all the rights denied to me,
For all the freedom you took away from me,
For all the inequality you did to me,
I Forgive You, dear Society!

Because I'm a Woman, different from the lot, whose greatness is beyond your thought.
But don't confuse my kindness with my silence, For I can be a rebel, I can be violent.
Don't teach me now, your age old dichotomy, As feminism is my new anatomy.
Enough of my perseverance,
now I am in a mood of zero tolerance.

Enough of your dominance, for now I'll be my own florence.

Now I've decided to fight for what is right.
First with love only then with might.
Now you dare not think of cutting my branch,
As just like birds I've learnt to rely on my arms.
I believe that the world will surely change,
If not today then certainly tomorrow.

As the future lies in the society where women are without sorrow.

Wake-o-Wake! See what you have done in your pride.
You have denied the other half their just and rights.
Now You don't be a fool and act wise.
For then it'll be too late to appologize.
Now we are in a no mood to suffer.
Get this in your head, clear.

You Men are worthy of nothing, like a ruthless beast in the jungle.
For when I treated you with Love, you didn't like, and my abhorrence, you may not survive.
Don't think of caging me again,

For Today I am a free soul, like a bird I'll fly high.

Don't teach me your concepts of liberty, equality and justice, I may disagree and may not oblige.

The time has changed,

And so has the game,

I will do whatever it takes to survive.

Now I'll show you the true meaning of democracy, where I shall not be denied my rights.

Here, I'm on the verge of writing my own story,

Calling out to you, to be a part of the glory!

Sedition: A Label Constructed to Silence Dissent

- **Mrinalini Kumar and Sehal Jain**
B.A. (H) Political Science (II Year)

Sedition in Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code is defined as- “Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the Government established by law shall be punished with [imprisonment for life], to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine.”

The definition clearly exhibits that sedition is any activity which is committed against the authority of the state or the Government. However, this phrase has 2 interpretations attached to it. The first interpretation i.e. the prima facie interpretation brings forth that the government is the representative of the nation state as a whole. This is the “ought to be” interpretation of the term. On the other hand the latter view suggests the widely popular and operational interpretation; it means any activity against the party in power. This article seeks to deconstruct this constructed label of sedition.

According to Mahatma Gandhi, “Section 124A is the prince among the political sections of the IPC designed to suppress liberty of the citizens.” He argues that “affection” cannot be manufactured or regulated by law. But off late, the ruling parties at the Centre have been on an undaunted mission of manufacturing affection by silencing popular dissent.

The law of sedition has a ‘great’ legacy. It is more than a century old which signifies that it has colonial groundings. A law of a colonial era continues to define our democratic existence- that is the irony our democracy is plagued by. What was once an instrument of British colonialism to suppress the freedom struggle is being used by the ruling party to silence the voices of its own people? There is no place in a democracy for a law that conflates disaffection with disloyalty and regards trenchant criticism as a form of treason. This law has had the honour of being charged on our freedom fighters who sought to free India from the clutches of the British Raj. Article 124A was added to the IPC, 1860 in 1870. So why does a law that contradicts the basic essence of our democracy continue to exist in our statute book?

The reason is simple. Independent India’s governments seem to have found great relief in having a provision on sedition in the penal statute. The law has been used to threaten and prosecute our thinkers and social activists because of the opinion they express or an ideology they may have sympathy with. This is the testimony to the creeping in of authoritarianism in a democratic setup. The authoritarian government in the garb of democracy and “national security” is manufacturing ideology and affection to maintain its hegemony. To percolate their definition of nationalism, they brand certain rebellious individuals who do not conform to their ideological inclinations,

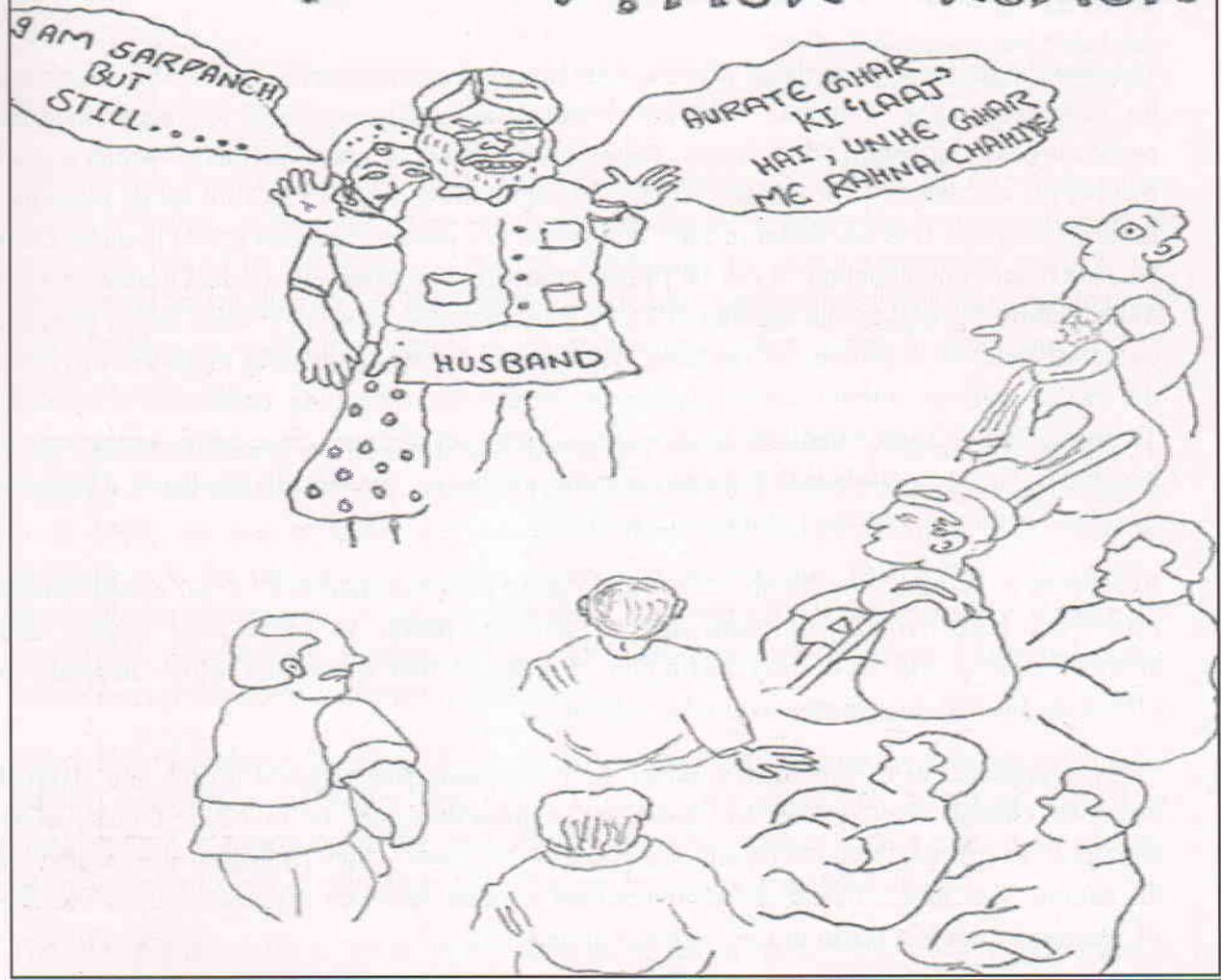
“seditious”. Talking about nationalism, it is a subjective concept, open to interpretation from across the society.

The Marxist philosophy explains why the state houses this overarching desire of maintaining its hegemony. The thinkers, who are branded as seditious, seek to break the false consciousness that engulfs the citizens. False consciousness is a Marxist theory which argues that people are unable to see things, especially exploitation, oppression, and social relations, as they really are. It is any belief or view that prevents a person from being able to understand the true nature of a situation. It can be further argued in congruence with the Gramscian idea of hegemony. He argues that the state rules by manufacturing consent. Dissent on the extreme end, threatens the hegemony of the state. Thus, the state uses repressive measures or rather the easier path to contain dissent and manufacture the remaining population’s consent. Therefore, before these rebellious thinkers spread their disease and cause havoc to the state’s hegemony, the state publicizes them as seditious and hence, controls the epidemic. Thus, the brand of sedition is a product of this very ideology.

According to PratapBhanu Mehta, “The ruling party uses nationalism to crush constitutional patriotism, legal tyranny to crush dissent, political power to settle petty scores, and administrative power to destroy institutions.” It seems that everything which happens to offend the present dispensation could be sedition.

“This is reminiscent of Emergency, when the ruling party just targeted people and slapped whatever charges they wanted to. However, sedition can only be invoked if there is an attempt to overthrow the government or a situation is created which endangers the security of the nation. Also, any criticism of the government or of its decisions is muzzled under the veil of Sedition which is a threat to the existence of democracy.”

POLICY : MEN = WOMEN



दर्द - ए - आम

शांति के लिए जुबानी जमाखण्ड काफी नहीं है। इस सेवा का विस्तार हमें धार्मिक सहिष्णुता, सामाजिक समरसता आदि के लिए भी करना होगा।

विश्व
शांति





DEVELOPMENT ??

अबला नारी

किरन बरतवाल

बी. ऐ . प्रोग्राम, 1st ईयर

आपने ही अधिकारों से वंचित ,
लोगो से होती हुई शोषित
न जाने कब होगा सच्चा न्याय
हे समाज जरा सुन मेरी पुकार ॥
बेटी को पराया धन कहकर
पितृसत्ता को अपनाया है
सहमी- सी सिसकती लाइली बनकर
मानसिक आपाहिज जीवन बिताती है
हे समाज जरा सुन मेरी पुकार॥
धरती का बोझ है लड़कियां
ये कहकर मुझे बहुत रुलाया है
हर घर की लाज बचाती है ॥
फिर भी घर में कैद कर दी जाती
हे समाज जरा सुन मेरी पुकार
मुझको नहीं किसी से कोई शिकवा
हर एक गम को दिल में छुपाया है
जब हाथ मेरा दूसरे हाथ में देदे

उस रिश्ते को बखूबी निभाया है

हे समाज जरा सुन मेरी पुकार ॥

किभी सति प्रथा तो, कभी दहेज प्रथा

हर जगह मुझे जलाया है

कभी पर्दे के पीछे तो कभी इज्जत के पीछे

हर बार सबके लिए मौत से टकराया है

हे समाज सुन मेरी पुकार ॥

भूर्ण में आते ही तड़पा- तड़पा के

मेरी जन को ले लेते है

लड़का होने में अपने आपको

खुशनसीब और किस्मत बताते है

हे समाज जरा सुन मेरी पुकार ॥

उंगली भी उठाऊँ मैं कैसे किसी पर

समाज के सामने नज़ारे झुकाई है

मेरी अपनी मर्जी कोई नहीं

कठपुतली बनकर शौहर के हाथों रोटी हूँ

अब तो कर दो सच्चा न्याय

हे समाज जरा सुन मेरी पुकार॥

सिसकती भारत माँ

Sehal Jain

B.A. (H) Political Science Second year

उस भारत माता का जयगान करो
जो बाणों की शय्या पर भी ज़िंदा है
वो तो ज़िंदा है पर उसकी आत्मा मुर्दा है
उस भारत माता को सबने लूटा है
खून उसका सबने चूसा है
पर वह अब भी जीना चाहती है
अपने बच्चों पर हुए जुल्मों का बदला लेना चाहती है
जिस दिन उसकी बदले की आग भड़क उठेगी,
उस दिन सुलगेगा हर वो प्रणी
जिसने की अपनी मनमानी
वो नेता, जो गद्दी से चिपक गए
करोड़ों का पैसा डकार कर खिसक गए
वो राजनीतिक अभिनेता जो तिजोरियों से लिपट गए
देश की सेवा से कोसों दूर भटक गए
फिर झुलसेंगे वो अधिकारी,
जिनकी थी भारी ज़िम्मेदारी
पर वे भी ए सी दफ़्तरों के एशों आराम में सिमट गए
"अंडर द टेबल" में ही लटक गए

पुलिस का नाम तो लिस्ट में होना ही था
सबकी रक्षा करने का उनका प्रण जो था
पर वे भी लोगों को डराते चले गए
घूस की गठरियाँ उठाते चले गए
न्याय को धूल में उड़ाते चले गए और भारत माँ के बच्चों को दरिद्रता की फाँसी पर लटकाते चले गए
आज उस माँ का हर बच्चा निराश है
अपने जीवन से हताश है
उसकी माँ चाहे तो उसे पल में हँसा सकती है
पल में उसका उजड़ा चमन बसा सकती है,
पर वो तो खुद बाणों की शय्या पर जी रही है,
हर रोज़ खून का घूँट पी रही है...
पर फिर भी,
उस भारत माता का जयगान करो
जो बाणों की शय्या पर भी ज़िंदा है
वो तो ज़िंदा है पर उसकी आत्मा मुर्दा है

किस ओर बढ़ रहे हैं हम.....

बी. ऐ. (होनर्सी), राजनितिक विज्ञानं

मधुबाला, 2nd ईयर

आतंकवाद के बादल गरज रहे हैं
मानव भय से कांप रहा है
किससे डर रहा है मानव ...?
कोई जानवर या फिर बाह्य शक्ति
नहीं, ये कोई और नहीं है मानव ही है
खून खराबा छाया है
आज मानव फिर घबराया है
उसके अस्तित्व पर फिर संकट छाया है
उसकी हँसी, उसकी खुशी
अंधकार में है घिरी हुई
मानव ने खुद आज आपने विनाश की रह पकड़ी
चारों ओर है लाशों की झड़ी लगी
दिन में भी रात का साया है
आज मानव फिर घबराया है
समय रहते संभल जा रे मानव
आँखे अब तू खोल दे
भले बुरे को तोल ले
इस दुनिया की रक्षा अब है तेरे ही हाथ में
हाथ मेंसाथ में

आरक्षण

पूजा

2nd ईयर, बी. ऐ. (होनर्स)

राजनीतिक विज्ञानं

मांग तो आपकी थी
कीमत हमने चुकाई
आरक्षण तुमने माँगा
रोज़ी रोटी हमने गवाई थी
मुद्दा तो आपका था
झुखना हमे पड़ा
आरक्षण की आड़ में
चुल्हों की जगह घर जला,
सोच तो आपकी थी
दंगा भी आपने किया
लेकिन उस मोहूले से गुज़ारना हमे पड़ा,
हैवानियत तो आपकी थी
फिर क्यू मासूमियत बलि चढ़ी
आरक्षण की मांग में
क्यू गोली चली ?

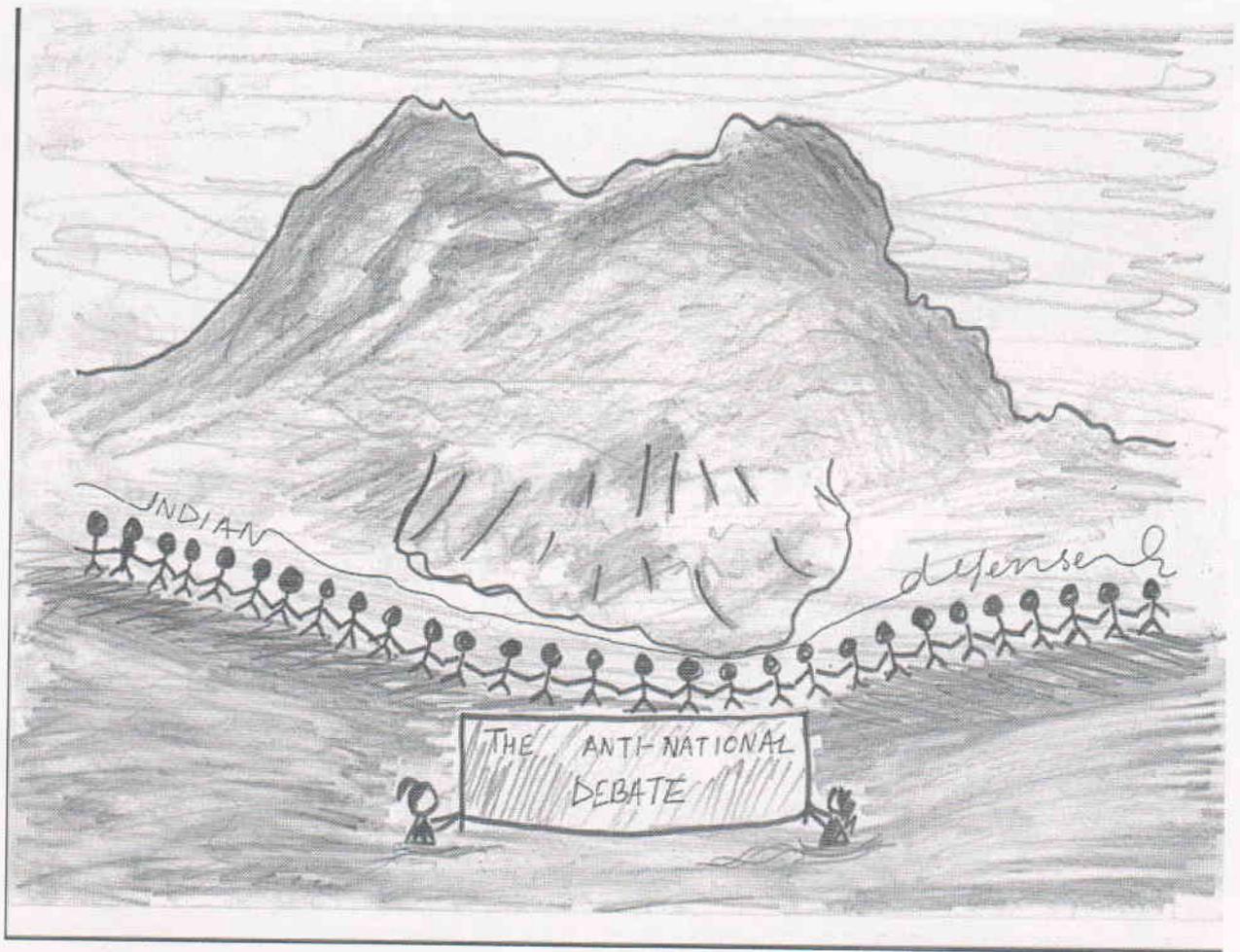
चुप्पी

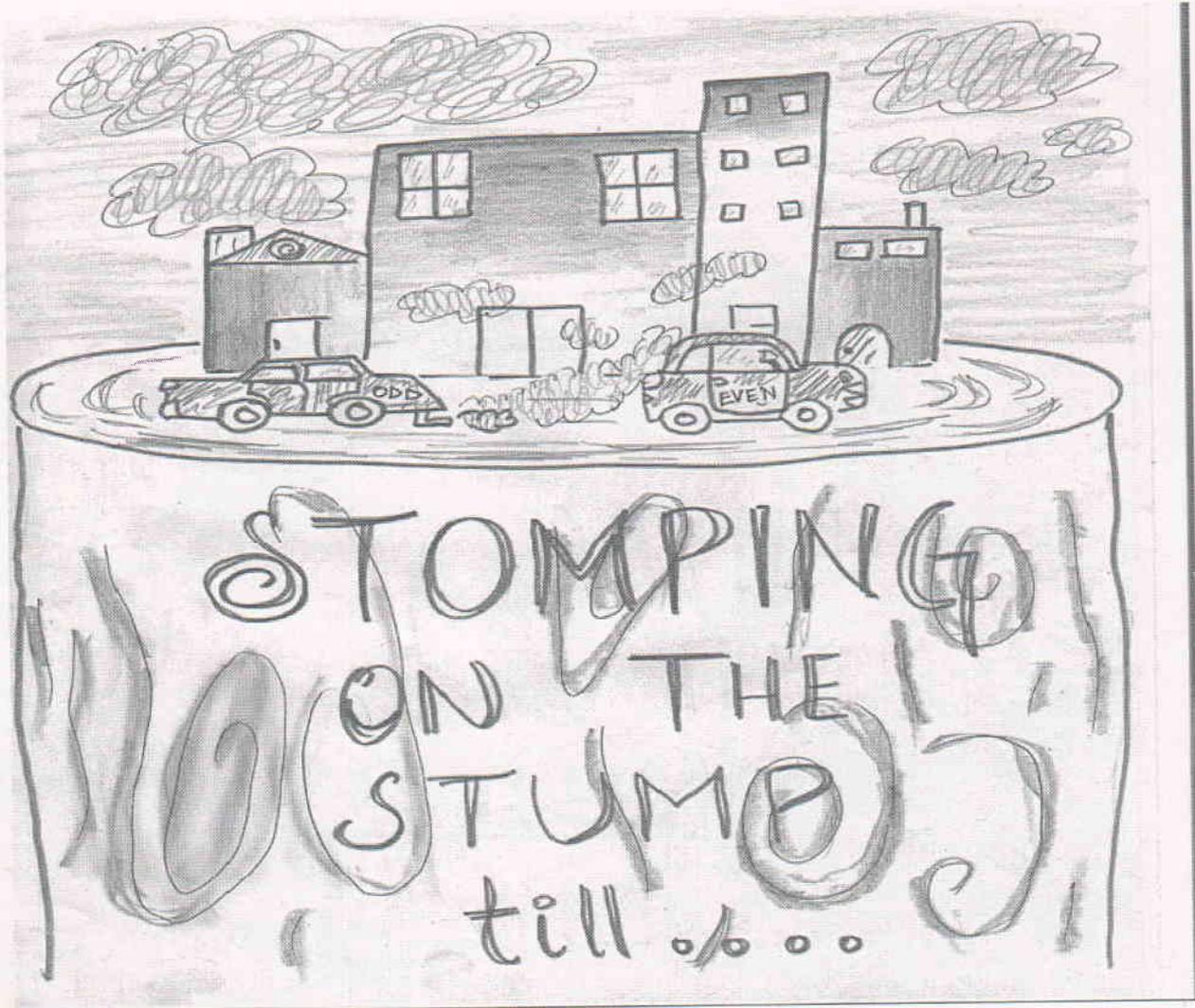
पूजा

2nd ईयर, बी. ऐ.(होनर्स)

राजनितिक विज्ञान

हसता खिल- खिलता बचपन उसका
छिप गया खामोशी के दरवाजे के पीछे
शाम के उस पहर ने
जोड़ दिया नाता ज़िंदगी का
काली रातों से ॥
उसकी चीख, उसका दर्द
खो गया किसी अँधेरे में
भरोसा करने की थी
उसे मिली ये सजा
जब उसकी ही रूह को नोच खाया गया
जिस्म को चलनी कर के उसके
छोड़ दिया तड़पता और मरता ।
वो चीखी, वो चिल्लाई
मदद की गुहार लगाई
लेकिन कोई न आया ।
था तो बस वो बंद कमरा
फटे उसके वस्त्र
काँपी हुई व बेबस उसकी रूह
और एक चुप्पी
वह चुप्पी जो हमेशा के लिए वो साध गई ॥







IIIrd Year



IInd Year



Ist Year



DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE
MIRANDA HOUSE

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'Governance, Participation
and Policy Formulation'

Panel Discussion

Keynote Speaker



Prof. J B G Tilak

Vice Chancellor
(In-charge)
National University of
Educational Planning
and Administration

Guest Speaker



Dr. Pankaj Mittal

Additional Secretary,
University Grants Commission
Former Vice Chancellor
Bhagat Phool Singh
Mahila Vishwavidyalaya

Date: 12th April, 2016

Venue: Seminar Hall, Miranda House

Events:

Paper Presentation

Treasure Hunt

President: Ashita: 9643433013
Vice President: Sonal: 9910139885

Teacher-in-charge:
Dr. Jayashree Pillai