



VOX POPULI

XII - XIII EDITION

2017-2019



Department of POLITICAL SCIENCE

Miranda House

University Of Delhi



FACULTY MEMBERS

Dr. Jayashree Pillai
Dr. Purnima Roy
Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda
Dr. Kusuma Krishna Subha
Dr. Namrata Singh
Dr. Hena Singh
Ms. Pushpa Singh
Dr. Skylab Sahu
Dr. Rajni Kumari
Ms. Sonali Chitalkar
Dr. Rashmi Gopi
Ms. Shruti Sharma Sethi
Ms. Mhadeno Jungi
Dr. Surabhi
Ms. Vasavi
Dr. Neelam Jain
Dr. Ceejun Chandran
Ms. Prachi Sharma
Ms. Rama A. Mitra
Ms. Saheli Bose

FACULTY ADVISORS

Dr. Kusuma Krishna Subha
Dr. Hena Singh
Dr. Skylab Sahu
Ms. Shruti Sharma Sethi
Ms. Mhadeno Jungi
Dr. Surabhi

EDITORIAL BOARD

(2017-18)

Sharanya Roy Choudhary
Anoushka Parija
Bala Panchanathan
Rangoli Mitra
Aishwarya Dhar
Madhubala
Vedika Znwar
Ishita Dhar
Brinda Anand
Shivanshi Rawat
Tanya Chaudhary
Tarini Gupta
Rukmini Bhuyan
Richa Sharma

EDITORIAL BOARD

(2018-19)

Anoushka Parija
Sharanya Roy Choudhary
Deepangna Singhi
Mahananda Ray
Pallavi Raj
Eshika Gombar
Rukmini Bhuyan
Sugandha Vats
Mili Bhardwaj
Bhumika Nebhnani
Arunima Maini
Priya Tomar

Cover designed by *Samridhi Diwan*

Illustrations: Pallavi Raj, Pratyaksha, Anwasha Suman, Harshita Srivastava

OFFICE BEARERS

President: Richa Sharma
Vice President: Anshita Shukla
General Secretary: Shivangi Stuti
Treasurer: Sailja Soni

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

I Year: Bhumika Nebhnani, Suhasini Dasgoptu
II Year: Bala Panchanathan, Diksha Singh
III Year: Simran Pachar

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

I Year: Aarushi Roy, Anu Sehwat
II Year: Ishita Sharma, Vedika Znwar
III Year: Niharika Saikia, Ritika Yadav

index

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK



There are many reasons why writing this message is special. In the Department of Political Science, where I began my career as a teacher - I would consider myself more a student of the department- I learnt both from my faculty and my students. The *Vox Populi* in fact came into being during my period of teaching initiated by a bunch of bright and brilliant students. The basic essence of *Vox Populi* is to bring in the diverse voices which reflect the political. In the course of its thirteen years of journey the journal has had an interesting set of articles written by both faculty members and students, ranging from in-depth research articles to creative musings.

The editorial teams under the able guidance of teachers-in-charge and other faculty members have worked tirelessly to bring the magazine to fruition every academic year- under stress of teaching, writing assignments and correcting them - by going through the process of selection as well as the most important task of getting people to write for the magazine! The articles reflect the political values, of not just the department, but of a larger political eco-system which is based on the principles of democracy, equality, rights and justice.

Writing this is also special to me because I write this message as the Acting Principal of the college. The values that the department reflects are at the foundation of the values of Miranda House. It is the values of courage and compassion that transform lives and provide us hope for a bright future. We hope that this spirit continues to define not just the Department of Political Science and the college, but the country as a whole.

I strive here to make a slight revision of the famous quote *Vox Populi, Vox Dei* – the voice of the people is the voice of the nation.

Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda
Acting Principal
Miranda House

A NOTE FROM THE TEACHERS-IN-CHARGE



It gives us immense pleasure to bring out this volume of 'Vox Populi', the annual magazine of the department of Political Science. This volume is special, as it combines both XII edition (2017-18) and XIII edition (2018-19) of the magazine.



Vox Populi, over the years, has continued to provide a creative space to its students enabling them to explore their thinking minds and raise the concerns that impact our world. The concerns that the students have raised through Vox Populi present an interesting lens into many perspectives of conflict and consensus in our day to day life. The ability of these students to engage with the voices of power and policy on the one hand and the voices of personal and political on the other hand in the magazine, we are sure will impress one and all.

For a teacher, nothing is a greater reward than to see their students evolving into sensitive thinking human beings in their own right. To us, Vox Populi, is that special gift from our students.

Along with the students, faculty members also regularly contribute to the magazine to ensure that the dialogue between the student and teacher continues, dialogue among the people continues and above all, the dialogue of democracy continues. To that extent, Vox Populi remains a continuing and evolving dialogue of our times.

We express our gratitude to the entire department of Political Science, teachers and students, each one, in their unique way have made this magazine possible. We extend our hearty congratulations to the editorial team, students and faculty advisors, who successfully brought out another volume of Vox Populi. We are confident that the magazine will enjoy your critical acclaim.

Dr. Purnima Roy
Associate Professor
Teacher-in-charge (2017-18)

Dr. Kusuma Krishna Subha
Assistant Professor
Teacher-in-charge (2018-19)

A NOTE FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Dear Reader,

There's nothing more gratifying than the successful culmination of the 12th and 13th edition of Vox Populi, the annual magazine of the Department of Political Science, Miranda House, University of Delhi. What makes it even more exceptional is the fact that this year, we are releasing the edition 2017-2019, which covers the hard work, ideas and creative aptitude of all the editorial board members across these two years.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our faculty advisors for rendering their unfailing support and to all the faculty members in the Department of Political Science for always taking out time to guide us and solve even the miniscule doubts we had. The foundations of this magazine are built on their valued aid and guidance.

With this edition of the magazine, we explored diverse streams of thought and covered a wide variety of issues, while keeping our main focus on "Annapurna: Farmers in Contemporary India". We have tried to bring to the front unique narratives and thoughts on the Farmers' Distress in India. Besides that, this magazine offers thoughtful insights on various notable contemporary events from India and the world. From a survey on student opinion regarding the upcoming elections 2019 to a timeline of the major events in 2018-19, along with a thought provoking analysis of the same, we aim to bring to you an amalgamation of contemporary debates around issues that are of importance.

We sincerely hope that every piece of writing will add value to your time and your ability to understand, analyze and question.

We hope this turns out to be a cherished experience for you!

Happy Reading!



A NOTE FROM THE STUDENTS UNION

The legacy of the Department of Political Science has always been to create a platform for dialogue and discussion about the multifaceted issues that we face as a society. The 15 membered Students' Union in its endeavour to continue this legacy worked on diverse issues with the support of our esteemed faculty. This year's activities covered a wide range of academic expanse, with diverse themes of international relations, law, philosophy. These included an interactive session with Dr. Harsh V. Pant, a panel discussion by notable experts in the field of Constitutional Law, a lecture series commemorating 200 years of Karl Marx with an inaugural lecture by Prof. Ujjwal Kumar Singh that stimulated engaging debate of the relevance and evolution of Marxism in contemporary times .



Simultaneously, the Union has strived to take discussions about traditional political thought outside the classroom providing a national perspective and exposure to all the students. One of the most captivating events of the year was the screening of Rubaru Roshni, a movie about capital punishment produced by Amir Khan. The ensuing discussion session with Svati Chakravarty Bhatkal, the director and music producer provided everyone a new perspective on the complex moral and ethical debates surrounding capital punishment .

The year came to a close with the much awaited annual festival, Ecclesia 2019 concentrating on growing farmer's unrest in the country. The theme for the festival 'Annupurna: Farmers in Contemporary India' where scholars and farmers from the grass root level were brought together the festival aimed at assimilating and integrating the conversation of farmers into the larger narrative of Indian economy and society.

The 12th and 13th edition of Vox Populi shines light on issues that plague our democracy and the challenges of modern day governance. It covers issues affecting the community on a larger level as well as the everyday struggles of citizens who are the foundation of vibrant participative democracy.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our Principal, Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda and our Teacher-in-Charge Dr. K.K Subha. Our endeavours would not have fructified without the constant support and guidance of our faculty members and the hardworking, dedicated and lively students of our department who motivate us to take this department to new heights.

Students' Union

Department of Political Science

Miranda House

In conversation with Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda (Principal, Miranda House)

- **How has the Department of Political Science of Miranda House changed over the years?**

I joined Miranda House in 1993. Initially it was a small department in terms of its numerical strength. In that sense it has changed, along with the changing times. There's been more focus on seminars, research but the essential spirit has been the same- of collective wisdom, participatory decisions. Now we have a much younger department. With the addition of new Ad Hocs, there has been an interesting mix of energies, in terms of dynamics and a diverse group. The other change is in terms of how the annual system has been replaced by the semester system. With this new change, the time to engage has been significantly reduced. The idea of what change really implies also needs to be explored. While change in a transformative sense has not come about, for me, change is not about transformation but about metamorphosis. A metamorphosis changes the object itself while transformation as a process retains a continuum with the earlier. Some essential spirits remain. We are in that sense one of the best departments, I'd like to believe. Democracy is the mainstay of the subject. It is thus important that our teachers and students adopt the democratic ideals and practices. Chaotic as it is, we still remain democratic. We don't aspire for perfection but to be fair and equal.

- **What are the strengths of this department and what are a few of its weaknesses?**

The strength is its democratic spirit and its resilience in changing times. We are one of the most interdisciplinary departments. Our faculty and students have carved a niche for themselves in all walks of life. They have been Bursars, Vice Principals, society representatives, administrators and more. The department of Political Science is very diverse. Our mentorship program creates a relationship of trust and a symbiotic ambiance for students and teachers. These relationships are long standing. Some of our weaknesses are in terms of our inability to maintain results. We need to do more. We haven't been able to maintain documentation of alumni for cross learning. We also need to work out the need for an audio-visual library. Further, we need to apply for a Master's program for our department. Timely decisions need to be made. However, overall, it has been a fascinating journey. While working with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), I realised that our students are leading programs everywhere.

- **What is your fondest memory with the Department?**

I wouldn't want to pick one. However, my fondest times have been with my students and the relationship I share with them. I have very good relations with the faculty. While the seniors like Jayashree and Purnima have mentored me, my younger colleagues like Subha, Hena and Namrata have made me 'feel' like their mentor! In fact I have received support from all of them including Pushpa and the relatively new entrants Skylab, Rajni, Sonali and Rashmi. When I first joined here, I was diffident. I was new to this part of the country and I was teaching third years. Getting feedback from the students that I was one of their most loved teachers and they learnt a lot from me was one of my treasured moments. I met my students who were in JNU and other places who had preserved my teachings over all these years and as I look back at them now, those are truly the most cherished memories. Lately my fondest memory is working with my students as colleagues or writing a book with them. For instance, I co-authored a book on rights with Nupur who currently teaches in Kamla Nehru College. This goes on to show that these symbiotic relationships are for life. It is almost like a family but I wouldn't wish to make it that patriarchal. It is a relationship by choice. I taught Shruti and now she's my colleague in Miranda House. Nothing could be better than this.

- **Given the diversity among students in college, how does Miranda House as a college space, cater to the diverse needs in terms of design and pedagogy?**

Miranda House is considered to be the best college but I don't think that we can lie back on laurels. Right from my early years of teaching from the 1990's, Miranda House has always catered to diverse needs. Teachers are careful to take care of the needs of all students. Even before the mentorship program was initiated formally, all students were attended to by our faculty. It was not so structured then but every student was guided through tutorials. In the annual system, the relationship lasted longer and now with the semester system, each student is allotted a mentor for similar purposes. The second thing is about the availability of learning material and the resources available for all our students. The other is immersion learning through seminars, conferences, workshops, and interactive sessions. This has been the way for Miranda House. We always strive to incorporate all the new pedagogical tools irrespective of certain constraints. We do use flipped classrooms, project presentations and while we are aware that one size doesn't fit all, we try to be as dynamic in our approach as possible.

- **We got to know recently that Dr. Rajni Kothari was the founding member of Political Science department of Delhi University. How far has our department been able to fulfil his ideals?**

Prof. Rajni Kothari has visited Miranda House in the past. We have had the occasion when Dr. Jayashree Pillai was the teacher in charge, she had invited him for a seminar. In this occasion we had the benefit of discussing our ideas with him directly. Prof. Kothari was a unique man who not only lived by his theory but his practices. He emphasized on the importance of setting up educational institutions and research centres. The Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and the Developing Countries Research Centre were both set up by Dr. Kothari. He also had his own grassroots organisation. He combined both theory and practice. He has been about application. While the theories were about ideologies, the application was about democracy. In that sense, our department has always reflected his teachings. We don't just learn about liberty but try to attain it as well.

- **Question: How do we place gender equality in the engagements of the Department of Political Science?**

Political Science department has always placed gender equality in its core. We are committed to gender equality in every sense of the term. The discipline has always led it. We were the first to float the Feminism course under Prof. Sushila Kaushik. The Women's Studies Centre and several others were under the aegis of the Department of Political Science. In plain terms, if one is interested in the ideals of Justice, Equality and Liberty, one cannot be interested in Equality without speaking of gender equality. Intersectionality is the key. Our classes are the most radical as we question and explore the concepts of gender, class, caste, sexuality and more.

- **What message would you like to give to the students of Miranda House?**

The message is that we must retain the essence of democracy and the essence of the first article of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. All human beings are free and equal. That is the message and we should never forget that.

Kerala : God's own country faces the worst flood in a hundred years....

You may go to Thampanoor railway station in Trivandrum and buy a ticket for Kochi, Trichur or Pallakkad, find for yourself a nice window seat, and once the train leaves the station..... what you can see from the window is the natural beauty of Kerala. You can also see this from anywhere in Kerala as you travel by bus or car. This verdant paradise of Kerala lies between the Arabian Sea on the west and the lush Western Ghat mountains on the east. It has various rivers, rivulets and lagoons spread all over. Thick forests, exotic wildlife, peaceful backwaters and long stretches of sandy beaches add to its natural beauty. Its rich cultural heritage, the various dance forms such as Kathakali, Mohiniattom, Koodiyattom, Ottamthullal, Theyyam, Thiruvathirakali, Chakiar Kuthu etc, is so impressive that anyone who is a visitor to this place will be spell bound by the sheer magical experience. This is probably the reason why it came to be known as 'God's own country'.



Kerala originates from the word Kera, which means Coconut. Kerala has an abundance of coconut trees. Kerala also stands ahead of many states with highest sex ratio, highest literacy, highest life expectancy, and lowest population growth rate.

People with varied beliefs and religion live peacefully as a community and show a great religious tolerance. Temples, Mosques and Churches can be found together in any nook and corner of this land along with educational institutions run by various communities.

The foundation of this tiny state was shaken by the great flood of 2018, unprecedented in living memory. As normal, the monsoon rains lashed the state from June 1, but as days went by, people wondered at the intensity of the unrelenting rain. For almost two months and three



weeks the state was pounded by rain waters, storm, and overflowing rivers. Then by the last week of August, the shutters of most of the 79 small and large dams of the state were opened and the state was submerged in unheard of flood and misery. It was unbelievable like your best friend turning into your worst enemy. The story of the great Kerala floods of 2018 can be counted in almost 500 deaths, about 14 lakh people turned homeless, about 54 lakh people directly affected....and also in the valour of fisher folk turned rescuers, the army and air force and navy coming to the help of the

marooned.

The Kerala floods were unlike any disaster I have heard of. Though sitting miles away, I have lived through the two weeks of agony as a witness and was part of it. I have shared the sorrow of the victims, understood the anxiety of people in the relief camps and thanked those who extended timely help. The Malayalee community across the world came together in organising aid and we also did our bit in Delhi. The losses due to the floods are estimated at Rs.26720 crore and the cost of rebuilding is estimated at Rs 31000 crore.



Some view the flood as gods' wrath and nature's fury, but some are of the opinion that the flooding was caused by the incompetent management of the dams. There may be truth in all these, but the fact remains that the people of the state were devastated by an unexpected havoc. The monsoon is a yearly feature of life in Kerala and in another two months we'll be facing another June 1, the day the rains arrive in Kerala. Let's keep our fingers crossed and pray that 2018 is never repeated!

[These two pictures are of our village in Kerala shot by me.]

Dr. Jayashree Pillai

Associate Professor

Dept of Political Science

Theoretical Reflections on Relationship Between Human beings and Environment

The earth provides enough to satisfy everyone's need but not for anybody's greed.

Mahatma Gandhi

Environment and Development: An Uneasy Relationship

The preoccupation of the state and society with development has caused greatest disservice to the environment. Affluence is equated with development and unlimited economic growth has become the objective of humankind making this whole planet unsustainable. Much contemporary thinking in development has its roots in the Enlightenment as the 'age of reason', which shaped concepts of progress, growth and social change. In this lineage, development is seen as synonymous with economic growth and material enhancement and free market is seen as its precursor. Modernization theories such as those advocated by likes of W. W. Rostow claimed that every society will pass through five stages of economic growth as done by industrialized



countries of the North. He asserted that countries that aspire to progress have to essentially go through these phases of industrialization. Eurocentric theories such as these, have been awestruck with intensive mechanization and mass production. So much so that development has come to be understood as industrialization, economic progress and abundance.

Inclination to define development in singularly economic term has been highly problematized. It fails to capture the process in entirety, in terms of the cost that this drive for superfluous have brought on the environment. The industrial model of development has highly intensified natural resource extraction and exhaustion. In twentieth century, chemical intensive agriculture for huge agricultural production, extensive mining and obsessive industrialization has disrupted the cycles of the nature. It has resulted in reduced fertility of the soil, eliminated numerous life forms, ravished the earth's vital support systems, undermined public health and destroyed livelihoods of the poor, all in the name of development. But the world woke up quite late to the irreversible damage already done to nature, and new set of hurdles arising from this altered physical environment. Realizing the limitations of such approaches, the concept of sustainable development was popularized towards the latter half of 20th century. Sustainable development called for adoption of environment friendly ways that will not fritter away the natural resource unmindfully. It reminded humankind of their duty to save the resources for the future generations. Ecocentrism, green consumerism and use of renewable sources of energy were emphasized. Sustainable development was defined by the Brundtland Commission, 1987 as 'development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

In the last century, we see the extension of this model of industrial development from the west to all parts of the world. Colonial legacies shaped the development practices in the post-colonial societies. After decolonization these newly independent countries were desperately trying to catch up with the developed nations. For this, their governments often pursued large scale state-controlled development projects in the areas of health, housing, industrial development and power infrastructure. Though these ventures were necessary for the development to take off in these societies, but it all went on at the cost of environment. This frame of development channeled intense volume of resources, through the intervention of state apparatus to sub serve the interest of the urban rural elite. Here lies the inherent problem with capitalist development that it continuously needs to yield a profit by creating consumer demands for new products, even where

this means expanding the ecosystem to the point where it exceeds its physical limits to growth or its carrying capacity.

However, from the beginning, questions have been raised against western model of development in most of these societies. For example, in India, Gandhi and his followers offered more sustainable model of development based on agrarian society of village republics. Since this model could not have yielded the surplus required by the cities, it was rejected in favour of industrial model of development. This obsession for economic growth has destroyed natural ecosystems, traditional production systems and associated human cultural diversity. Ironically the older modes of resource use, which were based on sustainable principles were labelled as primitive, rudimentary and unscientific and systematically discarded.

Tracing the Legacy: Various Perspectives on Human-Environment Relation

Invariably, civilizations all around the world have been living in syncretistic cohesion with the nature surrounding them. Different cultures recognize and associate with nature in different ways. Many of them viewed nature as a sacred thing, to be treated with respect and reverence. The pragmatic reason behind this orientation was human beings' tremendous dependence on their natural environment. From the ancient river valley civilizations to the present smart city plans, we always find ourselves invariably relying on the physical environment.

The theoretical justifications emphasising the synchrony between human and nature emanate from varied contexts. Those believing in radical environmentalism like deep ecology negate anthropocentric environmentalism that aims to preserve environment due to its instrumental utility for human beings. Deep ecology is a movement which aims at the flourishing or self-realization of all earth's species. It urges us to identify with the totality of life on earth, the planetary biosphere. Those adhering to this view believe that the nature has an intrinsic worth in itself. It should not be protected only for its value of providing perennial supply of raw materials for capitalist development. Ecosystems should be viewed in totality and there should be an attempt to preserve whole biosphere, not just the part of it which is useful for human beings. For the deep ecology enthusiasts, earthly reversion to its natural state would be something to celebrate. On the other hand, anthropocentric approaches are modelled on belief of perpetuation of human predominance on the earth. They see human as the centre of earth and try to engage with other living and nonliving beings as resources to be used for human consumption and survival. The assumption is that human beings are superior in their qualities compared to plants and animals which gives them moral justification to exploit the latter. This logic of domination and hierarchy of values accounts for the continued environmental exploitation through ages.

Another understanding of human-nature relationship comes from ecofeminism. This theory sees the domination of nature by man, deeply linked to the male exploitation of women. Man has always tried to control and exploit nature. Since women are equated with nature in their capacity to reproduce and nurture, subjugation of nature also coincides with the subjugation of women by men. The source of such ideological moorings can be traced to some early advocates of modern science like Francis Bacon who states that knowledge and power is synonymous with male who commands the service of nature and enslaves her. Ecofeminists see this view as reductionist, deeply patriarchal and sinister in design. It posits men as master and women and nature as the subservient. There can be no liberation for women nor there can be any solution to the ecological crisis with in a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one on domination. On the contrary, ecofeminism sees an intrinsic relationship between women and nature due to their ability to reproduce. Eco feminist like Vandana Shiva sees modern science as a patriarchy's project. She states that a new awareness is growing and questioning the sanctity of science and development, revealing that they are not universal categories of progress, but special project of modern western patriarchy. Carolyn Merchant in her work *The Death of Nature*, discusses on the masculinist structure of science and the extent to which scientific activities have been detrimental to the persons most in need of benefit. Many of the scientific projects, are inherently patriarchal and premised on subjugation and control of nature and female, both. As

human beings are inevitable embedded in natural world, we must root our behaviour in communion with nature rather than domineering it.

Some of the arguments for protection and promotion of nature is fueled by utilitarian concerns. This philosophy believes in fetching maximum benefits for maximum number of people. It stresses on conserving nature and checking environmental damage for future generations. Crucially, this approach may demand heavy sacrifices from present generation in order to secure the environmental rights of the future generations. On the question of bearing the cost of environmental protection, utilitarian approach will argue that wealthy countries now should bear the burden, as the cost in the welfare to those in poorer countries would be considerable. It is interesting to note that the Kyoto Protocol has implied similar principle in raising fund for its programme.

Egalitarianism recognizes that environment should be protected in order to ensure that all generations should have equal opportunities to its use. Some scholars like Hillel Steiner and Joel Feinberg question whether future generations, who aren't born yet have any rights in reality. Nonetheless, scholars like Brian Barry argues that argument for equality must extent to inter generations and intra generations. Communitarians also argue in favour for the environmental conservation as they think it is crucial for well-being of the entire community.

Interestingly, Karl Marx also provided a powerful analysis of the main ecological crisis of his day like problem of soil fertility with in capitalist agriculture, loss of forests, the pollution of cities, and the Malthusian specter of overpopulation. In his writings, he depicted the antagonism of town and villages, the significance of ecological sustainability and mutual relation between human beings and nature, all of these were threatened under capitalist mode of production.

The adversity and environmental crisis brought by the modernity and industrialization has been explained in terms of risk society by sociologists Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and others. Risk society describes the ways in which modern societies address the environmental problems so as to prevent it from arising. It has given rise to 'reflexive modernization' an approach that re-evaluates and reforms the role of science and technology in industrial progress to make it sustainable, publicly accountable and adaptable to the society.

A very creative vision in this regard comes from Gandhian understanding of human-nature relationship. The social and political thought of Gandhi represents syncretism in which the existence of human is seen to be quintessentially dependent and governed by the nature. Gandhi found modern civilizations, its institutions and working as an anathema as it disrupted this harmony between human and nature. For him, the distinguishing characteristic of modern civilization is an indefinite multiplicity of wants; whereas ancient civilizations were marked by an imperative restriction upon, and a strict regulating of these wants. His ideas on swadeshi, promoting local village based small scale industries, stands in contrast with the mass-produced commodities by the industries that bear huge cost on environment and ecology. Gandhian views present a sustained and holistic reflection on human- environment relation. Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence marked the basis for equitable relations between men and women, for a sustainable relationship to the environment and a practice of diet and natural medicine that encouraged non-violent forms of intervention with respect to our own bodies and in this sense, he can be called first green politicians.

Pushpa Singh
Assistant Professor
Department of political Science
Miranda House
University of Delh

Freethinking in the times of an Indian Election

The politicians are put there to give you the idea you have freedom of choice. You don't. You have no choice. You have owners. They own you. They own everything. They own all the important land, they own and control the corporations that've long since

bought and paid for, the senate, the congress, the state houses... they got the judges in their back pocket, and they own all the big media companies so they control just about all of the news and the information you get to hear. ..They want more for themselves and less for everybody else.

But I'll tell you what they don't want. They don't want a population of citizens capable of critical thinking. They don't want well informed, well educated people capable of critical thinking. They're not interested in that. That doesn't help them."



George Carlin, Stand-up Comedian.

Readers may find it a strange irony that the words of an American social critic and a stand-up comedian are being used to analyse Indian elections, however black humor like music has no boundaries and surely democracies turn out similar atrocities. The bounce across geographies however must not make us lose focus on the message. As young citizens of a democracy critical free - thinking must be our only response.

Apart from the much analyzed Caste factor the Indian voter may consider Ideology, Policies and Corruption as the issues that decide where the vote goes. Applying Free and critical thinking to all these factors is an interesting experiment in Politics. Corruption became a big issue in Indian Politics with the advent of India Against Corruption in 2011. Within a year with amazing speed it turned into a political party. Within another year the Aam Admi Party was in power. Corruption as an electoral plank has the power to sway electoral verdicts. One of the strongest moves against Corruption was the Right to Information Act passed under the leadership of the Indian National Congress in 2005. Ironically, it regularly faced charges of corruption thereafter and was voted out of Delhi in 2014, primarily on charges of corruption.

There are no statistics available on the decrease in corruption in Delhi after 2014. However there are statistics available on the number of citizens who have lost their lives or have been attacked due to their usage of the RTI Act since 2005. The number is large. So is Corruption a factor in Indian politics? It definitely is a useful device for political parties to bring down their opponents. In collusion with the media it is a useful device for propaganda. Ultimately corruption is widely accepted by the Indian electorate as an inevitable phenomenon. All voters know it is beneficial, and indulge in it freely. Like the proverbial railway coach, till you are outside the system, you cry for a fair chance at getting in, once inside you are a part of the system. Not being corrupt, like social justice is a moral that is always ideal for others to follow. All this while eradication of corruption really needs strong, individual commitment and is not a political issue. Human minds are amazingly deft at rationalizing their own corrupt practices within institutions, as students and teachers, administrators and as citizens at large. After all once they came to power one of the first steps that the Aam Aadmi took in **December 2015 was to pass a bill seeking 400 per cent hike in the basic salary of MLAs and ministers besides hefty increase in perks and allowances.. all for fighting Corruption!!**

After 2014, Ideology seems to be the other factor driving elections in India. Overall the two major political parties have drawn lines along Nationalism, Freedom of expression and Fascism. The

voter has to choose between the two major political parties and various smaller ones marketing these ideologies. So the citizens have to choose between the Right and the Left with the Liberals going whichever way that seems profitable at the moment.

Looking at the classic division between the Right and the Left in Indian politics critically is revealing. Looking at it through critical devices like the Horseshoe theory is devastating. Are the Right and the Left in Indian Politics, and elsewhere really that different? Philosopher Jean-Pierre Faye looked at infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 and other instances of right/left coordination, and decided that they were not very different. Instead, he believed the confluence could be explained by what he called Horseshoe Theory which says that the right and left are not on opposite ends of a linear political continuum. Instead, the political spectrum is bent, like a horseshoe, with the far right and far left at the ends bending around so they almost touch each other. Empirical evidences to support this theory are numerous. But then the most compelling evidence is when citizens choose to critically study the rise of Fascism which is a complex of both ideologies.

Benito Mussolini the founder of the Fascist party in Italy was a trained Communist with a thorough understanding of the techniques of mass organization, propaganda and mobilization. He used this training to maximum advantage in creating the structures of Partito Nazionale Fascista(PNF) in Italy. The template is still followed by the Right and the Left in India and the world over. These are historical facts that Freethinkers have to access and analyze on their own. These will never be taught in University classrooms anywhere. This analysis will settle the dust over most claims like Freedom of expression, Nationalism, Secularism and Mob-lynching which are emerging from the Indian political spectrum at the moment. While these political trends have been around for long, the game-changer has been the advent Information technology. The internet has rendered obsolete, most traditional forms of 'knowledge-creation' and transfer. Critical thinking is possible by clicking a button. All grand theories have been buried by the little machine that allows every citizen to access information and be well informed and capable of thinking for themselves.

Policies have never been a factor driving Indian Elections. Ideally they should be the core factor in any democratic process. In an elite driven policy regime why have voters never asked critical questions? Why is it that the first Education Commission in Independent India was the University Education Commission of 1949? In a country that severely needed policies for Universalisation of Primary Education this was a distortion that has never been questioned. Every government that has been voted to power in Independent India has ultimately retained a Policy regime that is geared to benefitting elites.

Freedom ultimately lies in understanding that Politics is an activity rooted in self- interest. And it is in the interest of voters to juxtapose their self interest into the self-centered agendas of politicians and political parties. It is important to understand the motivation behind issues that are thrown at voters by political parties. Is Employment generation a more important issue than access of women to Sabrimala? Where did the petition for Sabrimala originate anyways? When and how will Garibi-Hatao become a reality in India? Why is it not 'hataoed' till now anyways? Why have policies for the past 70 and more years in India been elite driven? Why did the Universal Basic Income Scheme come as an election promise in 2019, and not before? In this new and changed political spectrum where the voter is not restricted by the lack of information, propaganda has both intensified and can be made to lose its power by voters who think critically. Freedom is ultimately what critical citizens will claim for themselves while being surrounded by rhetoric and a culture of silence in institutions.

Sonali Chitalkar

Associate Professor

Department Of Political Science

Menstrual myths and madness: An alternative perspective

One of the most secretive and suppressing tales of Indian society is related to menstrual process and practices related to it. It is only in recent times, that mainstream media is openly speaking about it. Menstrual process is as old as human existence and it affects half of the population on this earth. It is interesting to note that a predominant narrative of patriarchal societies is that the blood that gives birth to a new life is dirty. This process makes the female body impure and thus an excuse to discipline, control and subjugate the female. There are multiple ways of dealing with menstrual process. In this paper we will briefly look into certain myths and madness attached with the process. One of the most common myths associated with menstruation is that it makes a female 'polluting-agent'. Therefore, she must not visit temple during this time period, she



she should not bathe (especially when bathing was done in common water bodies like lakes and rivers), she should not enter kitchen, she should not touch the pickle, she should not touch any auspicious thing and she should maintain distance from male members in the family. In certain parts of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, menstruating female is isolated by making the person to stay in a separate hut with separate utensils and clothes. This process has been used as a tool for shaming and stigmatising the female body. As a result, women have been forced to hide this process and has to adopt unhygienic ways to prevent bleeding. In India, women have been using ash to stop bleeding. Sometimes they use leaves and old clothes. Stigma is to such an extent that women using clothes to stop bleeding cannot even wash and dry these clothes in open. Due to lack of sunlight, these clothes are not properly sanitised and thus become cause for developing infections. However, feminists argue that these practices can be subverted by women in a manner that constraints can become enabling rather than just exploitative. Women can use menstrual time period to stay away from husband and household responsibilities. It can be used as 'me-time' to love oneself. It can be seen as a fresh break from the daily duties of looking after the family. Here one cannot afford to ignore the famous article written by Gloria Steinem titled 'If men could menstruate'. She rightly pointed out that whatever a 'superior' group owns will be used to justify its superiority. So what would happen if suddenly, magically, men could menstruate and women could not? Clearly, menstruation would become an enviable, worthy, masculine event: Men would brag about how long and how much. Young boys would talk about it as the envied beginning of manhood. Gifts, religious ceremonies, family dinners, and stag parties would mark the day. She further highlights how the whole power discourse would be about celebrating and justifying the superiority of men just because they menstruate and women cannot. To think about knowledge as power, as Foucault envisioned, then this power of men in patriarchal societies to create a negative knowledge about menstruation and all those who propagate inferiority of women due to biological difference is of circulatory nature, flowing through daily lives of all and controlling minds and bodies of all to think in a particular manner. **The myths and madness created around menstruation is a political act.** It is a political act as it is about claiming and concentrating power in the hands of men by systematically projecting women as weak as they bleed. From a non-patriarchal perspective, we can argue women are superior as they bleed and they have the power to give a new life.

Foucault is again significant in understanding the discourses around menstruation as he highlighted that there are always plurality of knowledge systems floating in any particular context. In colonial societies, most often European knowledge system predominated over local discourses but never completely successful to erase local discourses. The tension and tussle between various knowledge systems and prevalence of a particular knowledge system over others, ultimately becomes the power to control bodies and minds in any given context. Just by scratching beyond the surface of narratives stigmatising menstruation, we could see in India that different regions, religions, caste and class have very different meanings attached to the menstrual process. If we stretch our memories beyond colonial period, then we could see many communities

celebrating rather than stigmatising the menstrual process and the female body attached with it. For example, in the Nair community of Kerala, the onset of menarche –the first instance of menstruation – was celebrated with great vigour. Malayalam uses different words for menstruation with each word carrying its own meaning. The clinical term aarthavam derives its origin from the word ‘rithu’, which means in Sanskrit and Malayalam seasons and the transition of seasons, hence, change. In the context of women’s reproductive cycle, ‘rithu’ or ‘rithukalam’ signifies the sixteen days from the first spotting of menstrual blood when the woman is most fertile to conceive. Thus ‘rithugami’ in Sanskrit and Malayalam is a man who has intercourse with a woman specifically for reproductive purposes. Somewhere in here is the semantic nuance of seed, flower, and flowering parallel to the processes of the natural world. The other local words used for menstruation were ‘prayamavuka’, or ‘vayassariykkuka’, both of which means ‘to come of age’, or the girl approaching reproductive maturity, and not necessarily sexual maturity. ‘Maasamura’ translates into monthly periods. ‘Theraluka’ or ‘theranduka’ means a form of increase, or growth. All of these terms connote a positive meaning for menstruation. Indeed, the word ‘therandu kalyanam’ signifies the celebratory aspect of menarche. Kalyanam in Sanskrit, Malayalam and Tamil indicates the most auspicious phase of a phenomenon. In the matrilineal system, Nair men and women engaged in ‘sambandham’, a low-key selection of a conjugal mate, the young girls celebrated ‘therandu kalyanam’, or their menarche. In the Nair reform movement led by Mannathu Padmanabhan, the voice to abolish the extravaganza around ‘therandu kalyanam’ gained momentum. As exposed to Victorian ideals of morality, Nair male reformers felt that the celebration of menarche was symbol of being ‘uncivilized’ and thus an ‘irrational expense’ ruining Nair community. Specific customs of ‘therandu kalyanam’ differed from community to community, but a common symbol was the marked positive familial and communal attention given to the young girl during this celebration. The young girl was ritually bathed by elders and presented with sparkling new clothes; special food was made for her. Her menarche was announced to the community. Anthropological and ethnographic studies show almost a totemic worship of the young menstruating girl as an aspect of Bhagavathy or Devi, the primordial mother goddess. The young girl now shared her female body with the goddess herself. The menstruating goddess Parvathy of Chengannur Mahadeva Kshetram (temple) in Alappuzha district of Kerala symbolises power of menstruating women.



Kerala also has a large number of people following Christianity and Islam. Christianity in general does not regard menstruation as impure. The Jacobite women during this period refrain from touching the Bible and going to the church. But others like the Catholics do not follow such taboos. In the northern parts of Kerala, the first period of a Muslim girl is grandly celebrated. The girl is given gold jewellery. All the relatives visit home with presents for the girl. She will be given plenty of non-vegetarian food and raw eggs cooked in gingely oil. During these days, she is not supposed to do namaz or to read Quran. After seven days, the girl is taken for a bath and then she is considered as free from all impurities. The menstruating woman can listen to the Quran and she is also free to attend religious classes and lectures. However, sexual intercourse with husband is not permissible. It has been considered as a great sin by the Muslims. Similarly, we could see that the myth of being impure and weak during menstruation is a narrative attached with upper caste and upper class women. For women belonging to lower caste and lower class, the menstruating days are as any other day. They are not subjugated to isolation/segregation or entitled to take rest.

Thus we could see how the myths and madness around menstruation is simultaneously universal and yet reflects contextual patriarchal narrative with the aim to tame and blame women as sexual beings. It is time to reclaim the ‘Self’. Menstruation is a biological process – not a matter to be

stigmatised. The discrimination against women on the basis of menstruation violates fundamental rights of a woman to equality under articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution of India, right to freedom under article 19 and her right to life and to live with dignity under article 21 of the Constitution. It is time to claim basic right to have healthy and hygienic life, especially during menstruation. It is about affordability and availability of choices, be it, nutritious food, sanitary pads, tampons or panties. Menstruation – its frequency, duration and volume of bleeding, all are indicators of one's health. Any abnormality in terms of its irregularity, duration and volume of bleeding needs immediate medical attention. It is time to speak up about these issues. Ultimately it is about loving one's body and oneself – irrespective of its size, shape, colour or any other parameter set by a patriarchal society!

Rashmi Gopi

Associate Professor

Department Of Political Science

Toilets and Mission

Is toilet or the act of defecation as private a matter as we would like to assume? There is an established and proven linkage between Sanitation and hygiene and health, survival and development. As many as 2.5 billion in the world lack basic sanitation which is more than 35% of the world's population. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) related diseases is one of the many challenges being faced by many countries including India¹. According to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Performance Index 2015 developed by the Water Institute at the University of North Carolina, India was a bottom performer and ranked 93. Higher GDP was not an indicator for access to water and sanitation². Questions such as what kind of toilet is constructed, who defecates where and when, why do we use toilets are all important public policy questions and it is no joke. Infact toilets are a private matter of public health.



It is in this context that the Government of India has launched SBM on 2nd October, 2014 with the mission to eliminate open defecation and establish India as ODF by 2019. It was a project that was undertaken on a huge scale and political will behind this project has seen the total area covered under rural sanitation increasing from less than 40 percent in 2014 to 98 percent since then. In total 9 crore toilets have since then been constructed.

Some of the important aspect of SBM was its target on the behavioral and attitudinal change of the people, focus on IEC. With this focus the program has encouraged technological innovations that would be sustainable. SBM (G) strategy advocates informed choice of individual households in selecting the toilet model based on a basket of safe sanitation technology options like twin leach-pit, septic tank, bio- toilet, etc. However twin pit model has emerged as a default model for all regions irrespective of its sustainability. Despite an increased policy focus on toilet usage and strong promotion of community led total sanitation (CLTS) methods, in many parts of the country, the SBM is implemented in a construction-focused and target-driven mode, and 90 percent of the expenditure for SBM is utilised for purposes of construction.

On July 2018, I visited two villages in Nagaland- Shoxuvi and Ganeshnagar with the purpose to find out policy implications and the gaps especially whether the policy has reached the last mile or the marginalized. Some findings of the research were as follows:

1. The recommended model for building new toilets in Nagaland was the twin pit model. But there was lack of knowledge about this model among the communities. Twin pit construction manual was not found in any of the recipient households. Neither the masons nor the community were given orientation about twin pit toilet technology. In both villages, hired labourers undertook the task of digging pits. In Ganeshnagar, twin pits that was dug was overgrown with weeds as household was waiting for the Government people to come and teach them how to build the toilet. In few cases, incorrect construction of twin pits was observed.
2. Toilet aspiration of the people in the villages was to build big concrete superstructure with septic tanks.
3. The PWD department who has been entrusted the task of implementation reported that provisions under the program was given in kind in the form of toilet materials consisting

of bricks, the commode, some pipes, tin sheets and a bag of cement and not money to prevent its misuse. No money was provided for hiring labour

4. IEC was not followed adequately among the people. There was disparity in the information that people received and it varied according to the social ranks found in the village or gender.
5. No transparency in the manner beneficiaries for this program was selected.
6. Toilets in Government schools were in debilitated condition and no provisions were made for menstrual hygiene of female students.
7. Solid Liquid Waste Management or SLWM was not found in place.

In both the villages, the recipients reported dissatisfaction with the toilet materials that were provided and at the time of visit they were lying unused as they were either broken or inadequate. Since women were not targeted in the IECs, many of them were ignorant of the dangers of children faeces and safe disposal of diapers and sanitary pads. In the absence of SLWM, wastes were disposed off in a manner that was environmentally hazardous. There was also the added problem safe disposal of sludge from septic tanks in a way that does not lead to effective concentration of open defecation near dwelling places. In both the villages, large number of migrant labourers were present and were marginalised as far as this program is concerned. In the government schools where toilet facilities were not present, it was also found that the students were mostly children of the migrant labourers. Thus we see them being doubly marginalised.

After 2019, India is going to move toward SBM + and areas such as SLWM, faecal sludge management, water supply are going to be prioritized. In the midst of these programs which aim to improve health of the people and aim at holistic development, one needs to continuously reflect and ask the question why we are doing what we are doing and whether we are delivering what we have promised. Now with all the information we have about toilets, challenges about SBM and relation between open defecation and health, what do we do with this knowledge and how we can use it to make policies work better is the one question anyone interested in matters of public policy ought to ask.

Mhadeno Jungi
Assistant Professor
Department Of Political Science

Middle Class and the Goal of Sustainable Development

This paper intends to coherently discuss the role /responsibility of middle class in maintaining the sustainable development, which is the need of the hour. Furthermore the paper would also analyse the concept of middle class, sustainable development, Gandhian thought etc. My paper would be divided into different parts, beginning with the understanding of the terms, linking all the key words, and most importantly, responsibility of middle class in acquainting itself more with adaptability and finally attaining sustainable development as a necessity to save the earth.



It all began with Stockholm Environmental conference of United Nations in 1972. Ever since then, Sustainable development has been the buzz word. Since Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG), it has been in the minds of academia and policy makers. In 2017, India's external affair minister, Sushma Swaraj, also mentioned the need for sustainable development at the 72nd meeting of United Nations general assembly. This word has been in vogue not only with the academia but also at the level of policy making, be it at national or international level. There is increasing demand to implement sustainable development goals. The term is understood as a development process in which the available resources needs to be consumed in such a way that ample amount is left for the future generation in the same condition, if not better than what we have received from our past generation. In other words, it can be understood as 'development for all' and not for any particular section of the society.

The basic philosophy behind the concept of sustainable development is to use resources in an efficient manner so that enough resources are left for the coming generation in a condition which is not worse than of what we had received. Sustainable development is one of the most deliberated themes in both academics and at the level of policy making. In the 'era of scarce resources' this concept becomes pivotal. It reminds me of a famous quote of Gandhi that 'this earth has enough for everyone's need but not enough for even a single man's greed'. Thus we see that the policymakers across the world ponder over this issue before deciding any short term or long term policies. Related to the idea of sustainable development is the commitment of the United Nations (UN) to eradicate poverty and ensure a considerable standard of living for the existing population of the world without affecting much to the health of our ecosystem. Therefore in 2015 the world leaders committed themselves to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Twelfth goal of United nation talks about '*responsible consumption and production*'. As per the statistics given by UN if the global population reaches 9.6 billion by 2050 in a condition which is not worse than of what we had received. Sustainable development is one of the most deliberated themes in both academics and at the level of policy making. In the 'era of scarce resources' this concept becomes pivotal. It reminds me of a famous quote of Gandhi that 'this earth has enough for everyone's need but not enough for even a single man's greed'. Thus we see that the policymakers across the world ponder over this issue before deciding any short term or long term policies. Related to the idea of sustainable development is the commitment, the equivalent of almost three planets will be required to sustain current lifestyle. There are speculations about rise of middle class in coming two decades.

Though the rise is seen as an indicator to individual's development but it will put pressure on already depleting sources. Hedonistic consumption tendencies of the middle class are increasing pressure on our environment needs to be contemplated, its high time market driven consumer approach needs to be squared. Need of the hour is piece meal consistent change by the middle class in their consumption pattern. For example, According to a UN report each year about one

third of all food produced— equivalent to 1.3 billion tonnes worth around \$1 trillion—ends up rotting in the bins of consumers and retailers could be utilised judiciously to help deprived people.

In this scenario the role of middle class is significant, as this section of population across the world is known for consuming varied goods and services higher than both the lower and the upper classes. Middle class survives between the yearning of ascendant mobility and fear of falling into poverty, this social group is an important constituent for socio-political and economic stability. It is a volatile class which has mastered over adaptability. It is very important for sustainability as unless we adopt ourselves we will not be able to attain the goal of sustainable development. Middle class is considered as the backbone of any emerging economies. They are the engines of growth of an economy and this class is also known by another term called the consumer class. Thus we see that every policy initiative by the governments have a direct or indirect bearings on this class. Thus the middle class population and their role in achieving the United Nations Agenda of 2030 cannot be ignored.

When it comes to consumers, households consume 29 per cent of global energy and contribute to 21 per cent of resultant CO₂ emissions. However, we can save US\$120 billion annually by using power saver bulbs. Contamination of water has become grave issue which needs sustainable solution. We are not able to keep a balance with nature, as our frequency of polluting water is faster than nature can recycle and purify it in rivers and lakes. Textile industry is second largest sector after agriculture, where water is used and gets polluted. In present times there is an increase in demands of textiles because of the changing lifestyle, as the middle class consumers are responding to the changes at global scenario. This process is basically structured by local state strategies of urban redevelopment that promote new urban middle class lifestyle. The middle class consumers are getting trapped by lucrative financial deals by different brands as a result there is increasing tendency of demand based consumption than that of need based consumption. This entire process is acting as vicious circle, where increase in production is dependent on increasing demands whereas increasing demands are the result of easy accessibility.

Economic liberalisation in India operates through two desperate but simultaneous languages of economic development and economic growth. On the one hand, state, NGO and World Bank sponsored projects produce narratives of sustainable development that primarily target subaltern social groups. Ironically middle class identity as consumer class is getting accolade, it is being celebrated as indicator of success of neo liberal policies of the state globally. In the post liberalisation epoch both the narratives about consumer class and subalterns growth are considered to be part of single narrative of development strategies.

Images of a prosperous, consuming Indian middle class have now become a common place in both domestic and cultural representation in India as well in International political rhetoric on India's booming globalising economy. Such ideological cultural and discursive practices produce a normative conception of new Middle class as an opulent social group whose growing consumption capacity both symbolises the benefits of liberalisation and serves as the engine for driving liberalisation forward.

Middle class consumption and subaltern sustainable development are in fact part of a singular set of state developmental strategies in the post liberalisation period. Consumption paradoxically both signals and conceals the relationship between the new liberalising middle class and the current state of developmental regime. Role of state suggests that the politics of sustainability will require more than attitudinal shifts amongst middle class individuals.

Now the question arises as to how middle class can contribute? There are two main ways to help: 1. reducing your waste and 2. Being thoughtful about what middle class buy and choose a sustainable option whenever possible. Reducing the waste can be done in many ways, from ensuring that they don't throw away food to reducing their consumption of plastic— one of the main pollutants of the ocean. Carrying a reusable bag, refusing to use plastic straws, and recycling plastic bottles are good ways to do their part every day. Making informed purchases also helps. For example, untreated pollutants of textile industry have made it the second largest threat to depleting clean water sources. Do we know how much water is used in manufacturing a pair of jeans? It is 7,700 litres approx., which could have been used to quench the thirst of a number of people. If one can buy from sustainable and local sources middle class can make a difference as well as exercise pressure on businesses to adopt sustainable practices.

Dr. Surabhi
Assistant Professor
Department Of Political Science

RTI Implementation in the Education Sector

Right to Information Act, 2005 is a Central Act which came into force on 12th October, 2005. It extends to all of India except Jammu and Kashmir (u/s 1(2)). It was enacted to enable the citizens to access information held by the Public Authority. In India, its scope is wide, larger any country, as it includes Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. Besides these even Public Private Partnership project is under the purview of the RTI. It has only few exemptions Under Section 8 i.e. information that will affect sovereignty and integrity of India. RTI is enacted to bring transparency and accountability in the governance. Today more than overriding secrecy, it has become a tool for the redressed of grievances, a tool to expose corruption and fixation of responsibility. It has made every citizen's right to be informed and information is empowerment. When a person is informed he/she is better aware of their rights. This Act has empowered every citizen get the desired information within 30 days of filing the RTI Application by paying Rs 10 as RTI fees. The time limitation has brought relief to lakhs of poor people who were earlier denied of information about the dos and don'ts of the public authority. Earlier the people were not allowed to seek information about their policies programmes. But today it has made possible only by RTI Act. The official Secret Act 1923 and Public Records Act etc prevented citizen other the concerned official to access the records. Now we can access to records, mails, image, fax, document and manuscripts.

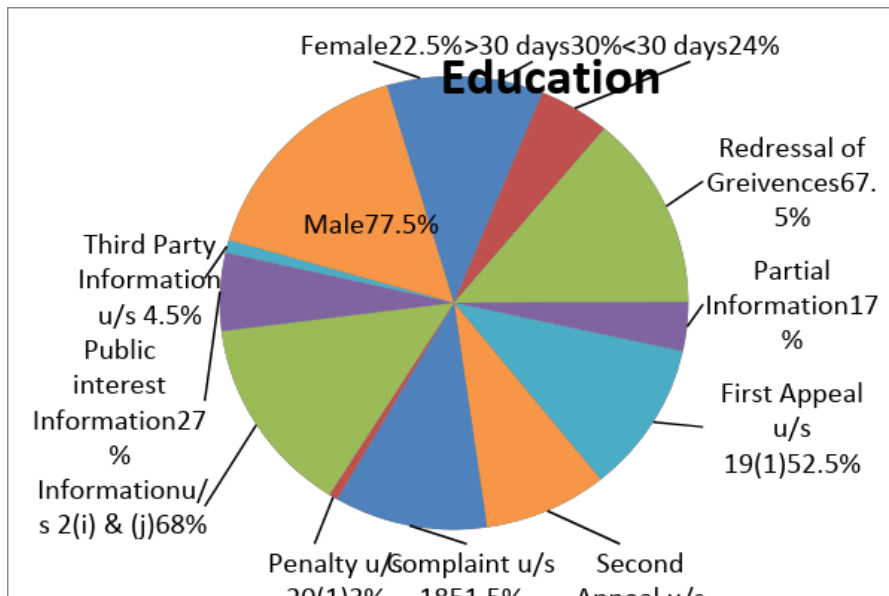


In this article we shall closely look into various provisions of the RTI Act, 2005 and its implementation in Education, in Delhi. An attempt made to study the impact of RTI on people and Public Authority, whether the citizen is aware of RTI Act and its uses; whether the public authority is aware of all the provisions of the Act and discharging the duties assigned to them.

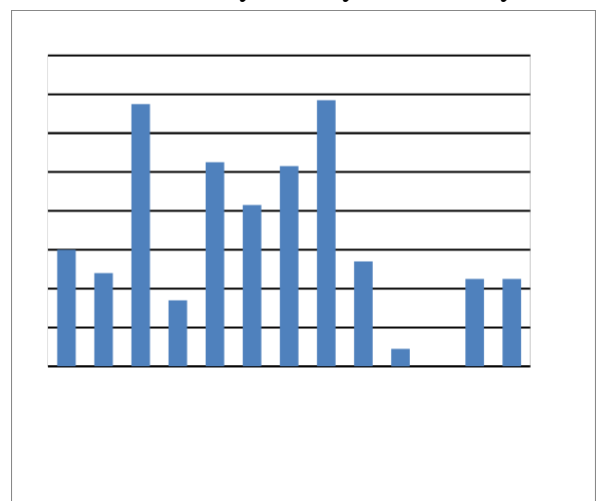
Out of the Public authorities who were interviewed, 95 percent of them are not given any training to discharge their duties under the provisions of the RTI Act. Many of the PIO opines that RTI fees are very less to meet the expenses of stationery providing information. They are overburdened with additional responsibility with no remuneration for the additional point of view. Word limit must be reduced.

Out of the citizens interviewed, 100 percent of them are very happy to have RTI enacted. RTI has enabled them to get their child admitted in Public schools under EWS (Economically Weaker Section) quota. Citizen respondents opine that RTI has empowered them to get any information from the Public Authority. As RTI is a right, nobody can deny them from getting information, access to records or inspection of work, samples or record.

The RTI experts that were interviewed, they are satisfied with the performance of the RTI Act. They want the amendment to strengthen RTI and not curb it. They want all the Political parties to be brought under the ambit of RTI. CIC in its decision ordered all the MP's and MLA's to disclose the details of expenditure of the Development fund allocated to them. Besides this, proactive disclosure is provided u/s 4 regarding functions of the public authorities, salary and allowances, subsidiary programmes run by the government from time to time and funds allocated to each beneficiary, reason for the denial of certain service etc.



RTI Application filed in the Education Sector is information related to admission in Economically Weaker Section Quota (EWS), availability of total number of seats, details recognized Schools, distribution of school uniforms, books, stationery, timely availability of scholarship, queries related to service matters teaching and non teaching staff and their salaries and qualification. The Penalty imposed u/s 20(1) is only 3% by the CIC. 67.5% of the applications filed were for solving grievances. This means information received through the weapon of RTI is used as a tool for the redressal of grievances. RTI has met more than just access to information. It has empowered the common man to get their grievance addressed without the interference of any other person.



RTI as a tool to access information has fulfilled the purpose for which it was enacted. Additionally citizens are empowered to make the public authority accountable and responsible for their dos and don'ts. RTI has over the years enlarged its scope as a tool to expose corruption, maladies and malfunctioning of the government and a tool for the redressed of grievances. In the Education sector, it has empowered the students to get their marks and answer sheets disclosed. Also, competitive examinations and interview are being held, there is disclosure of marks along with the evaluating criteria. There are many instances when the exam topper's answer sheets have been compared with other answer sheets in order to know whether right marks have been given or not. There were recent decisions of CIC in which UPSC (Union Public Service Commission) also disclosed marks in General Studies and other subjects. UGC (Union Grant commission) also started providing the carbon copy of the OMR sheet filled by the candidates. It happened because educational policy makers realized the need of transparency in the competitive exam in order to motivate deserving candidates to the limelight. Other than this, students managed to get admission in private schools under EWS quota. Getting admission in Private schools was a distant dream for the poor people who belong to economically weaker section. Earlier the people were not aware of the grounds on which a child got admission in private schools but after the RTI enactment, people started using RTI to know the criteria and eligibility of admission of the students. Though Right to Education Act 2009 was enacted which provided 25 percent reservation to the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) people in Private schools; it was not completely beneficial for the poor people as criteria of admission and eligibility criteria were hidden. However today with

the help of RTI enactment, everything has become transparent as far as the admission procedure is concerned. Another example is students of government schools who were not receiving their books, uniforms and scholarships are now getting it on time. In many cases, people were able to know the amount of scholarship allocated by the government and the reason why it has been delayed. In MCD schools, RTI helped the students to get their sports goods and uniform in time. There was distribution of books as well. In some schools, it checked the absence of teachers in the school. Teacher scams involving Former Minister Chautala was disclosed through RTI.

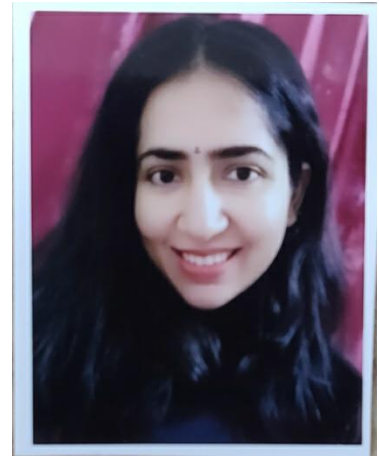
Ceejun Chandran

Assistant Professor

Department Of Political Science

HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS AND MULTI CONCERNS

Human life has become extremely complex, where difficulties and problems challenge us from all walks of life. Contemporary time is highly regulated, over occupied and highly coordinated with interconnected lives. Its time of planning and control of settling goals and achieving them in efficient manner. There are people who are struggling to sort out their inner world for a meaningful life, others who are trying to hold together a damaged relationship, individuals who are trying to be active participants in society, citizens who are frustrated of this corrupt power gamble and desperate to alter it in the best possible way but end up in ambiguities. And now an emerging class of 'Netizen' highly 'Networkized' into a virtual world and lost the grip of reality, unconscious of the cost that it is going to bear. Being a consumer we try best to make reasonable choices and decisions but end up in a farrago. Multiple societies are unimaginable without clock time, its time bound society regulated and regularized by the rational faculty. Due to this regularized nature of changing societal dynamics we are oversaturated in this commercialized world that we ignore to question difference between Needs and Desires. The journey is daunting and often people give up. The argument that is usually given is that one is too small to bring a change. Hence people fall to passivity, negativity and hopelessness. Eventually and gradually we try to explore solutions in this tangible world. But how far we succeed? What we don't realize is that neither we are too small, nor is the problem beyond our capability and reach. We must realize the fact that problem arises from this palpable phenomenal world but solution lies inside us. The great worry is that why don't we introspect ourselves instead of ransacking the material world, where things are in flux. We are very easy and confident when we are asked about something or someone but when we are asked to talk about ourselves in say some interview, we hesitate, stammer and talk inconstantly and at end hardly we hardly find words that can delineate our 'the self'. We are very good in passing judgments at others but completely fail when we need to judge ourselves to make life beautiful. We must not forget the fact that when we are raising the finger at others, three fingers are already pointed towards us. While all of us attempt to do a lot, but not all succeed because most of us function from a scattered mind. Our attention is rarely immersed as we wish to multi task owing to our phenomenal greed, restlessness and sensory needs. The attention, rather than being fully focused in what we are doing, runs into memories of past and fantasies of future. The reason being that we are mentally unsettled and baffled in this perplexed world. We are not determined about who we are being individual, consumer, citizen and end up being a reduced entity driven by logics of market. This is what Carl Jung has tried to delineate in his 'undiscovered self'. And as result all societal ills are because of lack of understanding of one's self. Hence crises of self occur. There can be no self knowledge based on theoretical assumptions, for the object of self knowledge is an individual. We are very conscious of existential apparent realities but how much we know ourselves. So there remains an undiscovered self. Through this article my only concern is to recognize the crises of undiscovered self. There have been few beautiful writings in the past which focuses on importance of realizing our inner self, one such work is Ralph Waldo Emerson's 'Self Reliance'. This generally revolves around individualism, personal responsibility, and nonconformity. His thoughts can be summarized in following themes;-Individual authority: Emerson mentions that citizens control the government so they have control. He also mentions how "nothing has authority over the self." He says, "History cannot bring enlightenment only individual searching can."



He believes that truth is inside a person and this is authority, not institutions like religion. Nonconformity, Emerson states, "Who so would be a man must be a nonconformist." He counsels his readers to do what they think is right no matter what others think. Solitude and the community: Emerson wrote how the community is a distraction to self-growth, by friendly visits, and family needs. He advocates more time being spent reflecting on one's self. This can also happen in the community by a strong self-confidence. This would help the counseled to not sway from his beliefs in groups of people. Spirituality: Truth is within one's self. Emerson posits that reliance upon institutionalized religion hinders the ability to grow mentally as an individual. Since it was the time of religious dominance, the beliefs are set in that context. However the context has changed but the broader ideas still remain relevant. Whenever any undesirable event unfolds in our society, we just find it easy to blame on society by keeping our ears and eyes closed and mouth remains open just for the sake of activism without any activity. But how far blaming the society is desirable? How far this actually works out? Why do we forget the fact that society is not something eternal or divine creation, it is a mankind development. We all comprise society so it is our collective responsibility to shoulder the blame. Holding the candle and marching unified would not really workout that would only remain symbolic misrepresentation of societal grief. The grief is because of declining family values, because of undiscovered self, because of the attitude that 'I am too small to bring about a change'. A change in attitude, a feeling of acceptance and recognizing moral sentiments and emotions can really work wonder for this humankind.

Ms Rama Boora
Assistant Professor
Department Of Political Science

Climate Change and Agriculture in Sunderbans: An Analysis.

Today the world seems to be a ticking bomb just to explode in no time to the adverse effects of climate change. From the water crisis in Cape Town to the increasing desertification, sea level rise, melting of glaciers, extinction of species- we are all witnessing the effect of climate change. Alas it's real! Thus from being part of World Politics to that of being an agenda of Sustainable Development Goals, climate change is perhaps one of the most important nontraditional security threats that we are witnessing in the new millennium.



India has also been adversely affected by climate change and the most pronounced effect of the climate change in India is seen on Sunderbans. Gravity of climate change effect on Sundarebans can be compared with that of the Island nations of the world like Maldives, Tuvalu which constantly faces the risk of being submerged. The area of Sunderbans, covers approximately 10,000 km², of which 62% lies within Bangladesh and 38% in India (in West Bengal) and forms the largest contiguous mangrove forest on earth. At the same time it is the largest delta in the world, worked by the huge deposits carried by the river systems of India and Bangladesh. The region is characterized by a tropical climate with a dry season between November and April and a wet monsoonal period over the rest of the year. During the monsoon season, tropical cyclones and smaller tidal events regularly hit the area, causing severe flooding and wind damage.

Thus the practice of agricultural is very challenging by its climatic aspect. The region has become vulnerable due to sea level rise which has serious effects on the health of the forests as well as on agricultural activities. The archipelago has lost 284 km² in the past 50 years, due to sea level rise, whereas accretion has been only 84 km². In some cases, such as Jambudwip Island, the total area lost has been over 50% where as Sagar Island has shrunk by 15%, and three other islands, Lohachahara, Suparibhanga and Bedford, have completely disappeared, whilst Ghoramara Island has been eroded significantly, displacing hundreds of people. Also the Bay of Bengal side of Indian Ocean the occurrences of cyclones increased by 26% between 1881 and 2001. Thus the incursion of more seawater due to storm surges, into the croplands and farms will make it more saline, making agriculture even more unproductive. Meanwhile, the mixing of seawater with swamps in the area will also have deleterious impact on the biodiversity of the region. Previously, agriculture in the region was heavily affected after the occurrence of cyclones like Sidr in 2007, Nardis in 2008 and Aila in 2009 with most of the agricultural land lying fallow till date. Similarly, along with the decline in agricultural productivity, fish catch in the region has also declined significantly which has also affected the local economy of the region as the majority of the people ventures into the sea for their livelihood. The Farmers in the region are faced with huge problems due to the change in the seasonal patterns as well. The farmers have realized that over the years the summer has become longer, stronger and more problematic. Even springs have become shorter than before. They are thus forced to change their cropping patterns.

As a co-optation mechanism the farmers in the Sundarbans have embraced organic farming with local crop varieties that are better adapted to the effects of climate change happening in the region. In giving the farmers of the region a new hope and accessibility to organic sources of farming, Mrityika Prayas is a non-profit organization based in Korakathi gram panchayat (village council) area in the Sundarbans has taken up the responsibility. It is a trust which started functioning in the region in 2016. It works to experiment with a market-oriented model that caters to both climate-adaptive farming and nurtures people's knowledge of organic farming practices, it built a people's knowledge centre called Gyan Vikas Kendra at Dhuchnikhali in Korakathi. The centre has evolved a training module and a market-linked strategy to promote climate-friendly

farming in the Sundarbans, which seems to be yielding a slow but sure switchover to organic farming of rice, turmeric, and pulses, with other items in the pipeline. Today, Mrittika Prayas are trying to build a model where food security and market returns are integrated through organic farming. Thus it sets a good example of adaptation to climate-friendly agriculture. The organization's success has been quite prominent especially in convincing the local rice producers to switch to organic farming, primarily because rice is the staple diet of the region. Mittika Prayas runs an initiative called the 'Amar Khamar' (My farm) which connects the produce of the local farmers to the market, by digital technology, where the customers are ensured that they purchase organically produced quality farm products.

The Sundarbans are the world's largest contiguous mangrove forest and one of the most highly modified estuaries in the world. It is one of the important ecological hotspot in the world. It is extremely important to initiate policies and programmes which will take care of the region. Climate change resilient agriculture through organic farming should show us the way to save this region from vanishing from the map of the world!

Saheli Bose
Assistant Professor
Department Of Political Science







The flipside of equality-Domestic Violence.

The issue of domestic violence cuts across cultures, states and social strata. The overarching framework under which we address the issue of women's equality and rights should be by inter alia, assessing the forces that subjugate them, the socialization of knowledge, misinterpretation of history and their economic dependence. It is in this context that we must provide increased access to legal mechanisms to women and organise them into social groups to reduce their vulnerability in society.

Women are an equal and synergising component of the human ecosystem. At a point in time when women were struggling against their relegation to certain sectors alone and for their expression and rights, history saw the advent of prolific writers and activists from the likes of Nussbaum and Friedan to that of more traditional tribal leaders agitating and organising against alcoholism, for the environment etc. A stark reality despite these encouraging historical and present day examples remains the violence that women have been subjected to. Women's bodies are treated as subjects whose rights are systematically violated. This violence is a worldwide problem that cuts across cultural, geographical, religious, social and economic boundaries. Physical, psychological, sexual and economic violence against women is rampant. With the advent of technology, easier access to digital data, cybercrime and cyber-bullying, the violence against women has increased.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines sexual violence as "any sexual act or an attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments, or advances, acts to traffic or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim in any setting, including but not limited to home and work." There are also certain forms of violence, linked to traditional or customary practices, which are limited to specific communities or geographical regions. These include wife inheritance in Southern Africa, female genital mutilation in among others East and West Africa, and dowry murders on the Indian subcontinent.

The results from studies world-wide indicate that between 15% and 71% of women who have ever lived with a man, report experiencing some form of physical or sexual violence perpetrated by their intimate partners. In many countries however, the extent to which women experience domestic violence remains largely hidden and undocumented. In addition, as violence is commonly perpetrated by a woman's partner, often in her home, it is considered as a "private matter" – and thus not an issue for discussion, research or action.

Consequences of violence against women.

Women have been touted as docile creatures through social sanctions and norms and often seen as the "weaker sex", "the care giver" or "the other". In many countries, violence against women is predominantly seen as being a legal issue. Yet, physical, psychological and sexual violence may have wide-ranging consequences for physical, mental and reproductive health. Domestic violence has serious health implications which not only physically affect a person but also leads to related problems of mental trauma, inability to participate in society, affects maternity and reproductive health and may also be fatal. Additionally, it also affects the well being of children who feel increased stress levels and may suffer from complex disorders due to the violent atmosphere they are exposed to.

Courses of action and legal mechanisms.

India has marked various changes by leading campaigns and conferences to address this issue. Certain provisions were made under IPC to protect women from violence. Section 304 B IPC reads that if there is a case of the death of a woman caused by burns or bodily harms by her

husband within seven months of her marriage and if it is established that her husband and in laws are torturing her for dowry, then it is termed as dowry death.

Section 313-14 IPC has been implemented to prevent 'female infanticide' or forced termination of pregnancy. Laws such as the immoral traffic prevention act (1956), Dowry prohibition act 1961, the indecent representation of women (prohibition) act, 1986, the commission of sati (prevention) act, 1987, the protection of women from domestic violence act, 2005 and the the sexual harassment of women at workplace (prevention, prohibition and redressal) act, 2013 are of salience.

The Domestic Violence Act, 2005

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted to protect women from domestic violence and was brought into force by the Indian government from 26 October 2006.

According to this act every woman who has been deprived of her right to life by the act of husband or relatives of the husband, can file a complaint to the protection officer, police officer or magistrate in the form of 'Domestic Incident Report' (Similar to FIR). Complaint filed by the victim /aggrieved person or relatives will also be considered as the prima-facie evidence of the offence. Every 'Domestic Incident Report' has to be prepared by the Protection Officer which will assist in the further investigation of the incidence. The protection officer will pass certain orders i.e. protection of the women, custody of respondent and order of monetary relief to the victim. The D.Velusamy v D.Patchaiammal case of 2010 presided by the bench of Justice Markandey Katju and T.S. Thakur, it was said that live-in relationships should not be outside the purview of domestic violence.



The act defines the meaning of an aggrieved person, shared households and domestic relationships. It paved the path for reform and progress.

Criticisms

Given the social contexts and the plight of women, this act is seen to provide only quasi-criminal or civil remedies. One issue which seems to have been ignored entirely are queer relationships. Even though there is no specific statement of the same in the Act, in the judgement of S. Khushboo Vs. Kanniammal & Anr., the Supreme Court specified that live-in relationships are permissible in only unmarried heterogeneous relationships. Further, the act does not speak of marital rape or forced sex, each of which are a violation of an individual's choice. Not only do women form a higher proportion of domestic violence victims, but combined with lower political-social and economic decision-making power it is harder for them to exit the abusive domestic relationships.

It has been noted that despite multiple recommendations to help enhance women's economic independence which would in turn, enhance their social status and command more respect in the society, the law makers seem to be more concerned about the 'protection' rather than 'prevention'. In many areas, the government officials, instead of the protection officers are entrusted with the issue of addressing cases of domestic violence. Further, despite guidelines for shelter homes, many areas have none at all.

In conclusion, it may be said that despite the lacunae in the act, it remains one of crucial importance for its very spread all over the country as an existing mechanism which can be availed if need be. Equality demands equal participation and thus this project of improving the conditions for women in the world would be incomplete without the cooperative efforts of the two halves of the civil society and the legal officials and contributors in the public domain.

References

1. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2002. World Health Organization. World report on violence and health.
2. Rozee PD. Forbidden or forgiven? Rape in cross-cultural perspective. *Psychol Women Q.* 1993;17:499–514.
3. El-bushra J, Piza Lopez E. Gender-related violence: Its scope and relevance. *Focus Gend.* 1993;1:1–9.
4. McQuigg, Ronagh J.A. (2011), "Potential problems for the effectiveness of international human rights law as regards domestic violence", in McQuigg, Ronagh J.A., *International human rights law and domestic violence: the effectiveness of international human rights law*
5. <http://ncw.nic.in/frmlawsrelatedtowomen.aspx>

Anoushka Parija
BA(H) Political Science, Third Year

Combating Fake News

A HATE CRIME IN SWEDEN LEFT MANY ASTOUNDED- THE RISE OF INTOLERANCE IN SWEDEN IS ALARMING AND IT CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE REFUGEE INFLUX.

Imagine reading this on your newsfeed of a social media platform, maybe through a seemingly legitimate news channel. In times like ours, this one sounds plausible.

But in reality, it is fabricated news- it is not a fact, but fiction.

With the availability of news (and all sorts of information) on our fingertips, in real time, from all around the world, it seems like it is the time of the consumer to be informed and have informed opinions. However, before we start believing that we are omnipotent, there is a need to realise that this information surge does not come without its cons. 2017 has seen a surge in 'fake news' that can be defined as a type of yellow journalism or propaganda that consists of deliberate misinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional print and broadcast news media, or on various social media.

'Post-truth' was the word of the year 2015-16. It is fake news for 2017. The most evident proof of just how much havoc, sensationalised, fictitious and dishonest media outlets can wreak can be attested by the US Presidential Elections of 2016. When clickbaits and false headlines started making the rounds before the elections, it actually swung the vote to Donald Trump's favour. Fake news also undermines serious media coverage and makes it more difficult for journalists to cover significant news stories.

Misinterpretation of one word cost millions of Japanese in Hiroshima and Nagasaki their lives and livelihood almost 70 years ago. We have evolved since then, so has our technology, as has increased our power to destroy. Ong Ye Kung, Singapore's Defence Minister said recently, "Terrorism and fake news are key security threats the world faces."

So, to put it coarsely, it is not enough to just know what is happening, you also need to know if it is really happening- a whole different ball-game. Fake news is a sophisticated form of rattling the hornet's nest, a form of psychological warfare, and has serious implications, and even more serious repercussions. Nations all around the world have realised the gravity of the situation and are working towards combating these trolls who spread misinformation.

In most cases, when we call for a remedy of any issue, be it environmental, or gender violence, the most grassroot and important way is to educate, and be educated and informed. But in this humongous, vortex-like labyrinth of news around us today, how does one know what exactly is true and what is not?

We all need to look beyond conventional solutions (read: censors and bans) and tackle the spread of fake news in a more refined manner. We need to realise that fake news is not new to our society, although it is infinitely more powerful now. We should understand that it has existed almost since the times of the Romans. Octavian famously used a campaign of disinformation to aid his victory over Marc Anthony in the final war of the Roman Republic. In its aftermath, he changed his name to Augustus, and dispatched a flattering and youthful image of himself throughout the Empire, maintaining its use in his old age. And now this trend has only exponentially grown- maybe like Frankenstein's monster.

It is an old disease, an existing wound, which in this age of technology has become virulent like never before. All we can do now is be critical of any and every news item we come in contact with, and be careful in reacting to any 'news' we read. More importantly, it is vital to take in news from more than one source- corroborating and comparing different articles, critically analysing every word.

It is easy for us to get lured into the siren song of fake news, but we need to steady ourselves and unleash our inner Odysseus and resist the call of misinformation. I would like to hope that this

piece has inspired at least some concern in you about the condition which we all, as humanity face.

Bala Panchanathan

B. A(H) Political Science, Second Year

Indian judiciary and globalization.

One of the epitome judgment of the Indian judiciary was the Keshvananda Bharti case where the court reflected it's judicial creativity in evolving the idea of "Basic Structure Doctrine". The doctrine has not only made major contribution to the constitutional law of India but for the other countries too, for instance in 1990 the constitution of Nepal incorporated the theory basic structure in its constitution . What this suggests is that an adjudication of the court of one land can impact the law of the other land and this simply suggest that the idea of globalization is no more limited to the economic concept . The world is evolving into a Global village and states are becoming interdependent not only for resources but also for the ideas . A new world order has emerged where liberal values are given emphasis and it is interesting to understand how the Indian courts have accommodated the idea of globalization without jeopardizing the national interest and the rule of law by looking into several judgments of the supreme court of India

In most of these cases, the Court upheld and endorsed the government's policies of economic liberalization. For instance, in Delhi Science Forum Case, where the issue pertained to a challenge against the government for adopting the National Telecom Policy which marked a shift towards privatization of the telecom industry, the Court, while upholding the privatization of the telecom sector, observed that it cannot question the merits of the policy and the proper place for any substantive challenge was the Parliament and not the Courts. The Court acceded to the need for massive acceleration due to the adoption of liberalized economic policy for the economic growth of the country. The Court, while recognizing the need for a robust, seamless and unhindered telecom sector for enjoying the fruits of globalisation, observed thus:-

Delhi Science Forum v. Union of India, (1996) 2 SCC 405

"Telecommunications has been internationally recognized as a public utility of strategic importance . . . Because of the economic growth and commercial changes in different parts of the world, need for interconnectivity means that communication systems have to be compatible with each and other and have to be actually interconnected. Because of this there is a demand even in developing countries to have communication system of international standards."

Another celebrated case is BALCO Employees Union wherein the Supreme Court of India displayed a liberal approach in interpreting the economic policy of the Government of India which is reflective of the fact that the constitutional courts of this country have embraced the phenomenon of globalization with their arms wide open.

The important observations in this case read thus:-

"...Process of disinvestment is a policy decision involving complex economic factors. The Courts have consistently refrained from interfering with economic decisions as it has been recognized that economic expediencies lack adjudicative disposition and unless the economic decision, based on economic expediencies, is demonstrated to be so violative of constitutional or legal limits on power or so abhorrent to reason, that the Courts would decline to interfere. In matters relating to economic issues, the Government has, while taking a decision, right to "trial and error" as long as both trial and error are bona fide and within limits of authority..."

Thus, what we can gather from these decisions is that the Constitutional Courts have always been alive to the need of providing a progressive and conducive climate to the initiatives of fostering liberalization and privatisation which are ultimately aimed to make India a desired destination.

From this we can conclude that another benefitting facet of globalization for the judicial wing has been the opportunity to learn from the Constitutional Courts across the world. Globalization

generated opportunities for exchange of judicial dialogue which led to borrowing of various legal doctrines and judicial approaches for enhancing the understanding of various subject matters having transnational relevance. The judgments of the Supreme Court of India are full of examples and instances wherein we have abundantly referred to foreign judgments and laws prevalent in other developed countries around the world for shaping our judicial decision-making. The most recent examples of such convergence are the Euthanasia Judgment wherein the Court allowed the concept of living will/advance directive and legalized passive euthanasia in India.

Indian judiciary has benefitted through globalisation by referring to foreign jurisprudence of countries including US, Canada, Australia, UK.

Akshita Gethe

BA(H)Political science, First Year

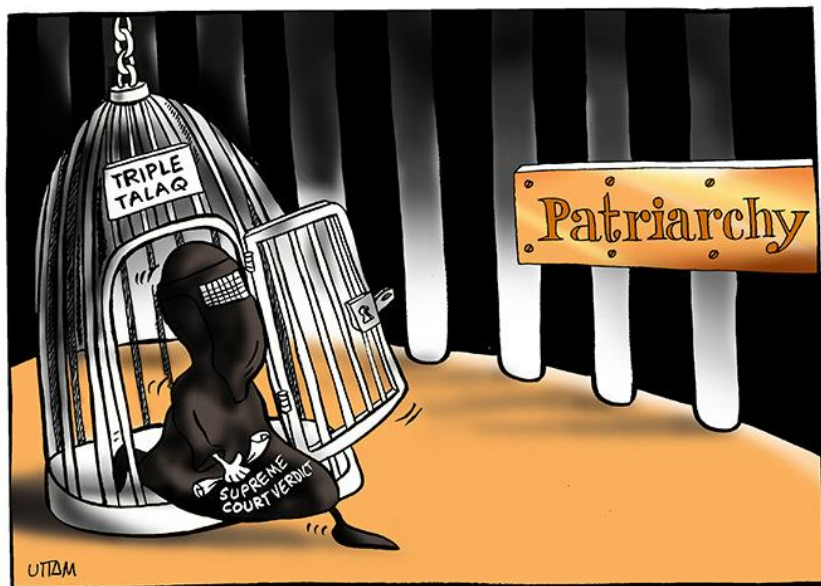
“TALAQ”, “TALAQ” , “TALAQ”

Triple Talaq, an issue of concern for over 65 years for Muslim women comprising approximately 8% of country's total population as per 2011 census, was contested after a long duration of suffering silence in India's apex court by Shayara Bano, the crusader complainant of the case.

What is Triple Talaq?

The Muslim personal laws holds three forms of talaq (divorce): Ahsan, Hasan and Talaq-e-Biddat (triple or instant talaq). Ahsan and Hasan are revocable. Biddat (pronouncing divorce in one go by the husband) is irrevocable.

Biddat is considered 'sinful,' but permissible in Islamic law. An anecdote in this context is about two men meeting in Medinah. The first man asks whether the second has divorced his wife, to which the latter replies that he has done so a thousand times. The man was produced before Caliph Umar, who whipped him. After the lashing, Umar told the man "triple talaq will suffice you." The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) holds that for the Hanafis, who make up more than 90% Sunnis in India, triple talaq is a matter of faith followed for 1,400 years.



Court Proceedings

On October 16, 2015 Supreme court registered a *suo motu* public interest litigation (PIL) petition titled 'In Re: Muslim Women's Quest for Equality' to examine whether arbitrary divorce, polygamy and nikah halala violate women's dignity.

The court took it as an opportunity to bring in the matter of gender equality which was not addressed in both Shah Bano and Danial Latifi cases. The former initiated the need for a uniform civil code whereas the latter upheld the right of Muslim women to maintenance till re-marriage. This was backed by Muslim women. This case became important as centre claimed that triple talaq is not fundamental to Islam and promised to bring in a new divorce law.

The government argued that Muslim marriage and divorce is codified under Section 2 of the Shariat Act of 1937 and came within the ambit of 'law' under Article 13 of the Constitution. Hence, they should abide by the principles of dignity and non-discrimination. The members of AIMPLB however are against any form of intervention

The court was of the view that these instances of gender discrimination such as polygamy and 'arbitrary divorce' could constitute a violation of Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution.

The order mentioned that the Supreme Court had, on an earlier occasion, observed that "practice of polygamy is injurious to public morals and can be superseded by the State just as practice of 'sati'

It was further observed the court said, “that conduct rules providing for monogamy irrespective of religion are valid and could not be struck down on the ground of violation of personal law of Muslims”. (Javed vs State of Haryana, 2003)

Case studies

1. Shayara Bano

It was Shayara Bano who challenged the controversial practice before India’s top court. Shayara, was divorced by her husband, Rizwan Ahmed, by pronouncing the word talaq thrice through a letter sent to her on October 15, 2015 when she was visiting her parents’ house.

Shayara, filed a petition against triple talaq, halala and polygamy in the Supreme Court on February 23, 2016.

After divorcing her, Rizwan, took away her two kids-- Irfan , 13, and Muskan, 11, due to which she suffered from depression for many months. She alleged her in-laws also forced her to undergo abortions six times, mainly ‘with the intention of killing’ her. A distraught Shayara even consulted a local cleric. But he told her that the talaq was valid.

1. Gulshan Parveen

Gulshan Parveen of Rampur filed a petition in Supreme Court asking for abolishing triple talaq. In 2015, she alleged her husband sent her a talaqnama on a Rs 10 stamp paper when she was at her parents’ home. She added that she was subjected to domestic violence by him for dowry for over two years.

1. Ishrat Jahan

Ishrat Jahan was divorced by her husband Murtaza through a phone call from Dubai.

In April 2015, her husband of 15 years, Murtaza, called and uttered the talaq word thrice before hanging up. Murtaza had allegedly married another woman and took away their four children with him.

The relationship between the couple got bitter after they had three daughters. Murtaza wanted to get married once again in the hope that the new wife will bear him a son, and though he and Ishrat had a son in 2010, the relationship never improved.

1. Atiya Sabri

Atiya Sabri, a resident of Sahranpur in Western Uttar Pradesh is the last petitioner in the case. Her husband Wajid Ali in 2015 sent her a piece of paper announcing he was divorcing her. She approached the Supreme Court challenging the divorce and said that triple talaq violates fundamental rights of women.

She alleged that her in-laws tried to poison her and she had to be hospitalised. Her husband was arrested later and a trial is on.

1. Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA)

The top court made the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA) a party in the case after taking cognisance of a survey which said 92% of Muslim women want abolition of triple talaq.

Led by Zakia Soman, the Mumbai-based autonomous body has been fighting for citizenship rights of Muslims since it was formed in January 2007. The organisation claims it has over 30,000 members in 15 states. “It’s a good and balanced decision. Now we hope and expect the government to make a law against triple talaq the soonest,” said Naseem Akhtar, the Jaipur convener of the organisation.

The Judgement:

On 22 August 2017 the Supreme Court of India declared the practice of Triple Talaq as unconstitutional by 3:2 majority. Justices Kurian Joseph, UU Lalit and RF Nariman delivered the majority Judgment. Chief Justice Khehar and Justice Abdul Nazeer dissented.

Chief Justice JS Khehar and Justice Abdul Nazeer argued that triple talaq is not regulated by the 1937 Act, rather it is an integral and constituent part of personal law. They went on to hold that since the practice of triple talaq was not contrary to public order, morality and health, it enjoyed the constitutional protection granted by Article 25. In 1906, the Bombay High Court’s SL Batchelor held the practice of *Talaq-e-Bidaat* to be “good in law, though bad in theology”, while dismissing the plaint of a Muslim woman.

Surprisingly, they also held that the practice was not amenable to a challenge on grounds of Articles 14, 15 and 21, because these provisions are limited to State actions, whereas the practice of triple talaq regulated the conduct of private parties. In so doing, the minority opinion held that the practice of triple talaq was not inconsistent with constitutional values and fundamental rights, and directed the government to consider legislating on the issue.

The majority opinions have been commended by many, including feminist legal activists, as a necessary step in reforming inherently patriarchal and discriminatory practices, and rightly so. The issue of gender justice against ‘whimsical and capricious’ act of patriarchy was brought to table.

Limitations pertaining to the judgement

Feminists and other activists wanted to sort the problem of gender injustice in our society owing to these customs. The narrow view called for targeting the ritual as discriminatory and a threat to fundamental rights. However, the broader view included the debate of whether the state has any right to interfere in matters of religion which further bounded the court to take aggressive measures against it.

As we celebrate this judgment, I hope that at the next available opportunity the Supreme Court gives issues of sex discrimination a fair consideration.

Another limitation that occurred to me was India’s sluggishness to tackle such discriminatory cases even after 70 years of independence and having one of most celebrated constitutions. The Arab states that have laws against instant triple *talaq* include Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The southeast Asian countries that have abolished instant triple *talaq* include Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines. Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka also have enacted legislations against the practice.

Conclusion

The judgement against a discriminatory practice, irrespective of its limitations is celebrated by the masses. Shayaro Bano with many other women had won the war after fighting many battles. Some of their statements:

“I welcome and support the judgment. This is a historic day for Muslim women,” Bano said after the verdict.

“It’s a beginning towards the abolition of triple talaq in the country. A law against triple talaq is what we wanted and the court has directed the government to do the same...The cruelty that was happening against women in the name of triple talaq, wherein they were thrown out of the house like a pair of shoes, will now end,” said the MBA hailing from Jaipur.

These happy voices reverberated loud enough to break the shackles of patriarchy.

Deepangna Singhi

BA(H) Political Science, 2nd year

References

1. <https://www.firstpost.com/india/supreme-court-verdict-on-triple-talaq-a-legal-reading-judgment-welcome-but-fails-to-address-institutional-sex-discrimination-3963863.html> Accessed on 31.03.2018
2. <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/pakistan-egypt-among-19-countries-that-have-abolished-triple-talaq-supreme-court-verdict-4808780/> Accessed on 31.03.2018

The Evolving Idea of India in the Age of Media Illiteracy

What is this oft quoted idea of India? Is it just a geographical boundary? The colour of my passport? Or is it an identity we were all born with ; a spirit that was inculcated in us since we were born? To me, India is more than just an idea, it is an identity that was formulated and fostered in me by a multifaceted process of socialisation. I was taught to nurture and value the idea of a free democratic India that grants me justice, liberty, equality and fraternity- the pillars of our Constitution and polity.

But these time tested ideals suffer a significant setback in a post-truth world defined by fake news where politically polarised emotions overshadow the frail old grasp of rationality. With every scroll on social media , I perceive a diverse passionate and highly opinionated India. An India where debates are popular. Amartya Sen didn't call us 'The Argumentative Indian' for nothing. But today's political climate is not argumentative, rather it manifests an unnecessary sense of aggression ; a combative spirit that instead of stimulating a free flow of thoughts encourages regimentation and an undeniable uniformity of thought. To be unique is to be mocked in today's world. For instance criticising the dominant narrative in any way results in one's inbox being barraged by a slew of nasty comments. The extent of hate varies from being labelled a 'high browed liberal' to hateful and often graphic threats pressurising individuals to keep their opinions to themselves.

In this paradigm it is imperative to discuss an often neglected aspect of social media that is so very often made a Goliath of. I was born into a liberal minded intellectual family. I took my liberal ideas for granted due to my political socialisation . Twitter, despite all its faults, has granted me a broader perspective of my world. When I was first attacked by an ultra-right-wing fundamentalist on Twitter, I fully grappled the tense underlying conflict that was brewing in Indian politics, and sure enough, it was this underlying strife that manifested itself in the 2014 general elections. Social media has transformed social issues into broad based social movements. Take the Nirbhaya rape case as an example. It led to an unprecedented mass movement that held the entire union government hostage and changed the way brutality against women was perceived in the world. The ultimate power of social media lies in its ability to change perceptions. After all mankind is the product of the perceptions they garner and manifest.

However in the era of fake news, the concept of media literacy is not a luxury but a necessity. Blind adherence to slogans such as "Ab ki bar Modi Sarkar" and right wing domination of social media spheres have won historic



mandates. This phenomena is not endemic to underprivileged sections rather, even the intelligentsia often fall prey to dubious articles shared on facebook. Thus the promulgation of media literacy is imperative in the information age.

Media literacy, however must not be associated with blind criticism of absolutely anything and everything. It is rather the practice of discerning and using your rational faculty to analyse a situation, and if it meets the high standards of your verification, you must accept it. Or else Mr Donald Trump with his fake news, lying media, and utter disregard for facts would be the most

media literate man in the world. All form of media, including advertisements is a hyperbolic mirror of society. It reflects the developments we sense in society. Take the Liril ad. In the 1970's, it outraged public opinion to see a bikini clad girl having fun under a waterfall. Today, most of you won't even remember it as it is no longer perceived as abnormal.

This raises the question, can this critical faculty, necessary for a media literate world be developed through the introduction of another course or class to our already burdened curriculum? No, rather it should be a natural product of our formal education. History, political science and sociology's function is not to make us learn a bunch of facts but should rather create a broad framework in our minds that will allow us to use our historical perspective and history lessons to question the events of the present.

Social media is a double edged sword. I may not agree with all I hear on these platforms, but I must know their point of view to hold them accountable. And this is my very idea of India. A chaotic conundrum that believes in liberty with restriction, equality with positive discrimination and is a federation with a Unitarian spirit

India, unlike western paradigms cannot be programmed through linear equations or algorithms. Test cricket is highly unpopular in India, yet we are the No. 1 test ranked country. Our lack of gender diversity is often criticised, yet the majority of our bank CEOs, arguably the most misogynist of industries, are women. Our own country's health services creak and crumble, yet 36% of all NHS consultants are Indians, we riot, fight and squabble, yet remain a thriving democracy whilst Russia, Brazil, Pakistan fall to authoritarianism. Thus the question 'Has the idea of India failed?' cannot be answered because it is the wrong question to ask. The correct question is – "can the idea of India be allowed to fail?"

India is a bundle of contradictions, it is the world's greatest experiment but an experiment that must succeed as it questions the traditional one dimensional beliefs and practices of the west while embracing a unique liberal spirit. We live in a country that was built by some of the greatest minds in the world. To let that idea of India fail is not an option. To let it fall into the hands of communalism, mindless intolerance, and mind numbing uniformity is not a choice. We are the children of a vast diverse accommodating nation. A nation that will accept our flaws and amplify our strengths. A nation that thrives on its diversity and in spite of the world's harshest deliberations continues to survive and thrive. It is a nation that does not allow an authoritarian to sit in its highest office. A nation that allows a naïve 19 year old student to exercise her freedom of expression to question the very basis of this great country.

It embraces the the teeming intellectual spirit of its academicians while acknowledging the needs and demands of the illiterate puchkawala on the streets. Though this idea, this dream of India that I treasure and love is challenged everyday by social media, communal politics, divisive ideologies and intolerance, I know, as history has proven time and again, in spite of the world's harshest criticism and the world's gravest doubts, the idea of India will always survive. It will survive through those who encourage us to question our surroundings. It will thrive on the thoughts of discerning audiences, readers and will be carried forward and celebrated though 1.2 billion people who have made this country their own. As said by Emily Dickenson , "you may call me a mindless optimist, but I ask you, never question the audacity of hope. For Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul - and sings the tunes without the words - and never stops at all."

Suhasini Das Gooptu
B.A (Honours) Political Science, Third year

Is war an option? : Debates in the aftermath of Pulwama

The Pulwama attack was followed by a feverish call for war and military action against Pakistan. Those favouring war, must fathom its impact and think rationally and logically with due concern towards the end result, keeping all parameters in mind. War always has a cost attached to it and is India capable of bearing that cost? India cannot wake up one morning and decide to go to war. Is the terror act in Pulwama an act of war? In one sense, the attack in Pulwama may not be an act of war because though the number of brave Indians lost was far too many, Parliament carries an indelible significance of India's nationhood. On the other hand, it's a challenge to India's military power and spoils its image both at national and international level.

Four issues need to be taken into consideration while coming to a decision.

First and foremost, what is the desired end state? Is it the destruction of the Pakistan army or an action that buys a greater peaceful coexistence? Second, what would be the economic and social impact after the war? While presently India enjoys thorough international support but we cannot predict US, China and Russia's future interests. China who is an all weather ally of Pakistan will always favour Pakistan due to its own economic and geopolitical stakes in Islamabad. The US, the only hegemon and most developed nation, needs Pakistan in its talk with Taliban and hence there are limits to its support to India. Russia needs Pakistan to play an intermediary role in Kabul after America's exit. Finally, should calculated and rational thinking decide the future or should public pressure and electoral calculations be the catalysts? The answers to these questions are governed by following facts. If escalation occurs through kinetic action, there would be a loss of human lives. In terms of economic terms, the 1999 Kargil conflict made India poorer by many tens of thousands of crores. More importantly, we lost 527 brave Indians trying to take those hills.

Let's suppose we declare war, China is clearly with Pakistan and even if they just start massing troops on our eastern borders, what will we do? We do not have the material capacity to fight a two-front war. For such condition, we have to be prepared and must have the capacity to prevail in it. Only then does war become an option. So, is war an option? Of course it is, with the above points rationally thought through. The 'reformation' of Pakistan vis-à-vis India is not possible but this may get us some years of peace. The peace can prevail by managing our relations with other countries in cordial and healthy manner. It would subsequently boost India's acceptance as a deterrent to Pakistan's stance towards India.

Mansi Sharma

BA(H) political science, First Year

AN ACT OF GOD!
The 100 days Farmers Protest



Remember when several thousand farmers reached Delhi for the **KISAN MUKTI MARCH** demanding a special session in Parliament on agrarian crisis to pass two bills relating to that of Farm Loan Waiver and Institutional reforms to not put farmers in debt again in November 2018? The Nashik to Mumbai Farmers March in April 2018 infact was the first mobilisation of these farmers to pressurise the government which had been neglecting their voices. Rewinding a little back, well before all this, more than 200 Farmers from Tamil Nadu travelling to Delhi just to get their voices heard resorted to strange methods of protest at Jantar Mantar. They even went to the extent of standing naked in front of the ever prestigious and most honoured Institution of the country 'The Parliament'.

Hailing from an agricultural family based in Tamil Nadu, it is obvious my stand is definitely with them and I actively participated in their protests. I will thus give a first hand experience of the same and the reasons why they were here. Why are the demands addressed to the government and how could the latter help them ? What did the farmers demand ?

It might be surprising why is it that all of a sudden, there is an active resistance by the farmers. However such events are highly appreciative as they now recognise themselves as citizens in a solemnly resolved Socialist Democratic Republic fighting to secure their rights, justice, equality, liberty and fraternity.

It raises an alarming question as politics plays in the forefront - Whether only the current government is to be blamed for not acknowledging them as a part of the nation or the entire political paradigm is responsible for the same?

The high rates of farmer suicides of 45 per day is petrifying. The suicides are a consequence of the agrarian distress which the country is facing and which is at its peak . The farming community is marginalised and prone to many oppressions particularly of women. The history of farmers distress can be traced back to pre independence.

Agriculture, as we are all aware was exploitative. The Britishers not only introduced plantation cropping but neglected all the endemic varieties of grains, pulses, seeds, fruits which wreaked havoc on our ecosystem. Certain varieties of plants and trees that were introduced were highly destructive like the Prosopis Julifora, which can poison the groundwater level to many sq kms and has been a main concern of water scarcity in many district.

With Independence, land reforms were taken up and agriculture was seen as complementary to Industrial growth- the surplus of the former processed the latter and priority was given to the latter. The agriculture growth was stagnant until the Green Revolution after which the reforms led to India achieving a Food Security status and thereby that of a major exporter too.

However it can also be said that the seeds of the distress was sown during this phase itself.

The green revolution experimented with High Yielding Variety of seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, modern technological base of ploughing and harvesting which led to mono-cropping, reducing diversity in production, damaging the soil fertility and toxication of food which in turn affected the productivity in the long run. With mono-cropping the farmers couldn't easily shift to another crop if the price realised becomes unremunerative.

The 1991 economic reforms exacerbated the crisis. The Indian economy was now open and the primacy of import tariffs to protect the native farmers was done away with. Within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the Uruguay Round discussions of 1986 to 1993 aimed at cutting down of agricultural subsidies provided by the developing countries while the developed ones continued to pay their farmers with high subsidies. This compelled farmers to sell their output at the determined international low price which was lower than the domestic price in India.

The Indian government has not made any import regulations regarding the same yet. Technology being highly obsolete we are still dependant on the other nations for inputs such as seeds, insemination for animals, fertilizers etc which come at a very high price. The size of the landholding has also decreased giving rise to a larger share of marginal farmers.

Thus the farmer is stuck between the devil and the deep blue sea.

The market price of the farmers' output is very low while the input cost is high for which farmers resort to borrowing. As banks do not lend to tenants, borrowing, especially from the informal sector adds to their plight, denying them access to the institutional credit facilities. The farmers not able to realise the price for their output thus are stuck in the debt cycle. As a result, the debt cycle is the inevitable outcome for such farmers.

There is a multiplicity of factors, apart from policy loopholes and man made elements.

Agriculture being a seasonal occupation is dependant on other natural factors as well. There could be a drought, cyclone, floods or failure in monsoons which may lead to crop failure. The farmers do not have the means to predict them and often their produce does not reap remuneration. The deepening crisis in farming today is because the nation faced 2 major droughts very recently. The one in Tamil Nadu saw the worst drought in 135 years. Further, the recent Gaja and Ockhi cyclones destroyed the farm lands and devastated the environment causing loss to life and property worth more than a thousand crores.

Thus it is an Act of God!

To ponder about how farmers could possibly repay their loans is a looming question.

The government promises insurance which the farmers do not get as the insurance companies evade directives through various reasons and poor meteorological detection technology prevents early detection of calamities.

Thus, the farmer's cry for help to the Government for loan waivers falls on deaf ears. The loan waivers are not a better solution economically but the question arises how would the farmers escape the trap.

Various Farmers Assistance programmes which the government undertook lately are petty and futuristic rather than compensating for their past mistakes and loss of farmers.

Shouldn't India as a welfare state come to the rescue of the farmers ?

It was disheartening to see lady farmers protesting half naked to gain media attention, they slept on the roads of Jantar Mantar for over 100 days. They ate rats, snakes, brought with them the skulls of already deceased farmers who committed suicide, stood naked in front of the parliament,

were arrested for more than 15 times for voicing out their grievances against the government. However, they were proud of their ability to collectivise and stage an uproar against the government.

The government thus should come up with various price support schemes to address their issues in the long term.

Although issues like crop failure due to droughts and other natural factors cannot be responded very quickly, the government can step up measures like minimum support price and others.

If loan waivers are the only way to keep the farmers occupied, there isn't any other alternative than this except for responding positively to their demand.

Jai Jawan ! Jai Kisaan!!
Hail the Farming Community.

Honeyshya Raj
BA (Honours) Political Science, Third year

Farmer's Predicament

In 2003, National Sample Survey Organisation in a special 2003 Situation Assessment study reported that 40 percent of Indian farmers, given a choice, would 'take up some other career'.

The farming community of our country has always been affected by a variety of issues which are a matter of national concern. However, the kind of mass suicides that have taken place in last few years have brought the plight of farmers into mainstream national attention. The government's response to the issue has been adequate, and as such has been heavily criticised. Journalist and scholar P. Sainath said "This country could have a joint special session of Parliament at midnight to pass the GST bill, but it could not find a single day, for its tens of millions of farmers in the past fourteen years." The problems with the agriculture sector today are wide ranging. There is a disjuncture between farmers' interests and the interest of the political representatives. A large share of farmer suicides have been reported in those areas which are relatively agriculturally developed, which have seen strong peasant movements and where the leadership of parties come from farming communities, as pointed out by K.C Suri in his article titled "Political Economy of Agrarian Distress."



With agriculture no longer viewed as a conduit for upward mobility, the nature of farmers' demands has changed to seeking options outside of agriculture. Farmer's interests hardly find space in the agendas and statements of a large number of political representatives who

claim to come from a farmer's background. The recent Kisan Mukti March in Delhi organized by All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee in November 2018 demanded better crop prices, drought relief and loan waivers, and a three week parliament session on agrarian distress apart from demands of bills on debt and remunerative prices. It also addressed issues of water, land reforms, the rights of women, Dalit and Adivasi farmers.

In dealing with the crisis in agriculture where farmers have to face tough competition due to liberalisation policies, it becomes important to recognise that what kind of future do we want for our agriculture- corporate driven or community driven. The findings of the NSSO, that the article begins with, is reflective of the hopelessness and despair that the farming community is faced with. In all reality, their next generation would not want to take up farming as a profession. The lack of any form of institutional support- education, skill training, among others- means that abandonment of the primary sector would not tackle the problem, and would increase unemployment, population in slums, and poverty.

The nature of the farmer's protest has changed with time. One major change that has taken place over the years, is that large section of middle class have also joined hands in support of farmers. One such amorphous organization is "Nation for Farmers", which is a farmers' organisation that includes people from all sections of society like doctors, teachers, students, lawyers, among others from different states of the country.

The increased visibility of the many issues that plagues agriculture and the community associated with it has brought one fundamental question to the fore- if the sufferings of the people who form the very basis of our economy are ignored, then how does our great nation uphold its constitutional values of equality and justice for all ?

Pallavi Raj

B.A (hons) Political Science

IIIrd Year



I AM A MARKS-IST.

The educational society is based on the idea of 'marks', an ideology called 'marks-ism'. Marks define people's status in the educational society, economic society, social society, political society or society as a whole. The members of the educational society who fail in accumulating marks become the 'proletariat' - the have not's, and the ones who succeed in accumulating marks become the 'bourgeois'. The educational system exploits the proletariats by not granting marks that they deserve in return of the labour that they put in. They are granted less than sufficient marks. The bourgeois (have's) exercise dominance and control over the proletariats in all aspects of life.

This is a historical process that has existed ever since the educational society came into existence and the bourgeois have been primitively accumulating marks and exploiting the proletariats. I cannot help but identify myself as a MARKS-IST because it is an ascriptive identity. I was born with this identity, I cannot change this identity, the educational system that I am part of rests or is based on 'marks-ism'.

In order to end this exploitative educational system, a non- grading revolution is necessary which will eventually lead to the dictatorship of the proletariats or the non-marks-ist.

So, while I know that we are all marks-ists not by choice, we can be 'aspiring non-marks-ists by choice'. All of us should focus on gathering knowledge, wisdom in their true sense and not prioritise on 'accumulation of marks'.

Jayashree

BA Hons Political Science, Second year

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

The Doctrine of *Terra Nullius* has long supported appropriation of forest lands by the Government over which no crystallised rights of property could be established by any person/s. The British government set up the forest department in 1864. The forest area in India amounts to around 23%. The state has appropriated the estimate amount of forest area that has led to exploitation and deprivation of forest dwelling communities. In 1970s the British government introduced the Conservation of Forests and Natural Ecosystems Bill but it failed and the Bill lapsed, pushing consolidated forest legislation into ignored areas of legislative business. The Indian Forests Act 1927 continued to be the applicable legislation supplemented by the Forest Conservation Act of 1980. This act did not realize the rights of self dwelling communities and declared encroachment into protected areas a punishable offence. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, is a key piece of forest legislation passed in India on 18 December 2006. It is called the Forest Rights Act abbreviated as FRA or is called the Tribal Rights Act, the Tribal Bill, and the Tribal Land Act. The law concerns the rights of forest-dwelling communities to land and other resources, denied to them over decades as a result of the continuance of colonial forest laws in India.

There are two extreme points of view in the conservation debate. One is that all forests should be handed over to communities. The other suggests that no rights must be recognised in forests and all people must simply be moved out. However, the Act will adversely affect the country's natural ecosystems and wildlife.

Brazil started recognising the rights of its forest dwellers over their land in 1980. Mexico, after decades of struggle, began the process in 1986, and Bolivia a decade later. India, on the other hand, waited till 2006 to enact a law for the same. The traditional rights of tribals and other forest dwellers were taken from them right from the 1850s during the British rule, a policy continued through various laws even in independent India.

The Indian Forest Act, 1927 was created to serve the British need for timber. It sought to override customary rights and forest management systems by declaring forests state property and exploiting their timber. According to this law, Forest Settlement Officers had the authority to settle the rights of the dwellers. The same model was subsequently built into the Wildlife Protection Act, passed in 1972, with similar consequences. The passing of forest rights were the result of several years of sacrifice by the forest dwellers and numerous activists and intellectuals working on this issue. The Forest Rights Act seeks to recognise the rights of over 200 million people in forestlands who were disenfranchised during the colonial era. Forest acts had mixed reactions. While some groups acknowledged it others believed that the surrender of control of the forests over to the tribal communities is hazardous to the natural resources and forests of the country.

Law and its provisions:

The objectives of the Forest Rights Act are laid out in the Preamble of the Act and seem ambitious considering the scenario in which the Act was passed. They are : to provide the dwellers the rights and responsibility for sustainable use and conservation of resources, to strengthen the conservation regime by decision making process, ensuring the livelihood and food security of forest dwellers, to undo the historical injustice by recognising their rights on their ancestral lands, to recognise that forest dwellers are fundamental to the sustainability of the forest ecosystem. These objectives help to recognize the rights of forest dwellers and to recognize the shortcomings of the Preamble of this act. Thus, the Act sees the forest jurisprudence in India moving away from the unjust framework laid down by the British. The Forest Rights Act seeks to provide the rights of conservation and sustainable use to the dwellers to enhance the regime.

Some salient features of this act are: Grant legal recognition to the rights of traditional forest dwellers, in an attempt to correct injustice caused by the forest laws prior to the Forest Rights Act; and taking the first step towards giving forest dwellers and the public some authority and power in forest management and wildlife conservation.

Eligibility criteria includes: Primarily residing in forests or forest lands; and Dependent on forests and forestland for his/her livelihood ("bona fide livelihood needs"). To prove these conditions a person must have a place to live in the forest, area of cultivation, grazing purposes etc. and sale for crops for survival.

Second qualification includes: To be declared as "Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribe" (a) that you are a member of a Scheduled Tribe; or (b) that you are residing in an area where they are Scheduled and To be as declared as "Other Traditional Forest Dweller" - that the conditions mentioned above have been fulfilled for a minimum period of 75 years (3 generations) as of the 13th day of December 2005.

It is important to make forest dwellers true partners in the development process. They should have rights to manage forests sustainably. The development projects should include right to livelihood and policies and decisions should be based on a consensual dialogue. Therefore besides institutional and procedural democracy, substantial democracy calls for involving the tribes in implementation of the Forest Rights Act. The Act has opposite outcome — it will make them even more vulnerable to eviction and will lead to the denial of their customary access to forests. Also in some areas, this may lead to an increase in encroachments of forest land and the conflict between people and the government.

The Forest Rights Act needs to be amended to accommodate self-governance of tribes without which the otherwise remarkable intentions behind the statute will not be catered to.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. <http://actionaid.org/india/publications/implementation-status-forest-rights-act-india>

II. <http://fra.org.in/document/Community%20Forest%20Rights%20under%20FRA%20Citizens%20Report%202013.pdf>

III. **Section 2(f) to Section 3(1)** of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights Act) 2006.

IV. Ramchandra Guha, Forestry Debate and Draft Forest Act - Who Wins, Who Loses? , Economic and Political weekly August 1994, p. 2192.

V. Madhu Sarin, Oliver Springate-Baginski, "India's Forest Rights Act - The Anatomy of a necessary but not Sufficient Institutional Reform", www.ippg.uk/papers/dp.45.pdf (July 2010)

VI. The Council for Social Development (2010): "Summary Report on Implementation of the Forest Rights Act", National / Current Situation, September, 2010

Madhulika Sharma
BA(H) Political Science, Third Year

India's Blue Economy: An initiative towards Maritime Diplomacy

The 15TH BIMSTEC joint statement gave huge importance to *Blue Economy* - "We recall the directives of the Leaders during their Retreat to explore ways to deepen cooperation and agree to constitute a Working Group to determine the modalities in this regard."¹ But why so?

A major segment of India's Blue Economy narrative includes primary focus on the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). With China subtly expanding its influence in the IOR evident through the increasing presence of Chinese warships², or operation of fire-drills³, the IOR has become an area of strategic relevance.

We need to tackle two questions to understand how the IOR is linked with India's foreign policy and maritime diplomacy on the one hand and how it is a potential area for India to develop its Blue Economy.

- What is Blue Economy? What is its significance to India?
- What is the strategic importance of IOR? How India can use it to advance its Maritime Diplomacy?

Blue Economy and India

According to the World Bank Group, Blue Economy is 'the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health.' It includes Maritime Transport, fisheries, renewable energy, Climate Change et cetera. In a gist, it aims to provide sustainability and productivity from oceans to the nations.

India is in sharp contrast to China which has its 'string of pearls' policy in this area. The idea of Blue Economy seems very novel in the Indian policy circuit with a primary focus on port developments. In 2015, though India crystallized its initiative with the Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) project and Coastal Economic Zones (CEZs), it still needs to buckle up its capacity and formulate its policies and intentions on the Blue Economy clearly for the Neighbourhood and the rest of the world.

The Development of the Blue Economy will firstly help India domestically to create employment and tap the potential that marine sector services have. India with 7,516.6 km coastline has the seventh longest coastline in Asia, which covers nine states and two union territories.

Thus, India needs a medium to assert its leadership in the subtle race of Blue Economy, which the Indian Ocean can provide.

The Indian Ocean Region

The Indian Ocean is considered to be the third largest oceanic water body which connects the nations from the African subcontinent, Asia, and Australasia. The Indian Ocean Conference held in 2017 in The Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, while highlighting on its potential clearly elaborated that IOR is of paramount strategic importance to the countries which are mostly middle-income countries looking for a boost-up to their economy. It is not only important to progress but also an opportune window for collaborations to harness Blue Economy collectively.

The Indian Ocean is of enduring relevance because of the following reasons; First, it is the crossway to trade and commerce happening from one part to the other part of the globe. The Strait of Malacca itself which is a key oil trade chokepoint, linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans, allows the transit of 16 million barrels per day of petroleum and other liquids, making the second largest oil-chokepoint in the world.

Apart from this, the IOR is highly rich in natural resources like zinc, cobalt, manganese, and the likes which are duly exploited by the bordering countries.

Lastly, the IOR with the cultural diverse littoral nations provides an opportunity for collaborations and progress. The countries of the IOR particularly India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Maldives share similar goals of growth and development. The idea of the 'Developing' Nations and the pursuit of development- be it to mitigate disasters, develop

infrastructure, strengthen economy et cetera can give a narrative on which India can assume leadership on the global platform.

India's Interests and the IOR

In the present scenario, from the perspective of security, IOR is one of the most sub-charged region. It is the possible ground of confrontation between the major Asian powers: India and China, and the other actors of the South-Asia. International Piracy is on the rise and so is the presence of extra-regional actors like the United States of America (USA), Japan and Australia.

India does aspire to be a credible leader in the region which was evidently reflected in the expansion of its Maritime strategy in 2015 called 'Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy', where cognizance of the changing dynamics in the IOR was taken care.

In the strategy, it not only accepted the concept of the Indo-Pacific region, but also took recognition of the Red Sea, and South-east Indian Ocean for its strategic operations. Also, it emphasized its role as the 'net-security provider' in IOR. "The term net security describes the state of actual security available in an area, upon balancing against the ability to monitor, contain, and counter all of these."

India will be benefitted heavily if it plays on its 'technologically advanced and knowledge building capacity' edge that it possesses. As

¹ 15th BIMSTEC Joint Statement, 2017; XV Point regarding 'Blue Economy and Mountain Economy'; accessible at <http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/28862/Joint+Statement+of+the+15th+BIMSTEC+Ministerial+Meeting+August+1+2017>

² 'From submarines to warships: How Chinese navy is expanding its footprint in Indian Ocean'; Hindustan Times, July 2017, accessible at

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "India's Indian Ocean policy would be based on building up India's own capabilities, helping regional partners with capacity building, collective action, sustainable development, and cooperation with non-Indian Ocean region actors to ensure greater transparency, rule of law, and the peaceful resolution of disputes."

The development of more institutions like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) would be needed for proper governance and coordination, since China has already gathered a lot of goodwill and influence by investing in infrastructure projects and giving loans on easy repayment conditions to the Indian Ocean countries. Other initiatives, like that of International Training Centre for Operational Oceanography (ITCOcean) are to be strengthened and encouraged on a regional level.

By prioritizing the Blue Economy, and the pursuits of maritime diplomacy in the Indian Ocean through collaboration, coordination and connection, India will not only be attaining the National Goals of Growth, Development of Infrastructure, inclusiveness, and mere goodwill of SDGs, but also re-asserting its influence in the region as a 'power to be reckoned with' especially when the power struggle with China is soft, and yet aggressive

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/from-submarines-to-warships-how-chinese-navy-is-expanding-its-footprint-in-indian-ocean/story-QeJp31UtBphNjya2z8L7gM.html>

³ 'Chinese Navy Holds Rare Live-Fire Drill in Western Indian Ocean'; The Diplomat, August 28, 2017 accessible at <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/chinese-navy-holds-rare-live-fire-drill-in-western-indian-ocean/>

Noor Bhatnagar

B.A. (Honours) Political Science, Third year

Ode to Humanity

On my bedroom wall hangs this huge poster of Batman that says, “A hero can be anyone, even a man doing something as simple and reassuring as putting a coat around a little boy's shoulder to let him know the world hasn't ended.”

Since childhood, I have always fascinated by superheroes. But out of hoard of heroes I came to admire, one left his indelible impression right on that small space between the intertwined veins and blood ,deep inside the atria and ventricles of my fist sized heart -Jean Valjean, the protagonist of Les Misérables, masterpiece of Victor Hugo. I was 12 when I read the book, a minced down, adapted-for-children version of the original. The story of a man who spent 19 years of his life in jail for stealing bread to satiate the hungry stomachs of his sister and family, the story of a man who was struck by tragedies again and again due to his compassion and staunch principles...I remember the 12 year old impressionable me sitting on my Grandpa's lap and crying how unfair and cruel life has been for him. Grandpa listened me out with a smile, wiped my tears soaked cheeks and said, “Agreed. Jean Valjean had a rough life. But think of all the lives he transformed throughout his journey. He was a hero. Not all heroes fly around in a cape and beat up hundreds of villains in a go. There are some whose superpower is compassion, the ultimate weapon of mankind. He was a hero like many around us and, hence you should rather be proud of him rather than feeling sorry for his fate”

Six years later, I read about the heinous murder of Madhu, a mentally ill Adivasi residing in Attappadi, Kerala, beaten to death for stealing rice and curry provisions from shops to sooth yearnings of his starved stomach. What is so new about that? History of wars ,concentration camps and riots reeking of murder, have already proved that humans has long lost its humanity. Even calling this animalistic would be deceiving ,since animals hurt and hunt only to appease their



hunger while we hurt and hunt to appease our diabolical instincts . But what was so appalling about this murder was how a group of youngsters, future flag bearers of our nation and world, took selfies and videos with their prey tied down, right before hacking him to death. The visuals say it all- a frail man who is nothing more than a bag of bones, tied up with his torn lungi,his eyes wide with fear and the smug faces of young 'knights in shining armour' who captured him. Another chapter to add to their mortifying account of hooliganism.

'Humane' is among the many root words of the term 'human'. Since when did we forget the very definition of what defines us? I presume we began losing our humanity the moment we dehumanized those around us and attempted to isolate ourselves in a piddling but delusively attractive shell composed of our own selfish interests. The race for power, coupled with invasion of technology and concomitant changes in lifestyle, accelerated this isolation and

dehumanization. We are now living in an increasingly aberrant world, where people are not only strangers to each other but also alien to the very elements that make them what they are. It is this evil of hatred and alienation, which is insidiously intoxicating the roots of our society, that we need to fight. This is where superheroes come in; whole lot of them - armed with compassion empathy and humaneness. Each of us can be one. Little acts of kindness and compassion, small steps are potent to weaken the evil we are waging a battle against, since it's only compassion that can expose the chinks in the armour of our enemy. So let's be heroes. Which brings me back to my hero, Jean Valjean who said, "It's nothing to die. It's frightful not to live."

Manjima A;

BA (H)Political Science , First Year

Overcoming Stereotypes

Stereotypes seem to surround us. Stereotypes are extremely generalised characteristics imposed upon groups of people because of their identity. While all stereotypes are generalizations, not all generalizations are stereotypes. Stereotypes are oversimplifications of groups of people.

Here is a guide to overcoming stereotypes that one forms about others.

When making an active effort to overcome stereotypes, remember A-B-C-D-E-F

Acknowledge

Acknowledge that you've developed a massive generalization and therefore have stereotyped people into a singular label. Often, we don't realize when we form a stereotype due to the inculcation of certain factors and ideas by societal pressures; such stereotypes are known as Implicit Bias/Stereotyping.

Project Implicit, conducted by Harvard University, studied the depths of Implicit Bias. This research produced a comprehensive test called the Implicit Association Test, which is available for free online. Once you have the results of this test, you can concentrate on the areas that are highlighted in the outcome. Apart from that, realising that a stereotype exists in your mindset is the first step towards the reformation of the same.

Be Open Minded

After you have acknowledged the areas of concern in your perception about people, open your mind. Be open to different ideas, feelings and information. Be accepting of the differences that all of us as individuals have. Listen to what people have to say about the stereotypes that you hold and understand why stereotypes are incorrect or unfair.

Communicate

Communication is important for breaking stereotypes. This step has two parts: the first requires you to make a conscious effort into thinking before speaking. Before you make a remark, ponder, whether you are implying a stereotype or whether what you think is a compliment is actually a 'positive' stereotype behind a smoke screen, like "Asians are good at math." The second part of the communication needs dialogue. Asking people about their culture, orientation, disability etc in a proper and polite manner helps one make an effort in understanding the other person and clarifies fallacies which are the root of most stereotypes.

Deconstruct

Systematically deconstruct stereotypes by putting all the aspects into perspective, comprehend them, and individually to break them. Ask the 'why' to every stereotype and eliminate it if the answer is discriminatory.

Educate

Educate yourself about the differences that people have. Learn different terminologies and ensure correct usage of the same. Read facts and differentiate between them and myths to ensure that none of your opinions is based on factually incorrect information. Educate others about yourself, to have a flow of ideas and representation of different views so that misconceptions are reduced.

Fraternize

Finally, fraternize. Interact with groups that you have inherent stereotypes against, you will learn how exaggerated some facts are and how alike yet different all of us are. The company

we keep has a huge impact on how we think and behave, so surround yourself with accepting and nurturing people who have open minds.

Surmayi Khatana
B.A. (H) Political Science, First year

Right to Privacy: Meaning and Implications

Introduction:

In a historical judgement on August 24, 2017, the Supreme Court of India, declared the Right to Privacy as a Fundamental Right. The unanimous verdict of the nine-judge Constitution Bench in this prolonged case was that the Right to Privacy was a basic human right. The court stated that the “right to be left alone” is an inalienable part of being human, it is natural and inherent; and the constitutional recognition is only to make it explicit. Formerly, it was, assumed to be a common law right. The significance of this case was brought out after the current government started to argue against the fundamentality of Right to Privacy in course of the hearings regarding the validity of the Aadhar- based unique identity scheme.[1] Aadhaar was to act as a remedy to the prevalent corruption in public distribution, money laundering and terrorism financing. In bringing this judgement, the court had to over-turn the eight-judge Bench in the M.P Sharma judgement of 1954 and six-judge Bench in the Kharak Singh judgement

of 1961, both of which delivered that privacy is not protected under the Constitution. Both judgments had concluded that privacy was not a fundamental or 'guaranteed' right.[2]

Implications of the Right to Privacy on Aadhar:

With the constitutional establishment of the Right to Privacy, the hearings on Aadhar will now continue before the already constituted three-member bench. There is now a clearer framework to refer to. The right to privacy judgement emphasises that any collection of personal data must have a legal basis. The already collected data under the Aadhar scheme lacked any such backing of the law. The very collection of a general purpose identification database is now constitutionally invalid.[3]

Sexual Orientation under Right to Privacy:

The Right to Privacy judgement contains within its clauses a very fundamental clause. It says what one does in their bedroom comes under the ambit of privacy, i.e. a person's sexual orientation is protected under the Right to Privacy. This judgement indeed brings in a rainbow of hope, if one may use the analogy, for it finally gives every citizen the freedom to be who they are without fearing any repercussions against their very identity. The judgement on Right to Privacy spoke about how discrimination based on one's sexual orientation goes against the very concept of human dignity and would be offensive to the person's self-determination and self-worth.[4]

International Significance:

The judgement has international significance, as the idea of privacy has been important one in most political discourse through the ages. It remains a major question around the globe, that whether such a right can exist in sync with the developed capabilities of various intelligence agencies that help them access and analyse minute details belonging to an individual's sphere of privacy. The age-old treatises of Political Theory that define the Social Contract and the Private Sphere are indeed important to give a direction to the idea of such a right becoming one of fundamental importance.

Thus, India's decision to declare the Right to Privacy is significant not only for its own political environment, but also for the rest of the world.

Analysis:

The Supreme Court judgement on August 24th, 2017 declaring the Right to Privacy to be a fundamental right comes as a landmark judgement that can change the course of a number of issues in the country, and the world at large. In the current scenario where the world is becoming more and more interconnected, an individual becomes largely vulnerable to a breach of privacy. Be it private, social media giants, government agencies, or any other of groups/individuals sitting in extreme parts of the globe, siphoning off of private information about individual users on the internet and off it is becoming easier and that is making the world a much more dangerous place. One, is being tracked everywhere without one's knowledge. A scary example of this prospect came up as a trend very recently, in the form of Blue Whale Game that led to several suicides all over the world. This game often infringed upon the privacy of the users or at least threatened to do so. The bold steps taken by the Indian judiciary makes it, in many ways, the most reliable institution in the country, keeping a check on both the government and the private sector, protecting the said and unsaid rights of the citizens. The Right to Privacy judgement is sure a welcome one, but as of now, very ambiguous.

[1]<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/citizen-vs-state/article19555383.ece/>

[2](<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/privacy-is-a-fundamental-right-under-article-21-rules-supreme-court/article19551224.ece>)

[3](<http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/fundamental-right-to-privacy-what-the-judgment-means-for-aadhaar-its-constitutionality-4812231/>)

[4](<https://thewire.in/170565/section-377-right-to-privacy-supreme-court/>)

Shireen Manocha

B.A. (H) Political Science Third Year

Refugee Crisis: Lessons from Africa

Today's media is truly strange. It is more powerful and dynamic than ever before and reaches out to the corners of the world. Incidents taking places many nations and shores away hit very close home. Media, today, is powerful and dynamic, and strangely enough, skewed. The problems of the world appear before us as the tips of the iceberg as they are, with a mammoth part of it out of our scrutiny, and sadly, out of our minds and hearts. For instance, take the refugee crisis.

The Refugee crisis that the world faces is not just about Syria and Europe, and Myanmar, though they are the ones most in the limelight. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) reports more than 65 million people in the world to be refugees, who, by its own definition, are people who have been forced to flee their country because of persecution, war or violence- including those seeking asylum, and also internally displaced people (IDP). To put it into perspective, this equals 24 people being displaced from their homes every minute. The Syrian refugees and the Rohingyas have garnered much international attention due to the scale and extent of these humanitarian crises. The Syrian refugee influx into Europe has, in turn resulted in what has been dubbed "The European Migrant Crisis."

The excessive focus on Europe's migrant crisis has overshadowed the efforts of many developing nations dealing with displaced people and its implications on their economies. Here, the main allusion is to the nations of the continent of Africa, which houses twenty six percent of the world's refugees in its sub-Saharan parts.

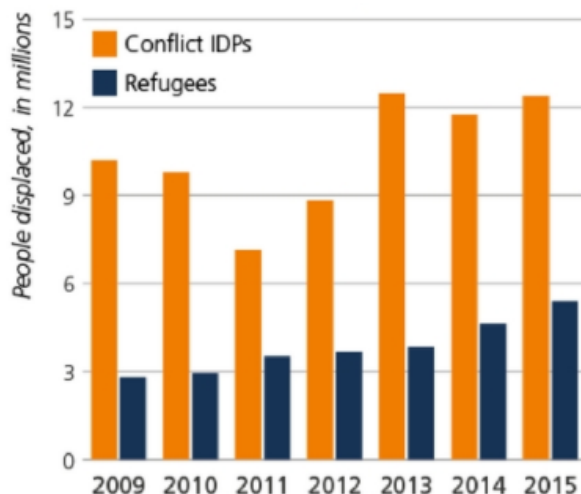
Africa is the second most conflict ridden region in the world after the Middle East, which is the major reason behind displacement of people. Political violence is not the only reason behind the African refugee problem. Environmental reasons like droughts are another vital factor, though there is no viable information about the direct influence of climatic phenomena on the displacement of people. If we come to think of it, even for the layman, it would not be too difficult to understand that floods and droughts, especially in developing countries, would be an extremely vital reason for the displacement of people, or in other terms, important 'push factors'. Environmental problems have often been causal factors for ethnic strife. 30,000 people of Uganda's Karamojo starved to death as they lost their cattle in raids among themselves or by Ethiopians, Kenyans and Sudanese who themselves did not have food.

African societies are ethnically plural and it was an almost impossible task to draw up national boundaries, after their decolonization, based on ethnicities. The newly formed nations thus inevitably pushed some tribes and ethnicities into becoming a minority within a nation's borders. Majoritarian tyranny by the socially and politically dominant tribes led to upsurge of violence and instability. The Angolan Civil War (1975-2002) led to the internal displacement of nearly four million people, along with half a million others fleeing from the country. The Rwandan genocide of 1994, which saw the mass slaughter of the Tutsis by the majoritarian Hutu government, led to the displacement of two million people from the country. Central African Republic witnessed a civil war involving the government comprising of the rebels of the Seleka coalition and the anti-Balaka militants, which has led to the displacement of nearly 1.1 million people since 2012. The violence of the militant group Boko Haram in Nigeria saw millions fleeing from the country. The conflict ridden region of Darfur has seen the movement of 2.5 million since 2003 due to the onslaught of the Janjaweed Arab militia, backed by the Sudanese army. The South Sudanese Civil War and a gradual process of desertification have led to two million people being displaced from the newest country of the world. This is just to put into perspective the gravity of the situation.

One interesting aspect about the refugee issue in Africa is that it contains within itself the countries of origin and countries of destination. The refugee flows within the continent are more than the people displaced within African nations who have sought and found refuge in neighboring nations. The Africa Report on Internal Displacement is the first of its kind report published by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Cell (IDMC) focused solely on one continent. In total, 12.4 million people are internally displaced in Africa, which is thirty percent of the global total and twice the number of African refugees.

Countries like Uganda and Ethiopia have been internationally praised for their open-door policies in the light of the South Sudanese refugees (Uganda) and Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan (Ethiopia), giving them the freedom to move, hold land, provide economic opportunities. Yet, this data does not present the complete picture as there is not enough study around displacement due to natural causes.

The Refugee crisis is a serious reality that the world faces, both in diplomatic and humanitarian terms. Nations seek to deal with this problem in various ways, where both acceptance and intolerance is shown. The world needs a more holistic view of the entire issue and not see it



just as centered around the policies of developed nations towards it. The developing world, including India, play a huge role in the same, and it is time that they too are seen as a part of the global solution.

Sources:

1. <http://www.ijrcenter.org/refugee-law/>
1. <http://teachershelp.ru/living-in-a-global-village-biboletova-11-klass/>

1. <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/6/5943ec594/war-violence-persecution-push-displacement-new-unprecedented-high.html>

1. <http://www.iar-gwu.org/node/19>

1. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/06/559802-violence-and-persecution-uprooted-record-656-million-people-2016-un-agency>

Rukmini Bhuyan

First Year, Political Science Honours

The rousing Tamil pride

Revanchism or Linguistic Chauvinism ?

The month of January has always been favourable to heighten the honour and dignity of Tamilians. As the state witnesses the glorious Pongal Festival or Thai Thirunal, they also mark

other significant observances too. This month is also very esteemed as it witnessed the labelling of State of Madras to Tamil Nadu in 1968. It did not only stop here. The triumph of Anti Hindi agitations in 1967 has its significance too. Passing by almost half a century, people led their own movement in support of their very own heritage sport of Jallikattu.

The unique quality of this protest lies not in being an organised one, but the crowd behaved in a very organised manner. The 50 years of Silence by the people, their emotions, their grievances against the state government and the very own people who were turning west were all voiced upon at various places across the world to revive the pride of their language, culture and their ethics.

‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ in Sanskrit which means ‘The world is one family’ was portrayed by people at the protest area. The protestors who gathered also ensured that every person had their food to eat, water to drink and blankets to cover themselves at night. The women felt very secure while protesting at Marina. To celebrate the victory of gathering to raise voices for themselves and their culture people also organised cultural events such as Silambattam, Karagattam

etc. The students comprising the major crowd of the protests behaved very responsibly as they ensured cleanliness of that place. The protest mobilised support in favour of Jallikattu and this also provided them with a platform to address various issues concerning their state, rights and their culture. The Cauvery water issue was the next



major discussed topics. Despite the positive effects, the protest also attracted various anti social elements. There were a group of people who came along with different posters condemning murder of LTTE leader Prabhakaran while few demanded a separate nation for the Tamil People.

The agony of the Tamilians was roused by the discrimination they faced because of the imposition of other languages and being termed as Madrasis. The centre was seen as being uncaring about the state in addressing their issues or fostering positive and favourable development for them. The centre also undermined their classical language and culture.

It can be revanchism and not linguistic chauvinism. Tamil culture has been dilapidated with the colonial rule. Various Olai Chuvadis, architecture, art and literatures has been ruined by the Europeans. Tamil language now accounts for being spoken by 76 million people in the world. It is an official language in many parts of the world.

The pride is not in the tongue but their blood is what they claim. Their fight cannot be seen as a separatist war but to reclaim their lost glorification to make their language live for a millennium continue their legacy and pass on the culture to all generations to come.

Honeyshya Raj

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

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

Introduction

MGNREGA is the largest work guarantee scheme in the world and in its World Report 2014, the World Bank called it a “stellar example of rural development”. It was first proposed by PM P.V.Narasimha Rao in 1991 but was finally introduced and enacted by the UPA alliance government much later in 2005. It draws inspiration from the Constitution, the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi and also from the works of Prof. Jean Dreze, a Belgian-Indian economist at the University of Delhi.

Its primary objective is to provide 100 days of guaranteed work in a year to the rural households. It also targets poverty by employing unskilled and semi-skilled individuals in small-scale developmental projects like construction of wells, building walls, planting trees etc. It also focuses on decentralization as the majority of decisions are taken on the local level by the Panchayati Raj institutions. Finally, MGNREGA also tackles the problem of large-scale migration to the urban areas by providing work in rural locality itself. This large chunk of the workforce is unable to avail their rights under the labor laws and is prone to exploitation by employers. Thus, there is a grave challenge for the state to protect the rights of the workforce.

Origin

Even before substantial political action was taken, there was a clear provision in our constitution for an act to provide basic livelihood to all and was enshrined in part IV which directs the State to secure to all citizens the right to work. Further, Article 48A seeks to protect the environment.

Article 21 of the Constitution of India guarantees the right to life with dignity to every citizen of India, and MGNREGA imparts dignity to the rural people through an assurance of livelihood security. The policy also follows Article 46 that requires the State to promote the interests of and work for the economic uplift of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and protect them from discrimination and exploitation.

The powers given to the village institutions are in accordance with Article 40 that mandates the State to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government. Article 73 which gave a constitutional status to local level governments is also strengthened by the MGNREGA Act. Thus, we see here how the Act is in accordance with various provisions of the Constitution and is hence an important addition to our democracy.

Law and its provisions

Legal right to work- Unlike other schemes before this, the MGNREGA provides a legal right to work for all adults in the household and also states that 1/3rd beneficiaries have to be women. The wage rate must not be less than Rs.60 a day and must be according to that specified for agricultural labourers under the Minimum Wages Guarantee Act 1948.

Eligibility to get employment -According to the official notification, any adult who is a local domicile of a district which is not 100% urban population is eligible to be employed under the Act. No discrimination on the basis of caste, class and gender to be practiced also it is not restricted to just BPL families.

Guarantee to work in a time bound manner-Employment must be provided within 15 days of asking for work. If the state fails to provide so, an unemployment wage must be given to the workers.

Decentralised planning-The planning, execution and further monitoring is the duty of the local government known as the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The major role in the planning must be undertaken by the Panchayat or Gram Sabha. 50% of execution too, must be managed by the same local level government.

Funding- As the Act is part of the concurrent list and includes subjects of both state and central jurisdiction, the costs are shared by the Central and the State government. There are three major components of the expenditure which include wages of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labourers, the costs of materials and the administrative costs.

The Central government pays 100% of the unskilled labor wages, 75% of skilled and semi-skilled labor wages. It also bears 75% of the material costs and 60% of the administrative costs.

Transparency and accountability-There are various provisions that increase the accountability of authorities such as wall writings, information boards and most importantly, social audits. These social audits are conducted by the Gram Sabha members to keep a check on the account books of the local administrative staff and the proper implementation of the scheme.

Report of the Standing Committee on Rural Affairs (2014-15)

The Committee, chaired by Ms. Sumitra Mahajan, submitted its report on the achievements and challenges faced by the government in implementing the MGNREGA scheme in rural India. It highlighted major issues that thwart the proper implementation of the scheme which needs proper scrutiny by the government.

Achievements

According to the Committee, the scheme has been somewhat successful in achieving its primary motive of increasing the living standard of the rural population and ensuring a livelihood for people in those districts which were the poorest.

It has also seen a large scale participation by the most disadvantaged classes- women and the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled tribe where 47% of the beneficiaries(as per person-days)were women and 51% were the SC/STs.

MGNREGA has also helped in increasing the wage rate in rural areas so that overall, the whole area is benefitted. The infrastructural projects led to better connectivity to urban areas via better roads.

The work pertaining to irrigation networks, reforestation, and other sustainable development projects has also had a positive impact on the environment.

It has also led to the strengthening of the democratic process and federal structures of the government as the Panchayat takes the majority of decisions. Thus, people feel more connected to the administrative process when it happens through consensus and they have a say in deciding how the funds ought to be used.

Shortcomings of MGNREGA

There also have been major shortcomings that has come to the forefront after more than 7 years of its implementation. These are-

A charge of corruption-The scheme has been plagued by the disease of corruption and misappropriation of funds like many others in our country. There have been corruption levied against Block Development Officers who disburse funds to panchayats, the members of panchayats, the middlemen, the suppliers and even the workers themselves who all use various ways to misuse funds.

Falling number of employment days-The average number of employment day has been falling since 2010-2011 and has been lower than the mandated 100 days. This raises lot of questions and the efficiency of such a scheme that aims to provide employment for about 1/3rd of the year.

Duplication and fabrication of job cards-In numerous surveys and studies, there have been cases of large-scale fabrication of job cards which led to misappropriation of funds and siphoning off of funds. It has been on part of individual workers, panchayat members and other officials at district levels.

Delay in payments-Under the MGNREGA scheme, the payments need to be distributed within 15 days. But there have been many instances where funds haven't been distributed for months.

Unfinished projects-The number of unfinished projects has been growing over the past few years and there have been long delays in the completion of developmental projects and the work has been irregular and erratic. According to studies, just 98 lakh out of 296 lakh projects have been completed.

Poor quality of materials -The underlying corruption in all stages of the scheme's implementation has led to authorities buying the sub-par or low quality of materials to build irrigation wells, roads etc that leads to poor quality of assets that get damaged easily and require more maintenance. This drains the official funds allocated and fills the pockets of material suppliers, middlemen and authorities.

Recommendation of the Standing Committee-

The committee suggested recommendations to help improve the implementation of policy and also stop leakages that happen due to corruption and misappropriation. These were-

Maintenance of job cards-The irregularities that occur due to non-maintenance of job cards needs to change and all employment-related information needs to be recorded regularly. The duplication of job cards must be stopped to make the scheme more efficient.

Increasing the participation of persons with disabilities-MGNREGA has helped elevate the social standing and standard of living of marginalized groups but has largely ignored persons with disabilities. Thus, the committee recommended that special job cards must be provided and they must be included in the scheme.

Proper utilisation of funds-A large amount of funds allocated for the scheme have been left unutilized or underutilized. For eg. About 28% of funds remained unused in 2010-11. The

Ministry of Rural Development must analyze the situation and find ways to properly utilize the funds.

State specific developmental projects-Since all states are different and have different levels of economic developments, the planning must be done keeping in mind the context and needs of the area where it needs to be implemented. There must be greater emphasis on skilled and semi-skilled workers so as to give them marketable skills and reduce the number of people in the unorganized sector.

Monitoring-National Level Monitors (NLMs) have been deployed by the Ministry of Rural Development to monitor the proper utilization of funds and report any irregularities. The Committee recommends that the frequency of monitoring and reporting by the NLMs must increase so as to ensure a more efficient system.

The boost that MGNREGA has provided to the rural economy and infrastructure is too big to be ignored. The number of people employed under the scheme has also increased and it has helped increase the socio-economic level in the rural areas. It has also helped in certain areas which were drought prone- in creating better systems of irrigation and in areas prone to floods- to build dams. Thus, we can see how a scheme which focuses on decentralization of planning has been so helpful in catering to the needs of the local level which are best understood by its inhabitants and not bureaucrats or ministers at the higher levels.

Further, the recent governments have also criticised the inefficient scheme of MGNREGA but for garnering votes, have channelized more funds into the scheme without opting for reforms. Proper scrutiny of allocation of funds, planning, and implementation must be stressed upon.

Simran Pachar

B.A. (Hons) Political Science, Third year

The promised freedom

A nation's glory runs as deep as the quality of the masses that shape its fabric. Intrinsic to this engineering is the freedom that the citizens possess and employ.

Be it theorists like J.S.Mill, Natural rights contractualists, Alexander Meiklejohn, contemporary artists like China's Ai Weiwei, journalists and lawyers, people from all walks of life have time and again emphasised on the importance of freedom of speech and expression. The understanding of this right has been reinterpreted.

The aftermath of the two devastating world wars was full of historic conventions, declarations, treaties and codified laws. Path-breaking among them was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 which drew out an international commitment to the cause of protecting and celebrating this freedom in Article 19 of our constitution; it recognised the Freedom of Speech and Expression with special duties and responsibilities, subject to limitations on the grounds of national security, reputation, public health and morals.

While this was merely an aspirational document, it initiated the process for greater consideration on the part of the international community.

Leaders across the globe recognised that certain rights were essential for individuals to conduct themselves in a free and fair manner. This has been reflected in the constitutions of many nations including India.

The right to freedom of speech and expression as a part of the six freedoms in Article 19(1)(a) as a Fundamental Right guaranteed to every citizen of India. This right is the basic essence of a democracy by the people and for the people. The participation of people in free discussion and expression which opens up channels for debate, progress and development is invaluable to a nation like ours.

However, this freedom is not absolute and is subject to 'reasonable restrictions'. These restrictions as quoted in Article 19(2) emphasize that one's rights of expression cannot be at the cost of others. John Stuart Mill's harm principle and offense principle went on to explain exactly this.

However, in recent times, given the scale of arbitrary arrests, lynchings, election rhetorics and powerplay, one is forced to wonder if the lines between what is reasonable and what is arbitrary and unlawful is fast getting blurred.

In a world where media is the primary source of information for a large mass is fast burgeoning with muscle power and the power of the buck defining the content and choice of news, where artists are condemned for their expression and their 'creative license' is revoked, censorship on music and motion films and so much more. All these contemporary realities impress upon us the idea of sheer suppression of freedom of speech and expression.

When MF Hussain was ousted from India for his depictions of Indian Gods and Goddesses and Raja Ravi Varma is touted as a celebrated painter, one cannot help but question the duality in these methods.

Do we then cease to perceive art for art's sake and clamp down on such artists?

Where was the promised freedom of expression when the brutal attacks happened at the Charlie Hebdo headquarters in Paris?

The murder of the Indian journalist turned activist- Gauri Lankesh, killing of human rights activists, witch hunts conducted for whistleblowers, go out to expose a very deep rooted, rotting cancer in our system- one that we've been blind to in our race to the top.

The fact that the Parliament has taken a back seat and the Judiciary is stepping in to make progressive judgements also shows a lacunae in our system.

What has happened to this country? Will the sleeping Leviathan awaken and take stock of the rights of the people?

It is a question that only time will answer but the most dynamic component of a nation is its Youth, we must continuously engage in a ceaseless dialogue,clashing with the hate-mongers, standing up to the oppressors-be it the tyrannical majority,a minority or an unknown entity in the elusive growing sphere of the internet.

With liberal spaces shrinking, movements must not rest easy and make it a ceaseless effort to regain democracy in its true sense-in politics, academia,human relationships and the civil society.

After all,what is independence worth if we're wound up in chains? Rousseau would agree.

Anoushka Parija

B.A. (Hons) Political Science, Third Year

An Analysis of The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2016

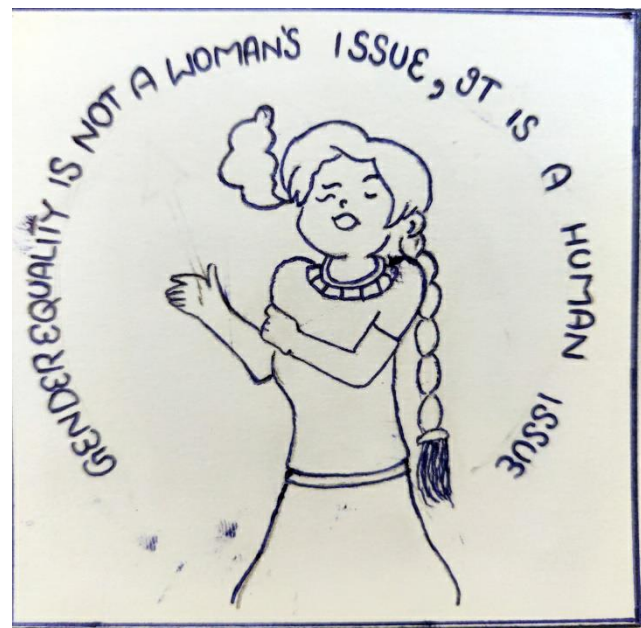
The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016 has been met with a lot of criticism. The Bill has many loopholes and has not been deemed satisfactory by the transgender community. The lack of transgender representation is the first thing that is blatantly obvious when one analyses the bill. A major chunk of law currently is divided into a binary of the male and female. The Indian Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code themselves, along with numerous other legislation that have been passed by the government have always contained gender-specific provisions, which in turn become gender-insensitive provisions. The bill in question recognises a third gender, yet does not provide for a clarification, or any provision regarding amendments in the existing laws. Apart from that, the penalties for offences vary due to the application of different laws solely based on gender identity. For example, there is a penalty upto life imprisonment for sexual abuse against women, whereas sexual abuse against a transgender has a maximum sentence of only two years. A similar problem arises in cases of

rape as Sections 377 and 376 of the IPC are gender specific and cannot be applied for transgender people. This loophole allowed for four rapists of a 19-year-old transgender in Pune to walk free in 2017.

Definitions are an important part of any proposed bill, and a subsequent act. The said bill uses terms such as 'female' and 'male' in the definition of a transgender person without specifying if the terms refer to biological sex, that is assigned at birth, or if it refers to one's identity, which includes how one chooses to feel, identify and express themselves. The Bill also includes terms like 'trans-men', 'trans-women', 'intersex variations' and 'gender-queers' in its definition of transgender persons- the terms are not defined in the Bill themselves, leaving scope for exploitation of loopholes and an unclear application and implementation. The Bill also wrongly assumes that people with intersex variations are transgender.

The Supreme Court in 'National Legal Services Authority vs. Union of India' 2014, held that the right to self-identification of gender is a part of the right to dignity and autonomy of an individual under Article 21 of the Constitution. Although the bill does state that a transgender person would have the right to 'self-perceived' their gender identity, it does not provide for the enforcement of this as an individual right and instead provides for 'A District Screening Committee'. Individuals will be recognised as 'transgender' on the basis of a 'Certificate of Identity' issued by the same. Such a Certificate will be proof of identity as 'transgender' and then will be used to confer rights under the bill. In cases of disagreement, like if a transgender person is denied a Certificate of Identity, the bill does not address issues for appeal or review of decisions of the District Screening Committee. Thus, the bill contradicts itself in parts, and it is unclear as to what the term 'self-perceived' gender identity entails, if the ultimate proof of gender identity is a certificate.

The bill is not entirely in line with the suggestions made by The Supreme Court, and recommendations of the Expert Committee of the Ministry of Social Justice and Welfare and a private member bill, passed in Rajya Sabha in 2014. The definition and identification of a transgender individual, according to the other documents' recommendations like the ones mentioned above, are based on self-identity and self-determination, which is not the case in the bill. It does not provide for reservations for transgender people, which is quite problematic as one of the main issues it is supposed to address is the issue of non-representation, and legislations concerning communities that are not even included in the lawmaking process.



Surmayi Khatana

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

“DESTROY DOWRY, NOT DAUGHTERS!”- DOWRY PROHIBITION ACT, 1961.

Dowry is a well-known yet the most unopposed crime in India. It is a nation wide plague, and has led to degradation of society because of its detrimental nature. Dowry is a greedy and unscrupulous demand made by the husband and his family at the time of marriage or after that. Owing to its pernicious nature dowry leads to the increase of crimes like female infanticide in the society at an alarming rate. Girls are considered to be the burden of the family, because at the end they have to be sent to their in laws house that too with dowry.

Not only female infanticide, burning of brides, dowry deaths has increased as well. This is why to combat this evil it is important to provide additional provisions to law, provisional as well as substantive .

“Bride burning is a shame of our society. Poor never resort to it. Rich do not need it. Obviously because it is basically an economic problem of a class which suffers both from ego and complex. Unfortunately the high price rise and ever increasing cost of living coupled with enormous growth of consumer goods effacing difference between luxury and essential goods appear to be luring even the new generation of youth, of the best service, to be as much part of the dowry menace as their parents and the resultant evils flowing out of it. How to curb and control this evil? Dowry killing is a crime of its own kind where elimination of daughter -in-law becomes immediate necessity if she or her parents are no more able to satiate the greed and avarice of her husband and their family members, to make the boy available, once again in the marriage market. Eliminate it and much may stand resolved automatically.”³

The payment of dowry has long been prohibited under laws including DOWRY PROHIBITION ACT, 1961 and subsequently by sections 304 B and 498 A of the Indian Penal Code.

In order to provide more teeth to dowry prevention laws , the government made it compulsory to notify gifts exchanged in a marriage for the couples. The rule came about through an amendment to the existing Dowry Prohibition Act 1961

The law underwent an Amendment in the year of 1986 thus the relevant provision of the Amendment Act are described as follows-

- (a). The amendment has inserted section **304 B in IPC** to make dowry death as a separate offence under penal laws by section 10 of the Amendment Act,
- (b). The Amendment Act also has inserted a presumption to dowry death by section **113-B** in the Evidence Act 1872 by section 12 of the Amendment Act.
- ©. It is also true that before the Amendment Act, 1986 some of the amendments have been made in 1984 and 1985 but were unable to meet the requirement of the

inserted many of the provisions in the Prohibition of Dowry Act. Those are being summarized as follows-

- (i.) The Amendment has enhanced the punishment for giving and taking dowry

³ Ashok Kumar V. State of Rajasthan (1991) 1 SCC 166

from six months to not less than five years in section 3 of the Act.

(ii). Section 4 of the Amendment Act has inserted a ban on advertisement by inserting into the Act section 4 A, this ban on any advertisement for any interest as consideration for the marriage of any relative.

(iii). Any offence under this Act is made non-bailable by this Amendment Act

(iv) Burden of proof is shifted in Certain cases on the accused.

(v) The State Government is empowered to appoint as many Dowry prohibition officers as it thinks fit and specify the areas in respect of which they shall exercise their jurisdiction and powers under this Act and also describes their duties.

Even though we have strict laws against dowry but as seen by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, a total of 9038, 10709 and 10050 cases have been enrolled under the Dowry Prohibition Act from 196, 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively. Same as total 8233, 8083 and 8455 files have been enrolled in Dowry Death in India during 2012, 2013 and 2014.⁴

In respects with these statistics let us look us few case studies which would give us more insights about this law.

KERELA: DOWRY GREED CLAIMS LIFE

ALAPPUZHA: Dowry death cases are on the increase in Kerala, the most literate state. Women are subjected to physical and mental torture by husbands and in-laws for bringing more dowry, including cash, jewellery, clothes and cars. The Malayalis' greed for instant money and wealth may be the reason for such a despicable state of affairs, it is said. As per last year's crime statistics available with Kerala police, 24 women either committed suicide or were murdered following dowry-related incidents. The figure was just seven in 2015. The conviction rate in dowry death cases is low. Rasiya, 26, Valiyamaram ward of Alappuzha municipality, set herself ablaze on May 12, 2012 after six years of torture by her in-laws and husband for dowry. Though the south police here registered a case against her husband Haseeb and others involved, no justice had been meted to them so far, said her brother A. Anas. She took the extreme step after she was detained by the accused in the house and barred from meeting her parents, it is stated.

The laws prohibiting dowry and dowry harassment have not been effective in the state. Though it is illegal to give or take dowry under the Dowry prohibition Act, the practice is prevalent in all sections of society. The justice system takes years to punish the guilty. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, 87 per cent of dowry deaths in the country are pending in courts. More than 83 per cent of the cases registered under the dowry prohibition Act are pending trial. This is when the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, assures special protection for the victims. "The women should show the courage to stand up for their rights," Ms K.C. Rosakutty, chairperson, Kerala Women's Commission, said. "There is nothing to be ashamed of divorce if needed. If a woman can't adjust with in-laws and husband, she has to take a call on married life. Suicide is not a remedy," she said. "The parents of the victimised woman often force her to patch up with the culprits to maintain their honour. But it lands her in adverse situations. Effective implementation of dowry prohibition Act can save several women on the verge of suicide," she added.

"The number of dowry victims may be higher as they are reluctant to lodge complaints. I know scores of women who do not go to the police station fearing that it would spell the end

⁴ <http://lawnn.com/dowry-prohibition-act-2014-10000-cases-registered>

of their married life,” she said. The commission had submitted a proposal to the government in June 2015 seeking regulations to provide help to the brides, including at least 120 grams of gold. But it has not been considered, she said. A total of 24,771 dowry deaths were reported in the country in the past three years with the maximum number occurring in Uttar Pradesh with 7,048. In a written reply in the Lok Sabha in July 2015, Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi said that 8,233 cases were registered under section 304B of the Indian Penal Code (dowry death) in the country in 2012, 8,083 in 2013 and 8,455 in 2014. Ms J. Devika, associate professor, Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Thiruvananthapuram, and noted feminist, opined that women should be made independent financially and intellectually. The girls should be given moral and emotional support by the parents. An emergency phone service that connects all authorities concerned should be set up so that the victimised women can contact them at a critical time, she said.⁵

This is not just one case, another case of Ph.D. scholar from IIT Delhi Manjula Devak who



committed suicide shows that Dowry is still spreading its poison in the country.

It was a mistake to educate my daughter and send her to IIT. I should have saved money for her dowry instead.”⁶ These were the words of the helpless father who was standing out of morgue.

This is how helpless dowry makes a father ,but why even after strict law and

provisions like this that any unnatural death of wife within 7 yrs of marriage , criminalizing the law fathers like Manjula’s are helpless. The loop holes in our administration and non enforcement of such laws. Even though there are guidelines provided by Ministry of Home and Affairs but the police and prosecutors hardly follow it. Police often does not take these cases seriously and disposes them on the name of family disputes or report them as kitchen Accidents. Even the investigations that are carried out are generally incomplete. The police vandalizes with the evidences and often the investigation is based on the basis of relatives statement. If a

⁵ <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/in-other-news/110217/kerala-dowry-greed-claims-lives.html>

⁶ <http://www.firstpost.com/living/iit-scholar-manjula-devak-suicide-shows-that-in-india-dowry-is-still-a-silent-killer-of-women-3538163.html>

death cannot be disposed as a kitchen accident it is then investigated in such a delayed manner. In addition prosecutors are reluctant to prosecute the alleged perpetrator.

Police corruption plays an important role in matters like this, many a times they are seen taking bribes from the in laws family or the husband to dispose the case as mere accident. This shows how crimes are interconnected. Inefficiency of judiciary by delaying the increasing number of cases is also one of the factors which leads to lack of proper implementation of the law

The social construct of our society that eventually women has to settle in with her husband and his family without any complaint compels them to be quiet and suffer violence and fulfill the demands of the in laws, as a norm the neighbor and parents rarely help the bride and ask her to adjust instead. Thus the new bride has huge risk to fall in the trap of dowry death.

As mentioned in the case study above from Kerala , it is important for us to notice that economic independence of women can halt the dowry deaths. The discrimination with the women in matter of distribution of property should also be taken into consideration. Though under Hindu succession Act all the children have equal right to property but in practice it hardly happens. Making women financially strong can be one of the major steps to curb dowry deaths. Since they will have an option to leave the house and settle on their own, which most of the women doesn't have since they are not financially independent.

As we have seen, due to lack of financial independence and owing to the structures of power relations within the family shaped and conditioned by patriarchy, the woman or the wife, in this context, becomes instrumental in transferring property and other valuables from her natal home to her conjugal home. In this respect, the natal home occupies a secondary position as bride giver while the conjugal home is glorified as the taker. The husband's role as the provider, the bread earner, further accentuates his domination and the subservience of the women. This also leads to, as observed by Patricia Uberai, the culture of violence within the family to be shrouded by a culture of silence.

Dowry has become deeply entrenched within the society, as a clear manifestation of the patriarchal institution of society, which has not only led to oppression of women but has also led to objectification of men, hence continuous negotiation must go on with this and various other elements of patriarchy to establish proper equality.

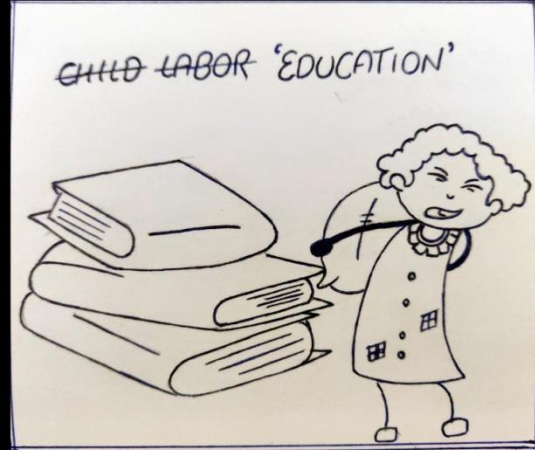
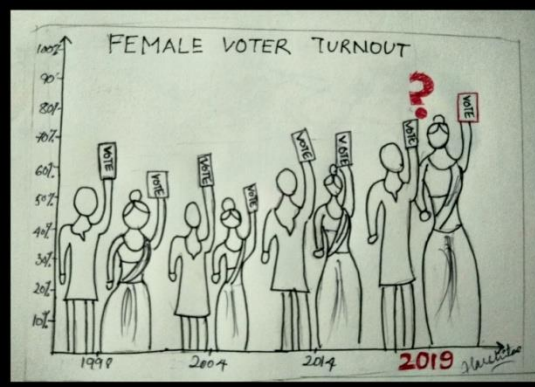
REFERENCES-

- 1) <http://www.legalservicesindia.com/article/article/dowry-laws-loopholes-and-possibilities-of-misuse-2034-1.html>
- 2) https://1.facebook.com/1.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.co.in%2Famp%2Fs%2Fblog.ipleaders.in%2Fdowry-death-cruelty-indian-law-suggested-reforms%2Famp%2F&h=ATPms3IpdzPtvOEjo-cJXib1p9M5xIiJR_7tFJ7LSidFg2onQwgNfnYunYofncZXSKiXBeQVoNQfL_5E4y

- [YYp6YnJ0dyt0DChF6m9B5KUGW5ke-U4MGfRSbzqJAxjCYfSwIdj4XVhRZTWA](https://1.facebook.com/1.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fshodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in%2Fbitstream%2F10603%2F33145%2F5%2Fchapter%25205.pdf&h=ATPms3IpdzPtvOEjo-cjXib1p9M5xIiJR_7tFJ7LSidFg2onQwgNfnYunYofncZXSKiXBeQVoNQfL_5E4yYYp6YnJ0dyt0DChF6m9B5KUGW5ke-U4MGfRSbzqJAxjCYfSwIdj4XVhRZTWA)
- 3) https://1.facebook.com/1.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fshodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in%2Fbitstream%2F10603%2F33145%2F5%2Fchapter%25205.pdf&h=ATPms3IpdzPtvOEjo-cjXib1p9M5xIiJR_7tFJ7LSidFg2onQwgNfnYunYofncZXSKiXBeQVoNQfL_5E4yYYp6YnJ0dyt0DChF6m9B5KUGW5ke-U4MGfRSbzqJAxjCYfSwIdj4XVhRZTWA

Shambhavi Mani

BA (H) Political Science, Third Year

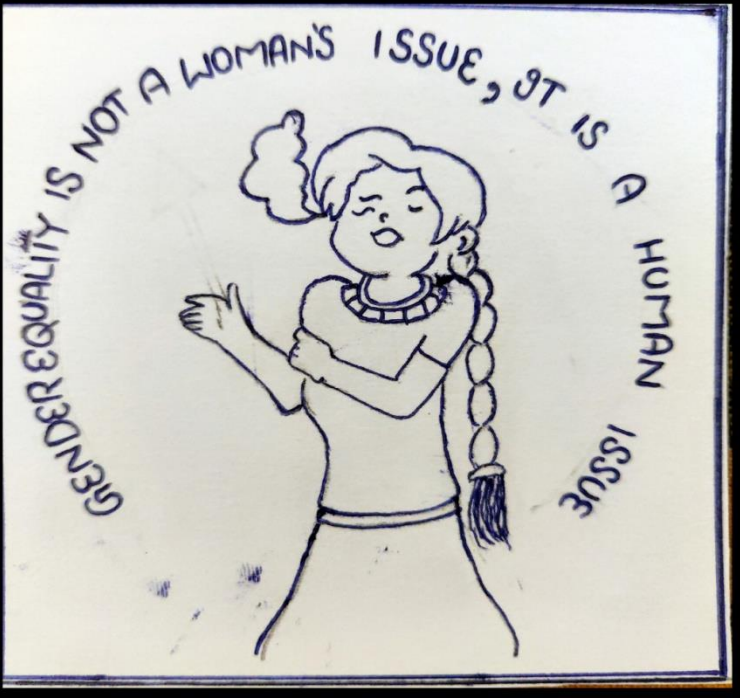


Lost childhood

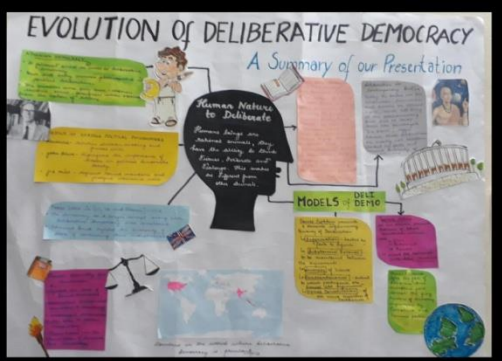
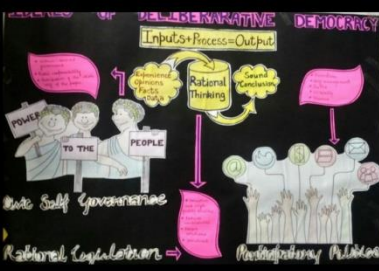
I wanted to fly, but then I realized that something is putting me down, was it that unlucky day!
I wanted to go on a picnic in the world of clouds, but then I realized that no such world exists on a world map!!!
The lightning was no more the flash of God's camera, rain was no more God's tears, was it the day I grew up!!!
The day I realized that blood did not come only from wounds, was it that unlucky day!
The grass was no more soft, the clouds no more pure, the sun no more smiling, was it that I stepped into the world of wisdom leaving behind the world of stars and smiles!!!
©silenced_voice



सिखाना है तुझे,
ही सिखाना है तुझे,
पर इतने बड़े अज्ञान अज्ञान सिखाना है तुझे,
मेरी नज़रों में, मेरी भावनाओं से अज्ञान,
रही-रही इस बार जन्माना है तुझे,
पता लगाना है तुझे जैसे दिल की आवाज़ें
और जन्मा सिखाती तेरी राहों और वो अकेलापन जो तुझे मुझसे दूर करता है,
जो एक जो तेरे दिल से बड़ी राहों से उतरता है जब मैं तेरे साथ होती हूँ,
तेरे वो सारे वादों के फलसफों जो तेरे दिल को आज तक अज्ञानों से है,
उस पलाने को जो अज्ञान में दूर जाने के बाद तेरे जीवन को जकड़ लेता है,
उस क्षणिक को जो तेरे हँसने हुए चेहरे के पीछे लुप्ट किया लेता है दुनिया से
मेरा दिल तो बड़ी अज्ञानों से अज्ञान का जगहों
पर तुझे पता लगाना है उस पल का जिनसे मैं पढ़ न सकी तेरे दिल
जीतने के सपने में







A KINZEE

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
MIRANDA HOUSE
presents

ECCLESIA '19

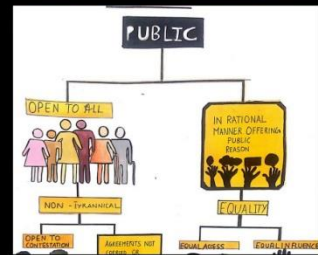
8 AND 9 APRIL

THEME
ANNAPURNA: FARMERS IN
CONTEMPORARY INDIA

powered by
YOURSHELL

INDO USSR

MILITARY POLITICAL

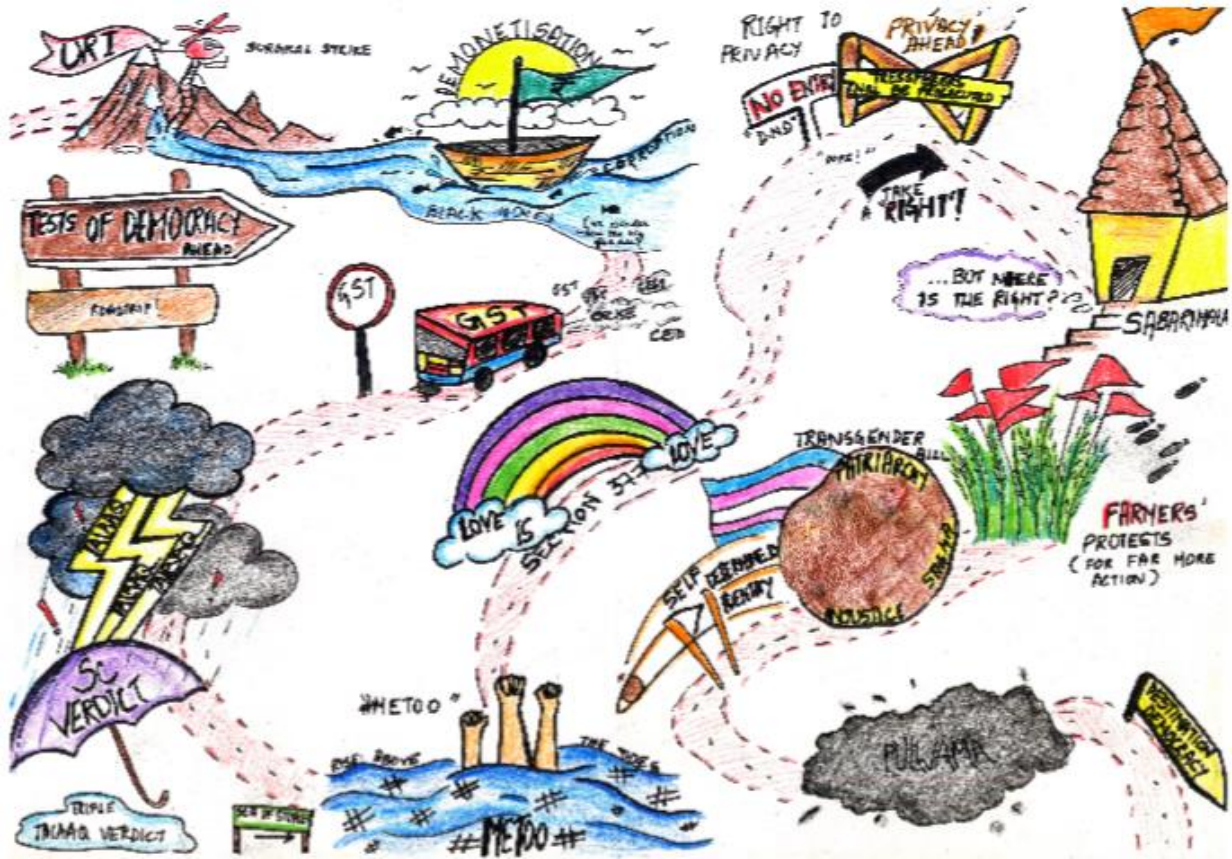


India's Foreign Policy: End of Era Review

Slipping the DRAGON

- | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Lymphe de gauges | Amartya Sen | Lenin | DD Basu | Vandana Shrivastava |
| Simon de Bevecur | E. Shreedharan | James Mill | Andrew Heywood | Sartori Dimerger |
| Rousseau Sneh | Gyanendra Pandey | Hegel | Emmanuel Kant | David Easton |
| John Locke | Nera Chandhoke | Aristotle | Adam Smith | Emma Goldman |
| Hobbes | Andrew Heywood | Charles Taylor | Nivedita Menon | Karl Marx |
| Edmund Burke | Jogendra Yadav | Karl Marx | Upinder Baxi | |
| Foucault | Sanyog Kumar | Friedrich Engels | Nehita Khushlev | |
| Mary Wollstonecraft | Ramachandra Guha | Norman Lowe | | |
| Nozick | Betty Friedan | | | |
| Hannah | Paul Brass | | | |





(this cartoon spreads on two pages)

2016: THE SURGICAL STRIKE

The last five years with BJP's majority government's at the Centre and its take on the defence front have been remarkable for the country. India has globally fastened its strong, steady and a sturdy stand against terrorism. While we stay true to our, 'NO FIRST USE' policy on war and nuclear arms, our comportment towards handling cross border infiltrations and terrorism might have undergone certain compelling adjustments.

One such instance was the military response to the Uri attack in which 18 jawans were killed, carried out through a surgical strike in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. India strives to emerge as a global superpower and this might have been its attempt to exhibit a ZERO-TOLERANCE stand against terror activities.

There have been several debates around these strikes and this essay critically analyses the Government's de facto decision.

POLITICS AT PLAY

With the then government's inaction post 2008 Mumbai attacks, 2016 surgical strike deemed crucial for India as a nation to retaliate militarily against terror attacks.

National Security Advisor at that time, Mr. Shivshankar Menon's exact words were, "*we should, and be seen to retaliate, to deter further attacks, for reasons of international credibility and to assuage public sentiment.*" As a follow up, few years later, some experts have assessed that the surgical strikes were made, not only to deter Pakistan's sub conventional war on one hand but to pacify Indian public anger on another as well.

The palpable picture within the country however has been witnessing a divided house. While some say that Indian surgical strikes did not have any major impact which can be construed to capture their utility in deterring Pakistan's sub conventional war. Contrarily, the strikes played a crucial role in pacifying public anger as it was a first strike that was publicly sanctioned by the government.

Political parties of opposition took to the centre stage questioning the credibility of these strikes only to get back at the BJP government. In a democratic setup, that is deemed to happen. Pakistan on the other hand called the operation "an illusion", denying any harm caused by Indian army. Prime Minister Modi's official statement moreover mentioned, that the government had informed Pakistan about the strike priorly and their denial did not come as a surprise. He highlighted the fact that it would have been difficult for Pakistan to accept the presence of militants safely sheltered in close proximity to Line of Control.

THE FUTURE AND OTHER POSSIBILITIES

What we need to look forward to, is the future. A major shift in India's approach, as very well articulated by Ajit Doval, National Security Advisor upsurges from defensive to defensive – offensive character backs up the country's fight against terrorism internationally and gives it a stronger eminence.

The strikes marked an era when India and Pakistan both will engage in asymmetrical war as deterrence freezes prospects of conflict at nuclear and conventional levels. Risk of escalation remained, but it also limited military operation to keep them short of war.

Some important questions that emerged from this incident include-

Q1. In the name of fighting terrorism, is the breach of national boundaries justified?

This concept of state led military operations for rescue and terrorism evolved after the United States headed Iraq invasion in 1990. Or another more recent instance, of US Special Forces raid in Abbottabad, Pakistan, to kill Osama Bin Laden, head of terrorist organisation Al-Qaeda post 9/11 attacks.

Historically, India has been a staunch supporter of protection of national sovereignty for which it even stood in solidarity with many South Asian countries whose sovereignty was under threat by international organisations. Will this change, as reported by Mr. Doval, bring a strong shift in our foreign policy ideals remains a mere possibility. This becomes even more crucial when our country tolerates theatrics of infiltrations and expansionism from its two neighbouring countries who are also each other's all weather ally, Pakistan and China.

Q2. Does politicization of sensitive issues such as military operations always bear negative results?

This essentially, need not be the case. Revisiting Prime minister's speech might help us find an answer here, who clearly mentioned how it was important to give an independent hand to the military and at the same time satisfy public's anger. This is no doubt a plus point of having Majority governments against Coalition ones. To master populist politics is an art, and not everyone is good at it. Our country witnessed it twice, once with Smt. Indira Gandhi and the other with Mr. Narendra Modi. Charismatic leaders have never failed to instigate a feeling of nationalism within its people worldwide. Whether they actually fulfilled their promises made to the public or not is another matter of concern.

There are voices of dissent, that complement our democracy and also educate us about the government's populist agendas. Criticism comes from the side of opposition, academicians, critics of propaganda films, analysts and experts and they empower the public to put pressure on the government and not to divert from the main issues within as well.

Q3. Is India prepared to take a similar action in future?

Our military, although second largest in the world, still has a long walk into the future. Views of retired defence personnels suggest that BJP government's Interim Budget announcement to allocate Rupees 3,01,886 crore for defence sector could be a game changing move for our military. The politics around defence for instance Rafael jets deal from France, has somewhat slowed down the progress.

As duly proclaimed by our External Affairs Minister, Smt. Sushma Swaraj that, "India supports the call for peace in the region and is ready to hold talk with its neighbours but only when countries like Pakistan take up aggressive action against terror groups within its borders".

Smart technology, improvised intelligence and a strong will to stand united as a nation are primary tools we desperately need to equip ourselves with. Globalisation increased with it the greater role for people on each and every front of national or international importance. It is high time we realise this privilege and work towards achieving world peace!

Deepangna Singhi
BA(H) Political Science, third year

Demonetisation

Third in a row of demonetisations that the nation has witnessed since Independence, the roll back of the Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000 denominations, stripping them off their value, on November 8, 2016 has been one of the politically debated argument. While announcing this decision, honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed it as a countermeasure to the deadly trio of black money, corruption and terror funding.

It was indeed a bold move to ban 86.4% of the total money amount of Rs. 17.97 lakh crores that was in circulation in the economy prior to November 8, 2016.

Demonetisation has faced the ire of critics on various grounds. "Indian economy lost 1.5 percent of GDP in terms of growth. That alone was a loss of Rs 2.25 lakh crore a year. Over 100 lives were lost. 15 crore daily wage earners lost their livelihood for several weeks. Thousands of SME units were shut down. Lakhs of jobs were destroyed," says P. Chidambaram, believing the move to be a highly political one rather than a deterrent to corruption.

On the contrary, the government has tried to stand up to its major manifesto highlight of 2014; that of bringing back into circulation, all black money. The vow taken by Narendra Modi to bring every penny of illicit and corrupt money that had been stashed in foreign banks has been the major cause of demonetisation.

Facing heated criticism, the government has put forward data in order to highlight the positive results of the move. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in a Facebook post described the note ban as a "key step in a chain of important decisions taken by the government to formalize the economy". The RBI's annual report on the assessment of demonetisation has given it a thumbs up. Of Rs 15.41 lakh crore demonetised currency notes of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 denominations, only Rs 10,720 crore did not reach to the banks or the RBI. With spending accruing to nearly Rs. 13,000 crores to remonetise the economy, which included printing new denominations and destroying the old ones, demonetisation has been a major cause for the drastic fall in the RBI dividend. Nonetheless, the overall currency in the economy has risen to Rs. 18.03 lakh crores, signifying a positive growth.

Thus, the demonetisation of the Indian economy has since its first implementation in 1971 has been a highly polarised issue. The 2016 demonetisation has been a crucial player in the politics and economic growth of nation, the final effects of which are yet to unfold.

Bhumika Nebhnani
BA(H) Political Science, First Year

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

The Goods and Services Tax(GST) is a progressive, indirect tax based on the concept of “one nation, one market, one tax” and is seen as India’s largest tax reform. It came into effect in July 2017 after much delay, deliberations and discussion and brought in a new era of tax regime. Its importance can be appreciated from the fact that a special session of the Parliament was called at midnight of 30 Jun/ 01 Jul to launch this tax regime.

GST has converted India into an integrated market by removing internal tax barriers and encompassing different taxes into a unified GST. Earlier separate taxes were imposed by the Centre and state which would get added to the original price of the product. GST rejects this multilayered tax scheme, making it easier to administer taxes and make revenue collection more efficient. While the rollout had hoped to reform India’s fiscal program and widen the economy, with PM Modi dubbing it as ‘Good and Simple Tax’, there have been fears of disruption as it is seen as hastily implemented, not in the best interests of the country. Therefore, the opposition has even termed it as ‘Gabbar Singh Tax’.

GST is jointly levied by the Centre and the state with the recommendation of the GST Council headed by the Finance Minister. Since GST is a progressive tax, different tax rates are imposed on different commodities. It has 3 components; Central GST, State/Union Territory GST, and Integrated GST.

The fundamental benefit of GST is that it reduces tax manipulation by the authorities as there is only a single tax to be paid. It has removed the cascading effect on the sale of goods and services which has lowered the cost. Moreover, the system has become more transparent.

The idea behind implementing GST countrywide was that it would be a win- win situation for all. Manufacturers and traders would benefit from lesser tax filings, easy rules and bookkeeping; consumers would pay less, and the government would generate more revenue. However there are complexities in its implementation. There are operational issues that have arisen related to ease of filing and refund. Businesses now have to update their accounting software to GST-compliant, leading to increased cost of software purchase and training of employees for operation of new software. Small businesses also have to bear the brunt of GST as earlier only businesses with a turnover more than Rs. 1.50 crores had to pay excise duty, but now the limit has been reduced to Rs. 20 lakhs thus increasing the tax burden for many manufacturing SMEs.

Change is difficult and is often resisted and so it was with GST. It took time to adapt in a large, diverse and populated country like India. Implementing GST had always been challenging but the government has done it with ease. There have been no serious complaints from the state on revenue shortfalls as such. Therefore, it’s been a fairly successful story. However the policy is still in its nascent stage and will need more time to fully stabilize, after which it will find greater acceptability.

Arunima Maini
BA (H) Political Science, First Year

TRIPLE TALAQ

“Her life is teemed with multiple insecurities and her ordeal seems beyond containment when the belief that religion is inviolable is exploited by peddling perverted constructions of religious scriptures, only to suppress her expression and her right to worship.”

Triple Talaq is a way of divorce in Islam where Muslim men can legally divorce their wives by using ‘talaq’ three times in oral, written and recently electronic forms. It is not followed uniformly amongst all Muslims and many Muslim countries have banned this regressive practice. India became the latest country to do so in August 2017 after much debate and discussion. The issue became controversial in India owing to its secular character wherein the minorities have a right to determine their personal laws and marriage and divorce fall within its purview.

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) sees the ban as interference in the personal laws whereas other Muslim organisations like the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA) had launched a campaign to ban triple talaq. Men were left blameless as their action was believed to be permitted by the Quran whereas other Quranic guidelines of discussion, arbitration, witnesses, specified time period or attempt to resolve differences were not followed, further necessitating the ban. Cases have also been reported of husbands divorcing their wives through text messages and Skype. Such circumstances make the question of alimony or the rights of children uncertain, thereby making the case for ban stronger.

It was finally in August 2017 that Triple Talaq was declared unconstitutional by the SC. After the judgment, there was pressure to make it a penal offence. Everything in India is politicised and so was this. Minority issue is important in Indian politics. While the Congress is charged with politics of minority appeasement, the BJP has been seen as supporting majoritarian sentiments. This issue was reflected yet again in the Triple Talaq case. Soon after, the BJP introduced the Bill making Triple Talaq a crime, in the Lok Sabha, Congress raised reservations about it. Since the BJP has a majority in the Lok Sabha the bill was passed there but failed to secure a majority in the Rajya Sabha. The Bill was met by Opposition protests, after which an ordinance was issued.

While the BJP projected it as a matter of ‘Insaaniyat aur Insaaf’, the Congress saw imprisoning the breadwinner as injustice as the woman and children would be left without any monetary support. The Bill is seen as yet another tool against the Muslim male by the ruling party. Feminist Lawyer and activist Flavia Agnes sees the judgement as anti-Muslim and a clear sign to bring in uniform civil code, an important BJP agenda. She feels it will lead to targeting of Muslim men in the name of Muslim women.

The bottom line is that the triple talaq is a regressive practice violating basic human rights. It goes against gender justice. The political forces in the country should think beyond narrow party politics and take decisions in the larger interests of society. In matters like these, the concern for women empowerment should be prioritised. However the socio-political climate of India is such that its abolition has given rise to obvious fears of majoritarianism. While the personal laws are not to be interfered with, the government reserves the right to amend and

abolish them if they breach principles of social and gender equality. Thus the current government is justified in doing so. Keeping the larger interests of women empowerment in mind and the condition of Muslim women in the country, the political opposition must behave responsibly and rationally and rise above vote bank politics.

Arunima Maini

BA (H) Political Science, First Year

#METOO

In 2017, a viral hashtag on a social media platform transformed into an international movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault. It has been more than a year, and #MeToo is still being talked about. The term was first used in 2006 by Tarana Burke, a social activist from the United States, who was inspired to use it after a young girl confided to her about being sexually assaulted, and Tarana was unable to respond to the situation. She later expressed that she wished that she had told the girl “Me too”. The hashtag blew up after actress Alyssa Milano posted a message on her social media platform, encouraging people to speak about their experiences of assault using the same. Thousands of women from all over the world have since come out on various platforms with their stories. Many prominent personalities in different professions- films, journalism, academia- were called out on sexual misconduct. In India, the movement gained momentum with the publishing of List of Sexual Harassers in Academia, or the LoSHA, a crowdsourced list begun by law student Raya Sarkar that named sexual harassers in colleges and universities across the country. Almost immediately, it generated a furore in various circles, with support as well as vociferous opposition by many, including prominent feminists, who questioned the veracity of complaints and objected to the bypassing of due legal procedure.

#Metoo generated, among others, #TimesUp in 2018, that has raised legal defense funds to aid victims of sexual harassment in legal procedures. In spite of widespread support, it has had its fair share of criticism. There are those who question its celebrity culture, and others who argue that it is not an effective means to actually secure justice in the absence of formal complaints to authorities. However, the movement has certainly generated dialogue around the issue of sexual harassment. The sheer numbers of stories that have emerged from #MeToo are overwhelming. The nature of sexual harassment and sexual assault has been reflected better by #MeToo than newspaper headlines ever do. They are not isolated, rare incidents, but a very close reality for the average human being. The power of #MeToo comes from its essence of a shared narrative and experience of a violation so intimate in nature, and the freedom to talk about it which has been hushed for so long.

Rukmini Bhuyan

BA(H) Political Science, Second Year

Section 377 Judgment

The past year witnessed one of the revolutionary developments towards equality, self dignity and liberty. It involved section 377 of the Indian Penal code which was introduced in the 1860's, most commonly known to the people as the law that affects the LGBTQ+ community. A part of this section deals with 'Unnatural Offences' which states, "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 term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine." This section was first questioned by an NGO, the Naz Foundation in 2001. In 2009, it was decriminalised by the Delhi High Court, however the Supreme Court in 2013 overruled the 2009 High Court ruling, recriminalising unnatural sex between two individuals. In the light of this, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court headed by CJI Dipak Misra began hearing petitions regarding this section and a monumental verdict brought us a step closer to social equality and freedom by lifting this ban on gay sex. In 2018 the apex court bench decriminalised the part of this section stating that it was in contradiction to Article 14 and Article 21 of the constitution and in violation with the Right to Privacy thereby legalising adult consensual gay sex in private. This verdict marks an important milestone for not just the LGBTQ+ community but also for liberty and equality. We must remember that we are yet to reach the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow and this marks only the beginning; change in the attitude of people, removal of social stigma, legalising marriage and adoption rights are required.

Sugandha Vats

BA(H) Political Science, Second Year

Adultery- No more a criminal offence

The Supreme Court in a milestone judgement, in September 2018 ruled that adultery is not a criminal offence, thus striking down the century-old law which was introduced during the time of the British. Section 497 of the IPC said that adultery is defined as a person having sex with a man's wife without taking prior consent from the husband. Women could neither be charged with adultery, nor could they be the complainant, the law only applied to men. It looked at women, merely as the husband's property, meant to do his bidding without the agency of their own. Several key points were made in the judgement. First, Section 497 was declared arbitrary since it served to preserve the 'proprietary rights' a husband has over his wife. Moreover, the wife could not file a complaint against her husband or his lover. There were no provisions to deal with a married man having an affair with an unmarried woman or a widow. Second, the judgement stated that "A woman cannot be asked to think as a man or as how the society desires. Such a thought is abominable, for it slaughters her core identity." Third, it was acknowledged that a husband does not own his wife and that equality is the governing parameter. Fourth, the court observed that the very nature of Section 497 was in contravention to Article 14 and 15, which hold every citizen as equal and prohibited discrimination respectively. Since it saw women as subordinates of men, it went against the Constitution. Fifth, the judgement made it amply clear that by criminalizing the act, the law was entering an extremely private sphere, that of matrimonial life which would deprive individuals of dignity and privacy upheld by Ar. 21 of the Constitution.

Hoping to bring about a change in the societal mindset, former CJI Misra said, "We are of the view that there cannot be a patriarchal monarchy over the daughter or, for that matter, husband's monarchy over wife. That apart, there cannot be a community exposition of masculine dominance."

Bhumika Nebhnani
BA(H) Political Science, First Year

Sabarimala

"Several women try sneaking in. Some come dressed as men but we can spot them just by looking at their face," claimed a security guard at the Sabarimala temple, as reported in an *India Today* story.

In contemporary times, the cases of injustices against women can be heard very often. The recurrence of such cases has been so normalized since the past few decades that the measures taken by the judiciary and the constitutional provisions have not proven to be effective enough. The Sabarimala Case Verdict is an important step towards addressing these gaps and moving towards a more gender equal society .

Temple is the holy place devoted to the worship of God and Goddess by the devotees irrespective of their gender. However the nurturing of the society since the past, bringing along its taboos, has framed the mindsets of the people in such a manner that injustice is embedded within our rituals. One such holy place is the temple dedicated to *Lord Ayyappa*, situated in the lapse of nature, Kerala..

One of the age old stereotypes associated with the rituals of this temple was that women in the age 10-50 years were not permitted to enter this holy place. A group of five women lawyers had challenged rule 3(b) of the Kerala Hindu places of Public Worship Rules, 1965. Advocate Indra Jaising who represented petitioners said the restriction went against article 14, 15, 17 of the Constitution and is discriminatory in nature and stigmatized women.

The temple board favored the ritual of barring women from entering the temple based on the argument that Lord Ayyappa took an oath of celibacy. The High Court ruled that only the 'tantri' or priest was empowered to decide on traditions.

The altercation on this issue ultimately paved its way to the Supreme Court. After the long struggle for justice, on 2nd August 2018, the Supreme Court in a 5 judge constitutional bench headed by CJI Dipak Mishra ruled with a 4:1 majority that women of all age groups can enter Sabarimala temple in Kerala. The judgement stated that the temple practice violates the right of Hindu women and it is gender discriminatory. It is based on the idea that patriarchy cannot be allowed to trump equality in devotion.

Preventing women's entry to the Sabarimala temple with an irrational and obsolete notion of 'purity' clearly offends the equality clauses in the constitution. With the verdict, justice was finally served, thus, moving a step forward towards a more gender just society.

Mili Bharadwaj

Farmer's Predicament

National Sample Survey Organisation, in a special 2003 Situation Assessment study, reported that 40 per cent of Indian farmers, given a choice, would “take up some other career”.

It is a depressing fact that even after half of India's population works on farms, farming contributes only 15% to the country's GDP. The issue of farmers distress have always been there but the kind of mass suicides that have taken place in last few years is matter of concern. P. Sainath said " This country could have a joint special session of Parliament at midnight to pass the GST bill but it could not find a single day, for its tens of millions of farmers in the past fourteen years." The problem with today's agriculture sector are wide, ranging from disjuncture between farmers' interests and the interest of the political representatives. And shockingly, large number of farmer suicides have been reported in those areas which are relatively agriculturally developed, which have seen strong peasant movements and where the leadership of parties come from farming communities as pointed by K C Suri in his article " Political Economy of Agrarian Distress."

With agriculture no longer viewed as a conduit for upward mobility, the nature of farmers' demands has changed to seeking options outside of agriculture.

Also, large proportions of political representatives who claim to come from a farmer's background, farmer's interest hardly find a space in their imaginations.

The recent Kisan Mukti March organised by ALL INDIA KISAN SANGHARSH COORDINATION COMMITTEE in November 2018 demanded better crop prices, drought relief and loan waivers and a three week parliament session on agrarian distress apart from demand of bills on debt and remunerative prices, and also the mega water crisis, land reforms, the rights of women, Dalit and Adivasi farmers.

Thus, in dealing with today's crisis in agriculture where farmers have to face tough competition due to liberalisation policies, it becomes important to recognise what kind of future we want for our agriculture; Corporate driven or Community driven, because by simply letting people abandon primary sector would not tackle the problem and moreover would increase unemployment, slums and poverty. One major change that has taken place over years is that large section of middle class have also joined hands in support of the farmers, one such amorphous organisation is Nation for "Farmers", which is not a farmers' organisation but include groups like doctors, teachers, students, lawyers , labourers from different state.

It is time for us to relook and reevaluate the solemn resolve to constitute India into a socialist democratic republic. Farmers being an important part of our country, we need to revisit whether the ideal of justice, equality , liberty has been secured for them in the present situation? If not , how and when, is the question.

Pallavi Raj

BA(H) Political Science, Third Year

TRANS BILL 2018: CONTEXTS AND CONTESTATIONS

In contemporary India, the word 'trans' has come to mean different things. It can be representative of an identity, embodiment or action. For some it is linked to the ideas of becoming and for others, un-becoming. The idea of who is a trans person is dynamic, it changes forms and articulations upon each utterance and yet, it is also stable, marked in difference to heteronormativity and the binary nature of gender. Nonetheless, to universalize trans subjectivity is to erase narratives of trans persons which emerge out of peculiar contexts and to un-see class, caste and other socio-cultural differences.

The trans community in India has a long history of being at the receiving end of unthinkable violence which manifests itself in various forms-structural, cultural and direct. This experience of violence has been instrumental in pushing trans persons to margins of citizenship. The trans community and the Indian State have a peculiar relationship. Contemporary governing structures in India relegate gender non conforming bodies to the margins of the society in a way which is implicit and discreet in the present globalized age. The struggle of the trans community has surfaced inconsistencies in discourses, laws and practices of governance. The recent debates around the Transgender Persons (Protections of Rights) Bill 2018, highlighting the faulty foundations of the assimilationist strategies of the Indian State have brought to surface this thorny relationship between this vulnerable community and the State. This bill has failed to meet the expectations of the stakeholders and reflects inconsistencies at multiple levels with respect to the landmark NALSA Judgment which was passed by the Supreme Court in 2014.

This includes District Screening Committee for approval of gender, which is in stark violation of the NALSA Judgement's provision for right to self-identification of gender as part of the right to dignity and autonomy under Article 21 of the Constitution, lesser punishments for perpetrators of offences on trans persons vis-a-vis cisgender persons; criminalization of traditional Hijra livelihoods by reiterating criminalization of begging, conflating intersex and gender non-conforming persons with trans persons and constituting National Council instead of a Commission at Central and State level, without adequate representation of the gender-diverse community, autonomy and powers to enforce its directives.

Despite mass protests and articulation of the lapses in the bill and the antithetical nature with respect to the NALSA judgment and the broader framework of fundamental human rights, the inaction on the part of the state institutions speaks volumes about the conception of inclusion the state institutions uphold. Perhaps we can say that the state, along with its interlocking system of power and discourses, displays an inconsistent and rather, nebulous position when it comes to the rights of the trans bodies. The Indian State-encompassing government, law and social policy, the courts, the criminal system and the police- functions as a conduit for this system of inequality enveloping the trans bodies. It plays important roles in maintaining social values, controlling 'social order' and enforcing social power. Given the current wave of discourse, the state is thought of as the central body in institutionalizing legal and social changes to support improving conditions for the trans community but it is also imperative to look at who is benefiting from this 'progress' and how far this is shaping the culture of peace by transforming the violence the trans community faces. Most importantly, there is a need to situate the trans 'citizen' in the contemporary legal as well as social order.

Eshika Gombar

Pulwama Attack

On 14th February, 2019, a convoy carrying personnel from the Indian Central Reserve Police Force in the Pulwama District of Jammu and Kashmir was attacked by a suicide bomber. This resulted in the death of 40 personnel of the CRPF. Additionally, 35 people sustained non fatal injuries. It was one of the deadliest attacks carried out in Kashmir in decades.

This attack saw the nationwide outpour of grief and mass protests throughout the country demanding justice and swift action against militants. The Indian government responded by giving a 'free hand' to the armed forces to retaliate against militants in Jammu and Kashmir and Indian troops in the state started an intense search for militant hideouts. A 'complete isolation' of Pakistan, by using available diplomatic options, was also promised. The US, UK and France supported India's demands of blacklisting Jaish-e-Mohammed Chief in the United Nations Security Council.

India also did not shy away from using military means to retaliate and targeted terror camps in Pakistani territory. On 26th February 2019, 12 Mirage 2000H fighter jets of the Indian Air Force crossed the Line of Control to perform an airstrike on terrorist camps in Balakot, Pakistan, which was celebrated by the Indian people as a decisive action against terrorist outfits. Pakistani air force, their response to violated Indian According to the was done with an military India. The tense while, created a escalation of possibility of war.

Mahananda Ray
*B.A. (H) Political
Year*



in what they called the airstrikes, airspace. Indian forces, it intent to target installations in situation, for a fear of further violence and the

Science Third

ME(N)TOO?

With the world being taken to a furore and women claiming to be victims of harassment at different levels and in varied contexts, we have mistakenly linked the #MeToo movement solely to females. And sadly, that is exactly what we all believe, that it is the women ONLY who face harassment. It is high time we realise that men are not only the perpetrators but also the victims. Harassment takes place wherever consent is absent, wherever there is an underlying power difference. Harassment is something faced equally by both women and men.

A woman of magnanimity

No denying,

She had an aura of her own.

Little did I know

It was a trap

That sweetness in her tone,

Late night calls,

Random meetings,

And every other task.

I followed as said

By my 'boss'

Until she threw off her mask.

One night she rang,

And that was when

She had a proposal to make.

"Either at my place

Or out of office"

Your career, my dear, is at stake"

My brain went blank.

I must admit,

It froze in stark fear.

If I didn't abide

To her dictates,

I knew the end was near.

Her unwelcoming touch
Forced on me,
And nights in the bed that we spent.
Oh wish I could utter
“Not my consent”
It is all that I repent.
So here I stand,
Marred by my scars
That I can’t help but hide.
For a man to claim,
He has been raped
Is a thing for the world to chide.
And thus if I wish to survive
It is a thing I ought to hide.

Deepshikha
BA(H) Political Science, First Year

The Red Brick Home

When you first walk through the majestic corridors of this institution the world calls Miranda House, and I call home, you feel more than just one emotion. Elated, proud that you made it, intimidated by the strong women around you, inspired by the same women, but most of all, surreal.

Is this even real? Can this exist? Can a perfect amalgamation of perspicacious adulthood, beautiful youth and merrymaking exist?

When I first came to Miranda, all of these thoughts and more came to me day and night, I couldn't believe that I was finally living the dream - and I do not exaggerate a word I say.

Of course, the first emotion I felt was that of pure, unadulterated awe. I was in awe of all these brilliant women around me, with their beautiful jhumkas and strong opinions, on dates with their PAM cheese burgers as they cheated on the nescafé frappe...shhh.

There was excitement and there was apprehension - how does one just smoothly slip into and mix with this vibrant crowd?

Then things fell into place. I realised that these women have grown over these 3 years they have spent in this building, and as I share my plate of Rajma Chawal with them, I learn something new every day. I grow with them.

Miranda House has a unique beauty to it. The cats, the professors, the kiosks and the students develop everyday, in harmony, and they share their stories sitting on the mushroom huts or being carefree in the lawns basked by the sun.

I do not have a Miranda House story to share. Miranda House is a story in itself

Shireen Manocha

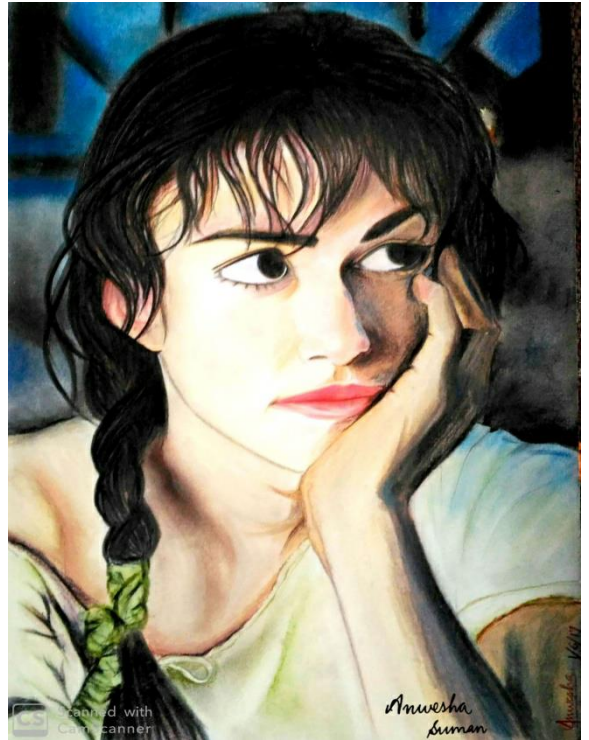
BA(H) Political Science, Third year



In the twilight

A bird flew down and perched
on my window pane,
Me, was lying on the
Last book I have read
My cheeks were kissed again and again
by the words..
The protagonist was walking
through my head..
Repeating his monologue
The bird was shrieking
in an obscure way
Me not getting neither the
protagonist nor the bird ,
turned another page to ambiguity

Nerissa Hameed TK
BA (hons) Political Science, First year



किस्सा कुर्सी का

पिछले वर्ष अचानक ही संसद जाना हो गया। जी नहीं, 'परंपरागत' तरीके से नहीं, मैं अपने विद्यालय के बच्चों के साथ शैक्षणिक भ्रमण पर गया था। अब चुनाव लड़ने की न तो हममें हैसियत है, न ही हिम्मत। खैर हैसियत और हिम्मत तो बच्चों को पढ़ाने की भी मैंने बड़ी मुश्किल से ही पाई है, किंतु बच्चे मुझे काफी पसंद करते हैं। कारण अज्ञात है क्योंकि उनकी कक्षाएँ लेने से ज़्यादा मैं उन्हें अनुभव देने में अधिक विश्वास करता हूँ; अतः कक्षा को वाद विवाद कक्ष बनाने और भ्रमण पे ले जाना मेरी आदतों में शुमार रहा है। वैसे, बच्चों को संसद ले जाने की हिम्मत विरले ही जुटा पाते हैं। अपनी किताबों में संसद को लोकतंत्र के आधारस्तम्भ के तौर पे पढ़ने वाले इन अबोध शावकों के दिमाग में बड़ी कम उम्र में ही कच्चा, अस्पृश्य आदर्शवाद भर दिया जाता है। "माता पिता का सम्मान करो", "बाल मज़दूरी अत्याचार है", "संसद लोकतंत्र का मंदिर है", "आवाम की आवाज़ लोकतंत्र की रक्षक है", इत्यादि अनेक विरोधाभासी आदर्शों की खिचड़ी, बाहर बैठे अनेक बीरबल मीडिया की आँच पर पकाते हैं पर आँच में दाल-भात कभी उबल ही नहीं पाता, हमें पता है। अब आखिरकार बच्चों को बैठना तो बड़ों की छोड़ी कुर्सी पर ही है, अब चाहे उसके पैर टूटे हों या उसकी तशरीफ़ में बड़ी सी कील निकली हुई हो। कुर्सी तो कुर्सी है, खास है, परंपरागत है, विरासत है, बदली तो जा नहीं सकती। खैर, यही सब सोचते-बूझते मैं बड़ी हिम्मत जुटाकर बच्चों को संसद ले गया। हमें बड़ी इज़्ज़त से अंदर ले जाया गया और फिर दर्शक दीर्घा में खड़ा कर दिया गया। नीचे बहुत सारी कुर्सियाँ भी खड़ी थीं, ये देख मुझे बड़ा संतोष हुआ-चलो, हम खड़े हैं तो हमारे प्रतिनिधि भी ठिठाई से बैठे नहीं हैं। अभी मैं ढंग से खुश भी नहीं हो पाया था कि सफ़ेदपोश कुछ सज्जन भीतर घुसे और बड़ी बेतरतीबी से एक दूसरे को धकियाते कुर्सियों पर बैठ गए। मैं भौंचक रह गया। बच्चे पूछने लगे- "मास्टरजी, क्या ये कुर्सियाँ इन्होंने ही बनाई हैं जो इतने जम के बैठे हैं? बोलिये न मास्टरजी!" इस प्रश्न का उत्तर सुनकर बच्चे बड़े निराश हो गए- "नहीं बच्चों! ये कुर्सियाँ जिन्होंने बनाई हैं, वो तो शायद जानते भी नहीं कि इनपे बैठता कौन है"। मेरे पास सचमुच और कोई जवाब न था। फिर संसद की कार्यवाही बड़ी कुर्सी वाली मोहतरमा ने शुरू की। वो कुर्सी ज़रूरी मालूम पड़ती थी, बाकी सारी कुर्सियों की शकलें उसकी तरफ थीं।

कुर्सी के आविष्कारक भी बड़े विचित्र इंसान रहे होंगे। कुर्सी बना दी, चेहरे बना दिये, साज सज्जा कर दी, लेकिन एक बार कोई अपनी तशरीफ़ लेकर जमकर बैठ जाए, तो भई सब गायब! फिर तो बनाने वाले की आँखें किसी के पीठ के पसीने से ज़्यादा कुछ न देख पाएँगी- "अरे भई, नेताजी मेहनत कर रहे, देखो कितना पसीना पसीना हुए हैं!" अब भले नेताजी आगे बैठ झपकियाँ लेते हुए कराहते पंखे को गालियाँ दे रहे हों।

मैं अब भी देख सकता हूँ कुर्सी बनाने वालों को राशन की दुकानों की कतारों में खड़े, दरारों से भरी सूखी धरती पर हाथों के बीच माथा पकड़े खड़े, साहूकार के आगे हाथ जोड़े खड़े, मंदिरों के दरवाजों के बाहर जूते हाथ में पकड़े खड़े, ये वे लोग हैं जो सारी ज़िंदगी एड़ियों पे खड़े होकर खाना छूने की गहमागहमी में बिता देते हैं, कोई आश्चर्य नहीं कि उनकी बनाई कुर्सियाँ भी खड़ी ही रहती हैं और कुछ और लोग अंततः उनपर बैठ जाते हैं। कभी कभी ये खड़े रहने वाले बगावती हो उठते हैं, और कुर्सीवालों के खिलाफ़ जंग का ऐलान कर देते हैं और ऐसा करते हुए भी ये अक्सर खड़े ही रहते हैं या चलते हैं-चलो दिल्ली, संसद कूच वगैरह वगैरह। लेकिन फिर भी जब कुर्सीवाले उठने से इनकार कर देते हैं तो इन्हें ज़मीन पर बैठना ही पड़ता है। मज़े की बात यह है कि ये लोग तब भी ज़मीन पर बैठे होते हैं और इनके बीच में मंडूक सभा में आए सर्पराज की तरह फन फैलाए एक कुर्सी खड़ी होती है। यह कुर्सी बड़ी ही प्रतीकात्मक होती है। इसपर बैठते वही लोग हैं जो हमेशा से इनपर बैठते आए हैं, क्योंकि ज़मीन पे बैठने वाले के बैठने से, उसकी मैली धोती

की धूल से उसकी ही बनाई कुर्सी के मैले हो जाने का भय रहता है, और कुर्सीवाले तो ज़मीन पर बैठ नहीं सकते।

इसी कुर्सी पर बैठकर सरकारी प्रसाद बाँटे जाते हैं। अधिकार, पॉलिसी इत्यादि। इस वितरण का अपना एक विचित्र समीकरण है। जब एक कुर्सी दूसरी कुर्सी को कुछ देती है, जो पदवी, रिश्त इत्यादि "महत्वपूर्ण" वस्तुएँ हैं, राजनैतिक स्थिरता के हेतु अपरिहार्य हैं, तो दोनों कुर्सीधारी महोदय खड़े होकर, एक दूसरे का हाथ मिलाकर लेनदेन करते हैं। किंतु, जब मामला अधिकार, सब्सिडी, सुरक्षा इत्यादि दाल-भातीय वस्तुओं का हो, तो इन्हें कुर्सी से नीचे ज़मीन पे रेत की तरह बिखरी हथेलियों पर लापरवाही से फेंका जाता है। किसी के हाथ लग गई तो ठीक वरना रेत में ही गुम हो जाएँगी। फिर ध्यान कुर्सी से दोबारा माँगने पर नहीं बल्कि रेत खंगालने पर लग जाएगा और मज़े की बात तो ये है कि जब तक कोई दोबारा माँगने की सोचे, कुर्सी-वाला ही बदल चुका होगा।

और साथी जनता मित्रों, गौर करने वाली बात यह है, कि ये कुर्सी-वाद केवल सरकारी महकमे में नहीं है। मसलन आप किसी अस्पताल चले जाइये, बुखार से जलते या अपच से कराहते, और सबसे पहले जो सवाल आप को पूछना होगा या आपसे किसी साथी मरीज़ द्वारा पूछा जाएगा, वह होगा-डॉक्टर साहब बैठे हैं? अर्थात्, भले आप दर्द से पस्त हों, किन्तु आप कतार में पचीं लेकर खड़े रहेंगे और आपके तीमारदार अंदर किसी कुर्सी पर आराम से बैठ किसी पत्रिका के पन्ने पलट रहे होंगे। कुर्सी आपकी तरह ही खड़ी होगी, अपनी टाँगें सँभाले पर उसका हाल पूछने वाला कोई न होगा। और उस कुर्सी को बनाने वाला उसी अस्पताल से दो सौ किलोमीटर दूर किसी साधारण से गाँव में अपनी गर्भवती बहु के लिए एम्बुलेंस बुलाने लाठी टेकता घर से निकल रहा होगा।

कुर्सीवाद केवल समाज और इंसान तक ही सीमित नहीं है। देवताओं की विरक्ति का भाव लिए आपको चंद कुर्सियाँ खड़ी मिल जाएँगी जिनपर बैठे होंगे फूल मालाओं से लदे धार्मिक अफ़ीमची जो अपनी अफ़ीम की दुकान खोले आपको सतरंगी सपनों का लोभ दिखाएँगे, रचाएँगे कल्पना और निर्भरता की अफ़ीम के नशे में उन्मत्त एक आस्था का संसार! और उन कुर्सियों को बनाने वाले दूर कहीं किसी अज्ञात से लोकदेवता की मनुहार कर एक जून की रोटी की भीख माँग रहे होंगे।

कुर्सी भी चंचला होती है, स्थाई नहीं होती। जैसे राजे-महाराजे थे, तो वे सिंहासन पर विराजमान होते थे, अंग्रेज़ आये तो उन्हें चेयर का शौक था और भारत आज़ाद हुआ तो कुर्सी ज़रूरी हो गई। जिन्हें कुर्सी नहीं मिलती, वो घूम घूमकर पर्चे और भाषण बाँटते हैं और जिन्हें मिल जाती है, वो संसद में बैठकर पैसे छाँटते हैं, समय काटते हैं। कई बार तो कुर्सी पर ही सो जाते हैं। ऐसा देखकर ये कतई मत सोचिएगा कि कुर्सी जाती ही नहीं। कुर्सी कोई पीछे से खींच दे तो चली जाती है, लेकिन जब कुर्सीधारी चले जाते हैं तब कुर्सी नहीं जाती। मैं देख रहा हूँ, प्रधानमंत्री विदेश यात्राओं पर तो जाते रहते हैं पर कुर्सी नहीं जाती। कहीं नहीं जाती। वो यहीं रहती है। क्योंकि वो वहाँ टिक नहीं पाएगी, वहाँ उसके नाप का कोई नहीं। गरीबों की बनाई कुर्सी है, उस पर उनका प्रधानमंत्री तो बैठ सकता है पर विदेश का मेहमान नहीं।

प्रधानमंत्री विकास लाने विदेश जाते हैं। विकास को लाना कोई कठिन काम नहीं है। वो आराम से आ जाता है। खुद पहल करके आता है लेकिन जब उसे यहाँ लाकर कुर्सी पर बिठाते हैं तो वो 'एडजस्ट' नहीं हो पाता। कुर्सी की बाँहें काटी जाती हैं, टाँगें बढ़ाई जाती हैं पर विकास बैठ नहीं पाता। अब विकास तो खड़ा रहेगा नहीं। तो सब उसे अपनी अपनी कुर्सी पर बिठाने की कोशिश करते रहते हैं। विकास बड़ा है तो कुर्सी भी बड़ी होनी चाहिए। बड़ी कुर्सी मतलब बड़ी तशरीफ़, माने बड़ी पतलून, माने बड़ी जेबें। विकास की जेब बहुत बड़ी है, इसीलिए वो हर तरह की कुर्सी पर नहीं बैठ सकता। वो सबसे बड़ी कुर्सी पर बैठता है। कई बार तो ऐसा होता है कि विकास के लायक कोई कुर्सी मिलती ही नहीं, तो विकास नाराज़ नहीं होता। आखिर वो बैठने के लिए ही तो आया है। तब कुर्सी बाहर से मँगाई जाती है, वही से जहाँ से विकास आया था। जब विकास बैठ जाता है तो चंद कुर्सियाँ बच जाती हैं। जो किसी काम की नहीं होतीं। फिर इनपे

वे लोग बैठते हैं जिनके पास पहले कुर्सी थी ही नहीं। इन कुर्सियों को कहीं किनारे घसीट दिया जाता है और वे सारे खड़े खड़े थके हारे फटेहाल इन टूटी कुर्सियों पर बैठ जाते हैं। वो इस देश के किसी छोटे से विकास की बनाई कुर्सी भी हो सकती है।

विकास चालाक है। वो अपनी कुर्सी कहीं नहीं छोड़ता। वो जहाँ जाता है, अपनी कुर्सी साथ ले जाता है क्योंकि उसे मालूम है कि उसके नाप की कुर्सी यहाँ नहीं मिलेगी। टूटी कुर्सियों वाले किनारे से बैठकर उसे देखते हैं। उसके बराबर में पहुँचने की कोशिश करते हैं। ये ज़रूरी है क्योंकि विकास से ज़मीन पर बैठकर तो बात हो ही नहीं सकती। और शायद लोकतंत्र, इन्हीं चंद कुर्सियों पर टिका है!

-शाम्भवी तिवारी

स्नातक राजनीति विज्ञान

द्वितीय वर्ष

बचपन

मम्मी कहती है कि अब मैं बच्ची नहीं रही

पर बचपन तो अब भी महफूज़ था।

और मासूमियत..

वो भी हर लहज़े में अपनी साँसे नहीं छोड़ रही थी।

बचपन जैसे दुनियावी भार के नीचे दफन हो चुका था

पर हँसी तो अब भी बिना मिलावट की थी।

आँखों में अब तेज़ था

पर हर डाँट पर आँखों में आँसू आज भी झलकते थे।

शायद अब चलने के लिए मम्मी – पापा की उंगली की ज़रूरत नहीं थी

पर चोट पर मरहम के लिए दवा आज भी उनके ही हाथ थे।

सयानापन सब कुछ बदल रहा था

जीने के नए सलीके में बेमतलब कर्जे भी चढ़ रहे थे

पर बेबाक हरकते आज भी जिंदादिल थी।

मम्मी कहती है बचपन जा चुका

पर बचपन का अक्स आज भी हाथ थामे मेरे साथ चलता है।

सब कुछ जिंदा था

हम साथ बड़े हो रहे थे

मैं और मेरा बचपन।

वैशाली सक्करवाल

स्नातक राजनीति विज्ञान, तृतीय वर्ष

चहरा

बैठे एक जगह कितने चेहरे देखूँ मैं
कुछ पहचाने , तो कुछ अनजाने चहरों के बीच रहती हूँ मैं।
मेरा मन असमंजस की नाव में है डूब रहा,
अनगिनत चहरों के भाव में, भावुक हो उठा है
मोह मेरा।
कैसे देखूँ कौन चेहरा है मन का पाक,
यहाँ हर चहरे ने पहने हैं अच्छाई के नकाब।
कैद हो गई हूँ उन्हीं नकाबों के पिंजरे में मैं,
काट दिए गए हैं पंख मेरे , उड़ान के आदी जो
थे।
हर रोज़, हर दिन से रात,
मेरी नज़र चहरों के पहरो में खामोश है,
चुप्पी की आड़ में वो दर्द आज मेरे नाम है।
आँखें मूंदे , मैं आज भी उसी जगह बैठी हूँ
कैदी हूँ , पर चेहरों के पहरो से मैं मुखातिब
आज भी नहीं हूँ।



वैशाली सक्करवाल

स्नातक राजनीति विज्ञान, तृतीय वर्ष

किसान

जो किसान खेत में टिटहरी के
अंडे नज़र आने पर उतनी
जगह की जोत छोड़ देता है,
वो यात्रियों से भरी बस के
कांच कैसे फोड़ देता है?
जो किसान खड़ी फसल में
चिड़िया के अंडे /चूज़े देख
रही फसल ही काटता है,
वो किसी की संपत्ति
कैसे लूट सकता है?

जो किसान

पिराडे में लगी आग में कूदकर
बिल्ली के बच्चे बचा लेता है,
वो किसी के घर में
आग कैसे लगा देता है?
जो किसान दूध की एक बूंद भी
ज़मीन पर गिर जाने से
उसे पोंछकर माथे पर
लगा लेता है
वो उस अमृत को
सड़को पर कैसे बहा देता है?

जो किसान

गाड़ी का हॉर्न बजने पर
सड़क छोड़, छोर पर खड़ा हो जाता है,
वो कैसे किसी का
रास्ता रोक सकता है?
जो किसान
चींटी को अंडा ले जाते

चिड़िया को धूल से नहाते देख
बता सकता है कि
पानी कब बरसेगा,
वो कैसे किसी के बहकावे में आएगा ?
ये दुखद घड़ी क्यों आई
कुछ पुरुस्कार में फूल गए
नदी से संवाद करने वाले
किसान से संवाद करना भूल गए।
जो किसान
अपनी फसल की
रखवाली के लिए
खुले आसमान के नीचे
आंधी तूफान, हिंसक जानवर से
नहीं डरता,
वो बंदूक की गोली से क्या डरेगा?
वरन् मीठी बोली से मानेगा ।
एक बार उसके अंदर का
दर्द अच्छे से जानिए।
वो अन्नदाता है,
उसे केवल मतदाता मत मानिये
अपनी पूरी ताकत झोकिये
किसान को गुमराह होने से रोकिये ।

पूजा

स्नातक राजनीति विज्ञान, प्रथम वर्ष

शब्द

केवल अढ़ाई अक्षरों का ही खेल है,
मायने ढूंढने खातिर इनका ही मेल है,
माध्यक दबात सहारा लिए खड़ा है,

असल में यह शब्द ही तो हैं,
जो व्यक्ति एक दूजे से अलग अडिग खड़ा है।

अडिग खड़ा कर रहा दो धुरियों का निर्माण,
इक शीतल-शिथिर दूजा काक सा शैतान,
कर्कष बोली है उसकी, है हृदय रंग बदन लपेटे,
शब्द केवल अढ़ाई अक्षरों का ही खेल है,
मायने ढूंढने खातिर इनका ही मेल है।

कबीर कहे कि भांति-भांति शब्द-संयोजन,
खोखले बाह्य मुखौटों की ही भीत है,
भीतर दबाए विचारों की भी तीथ है,
शब्द केवल अढ़ाई अक्षरों का ही खेल है,
मायने ढूंढने खातिर इनका ही मेल है।

द्वंद्वारम्भ क्षणभर व्यंग्यों की मुठभेड़ है,
आरंभ में विचार तो अंत में सभी को खेद है,
सूरत बदलती ये चाल भेड़ है,
स्वयं विचारांगुत न होते,
दूजे के विचारों से बैर है,
शब्द केवल अढ़ाई अक्षरों का ही खेल है,
मायने ढूंढने खातिर इनका ही मेल है।

प्रिया
स्नातक राजनीति विज्ञान
तृतीय वर्ष

राजनीति

एकसुबहहोऐसी
राष्ट्रनिर्माणकाहोकाम,
हरहाथमेंहोताकत
महिलाओंकाहोसम्मान
सामूहिकभारतकाहोउत्थान।

कितनीथीकसमें
कितनेथेवादे, थेसारेझूठे
होतेगरइनकेवादेसच्चे
भूखेपेटरोनहींरहेहोतेबच्चे।

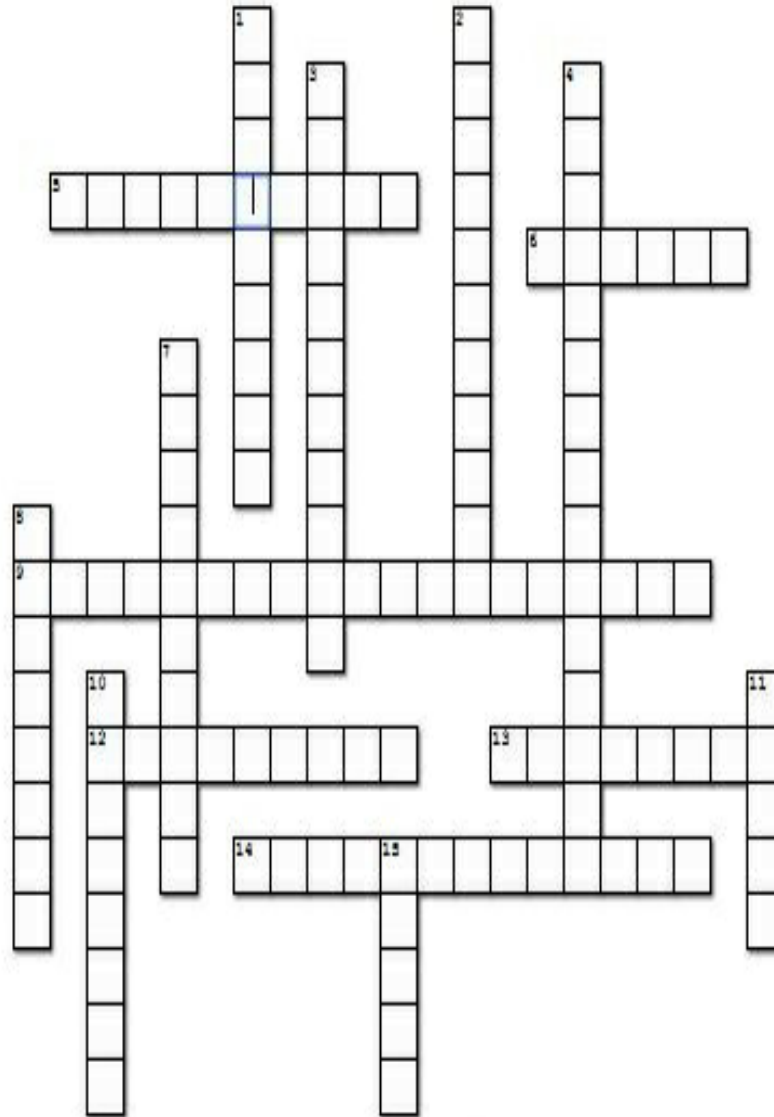
आजहमारीगलीमेंफिररोशनीआई
कुछवादोंकेशोर,
तोकुछनम्रआवाज़ेआई
लगताहै... चुनावकीलहरफिरचलीआई।

वोटअस्त्रहैं, वोटशस्त्रहैं
लोकतंत्रकामहामंत्रहै
प्रजातंत्रकामहायज्ञहै
मतदाताओंकाहुंकारहै।

नाकमलमेरा
नासाईकिलमेरी
नाहाथीमेरा
नासाथीमेरा
शिक्षितसमाजकैसाहै,
बटवारेकीराहचल
कौनसाविकासढूँढताहै,
क्यागलतसही, ज़रागौरकर
मिलकरनवभारतकानिर्माणकर।

अमृता रानी

स्नातक राजनीति विज्ञान, प्रथम वर्ष



Across

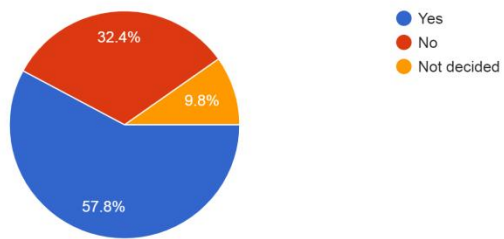
- 5. Two treatises of government, Man by nature is free
- 6. Leviathan
- 9. The vindication of the rights of the women
- 12. Greek philosopher, Author Politics and Poetics
- 13. Theory of utilitarianism
- 14. Personal is political

Down

- 1. The communist Manifesto, Theory of Materialism
- 2. Indian economist who was awarded a Nobel prize in Economic Science
- 3. The Prince, Politics have no relations to morals
- 4. The Marxist theory of Cultural Hegemony
- 7. The Father of Economics
- 8. The annihilation of caste
- 10. Arthashastra
- 11. Aristotle tutor, Allegory of cave
- 15. Leader of the Bolshevik Party, The head of the new Soviet Government

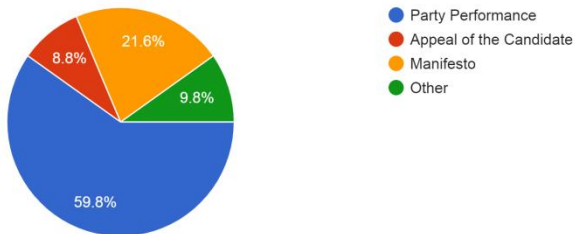
Will you vote in the upcoming 2019 elections?

102 responses



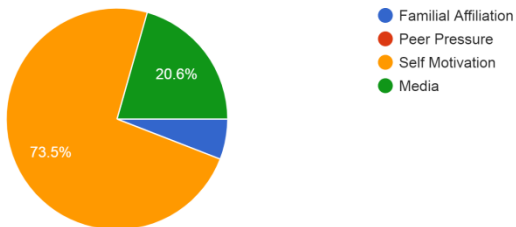
What is your basis of voting?

102 responses



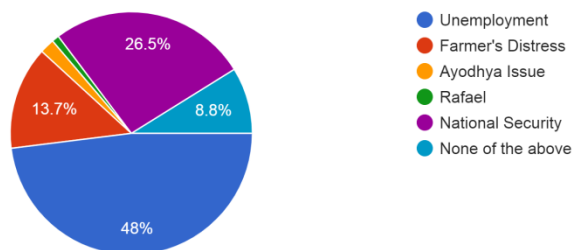
Which is the most influential factor for you while voting

102 responses



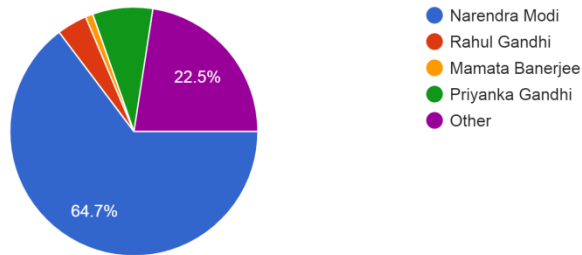
Which is a big election issue according to you?

102 responses



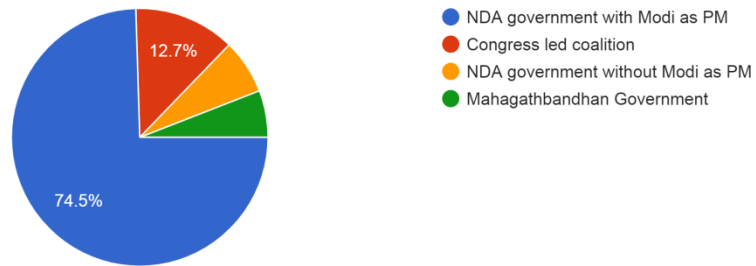
Who is your preferred PM candidate?

102 responses



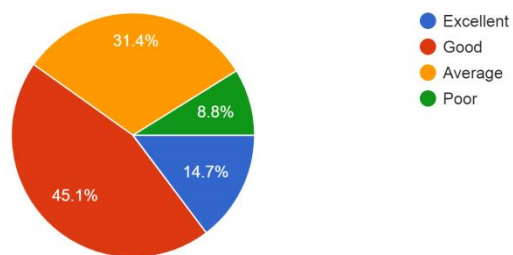
Which is the most likely outcome after elections?

102 responses



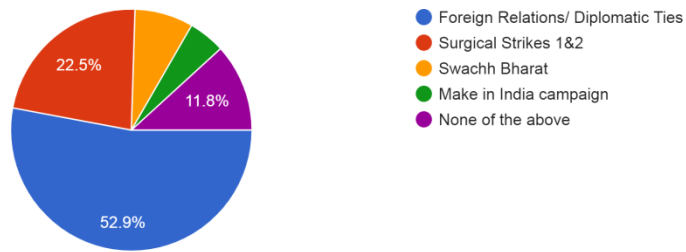
How would you rate the current government's performance?

102 responses



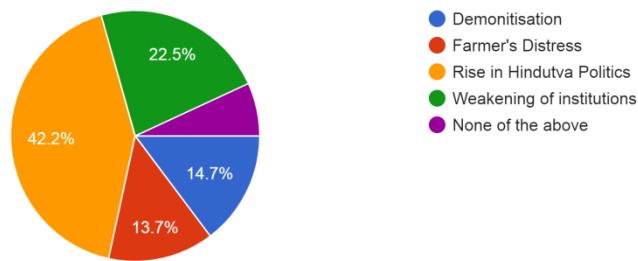
What is the current government's biggest achievement?

102 responses



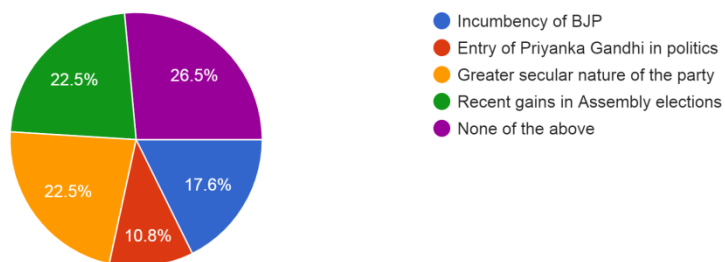
What is the current government's biggest failure?

102 responses



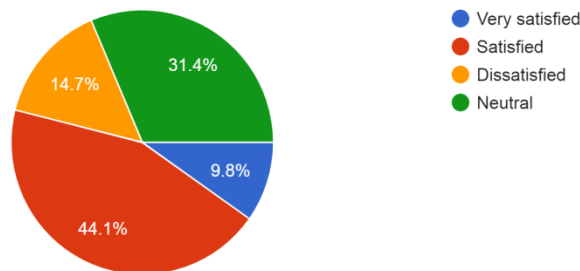
What are the factors working in favour of the UPA

102 responses



How satisfied are you with the conduct of elections in India

102 responses



2019 ELECTION SURVEY

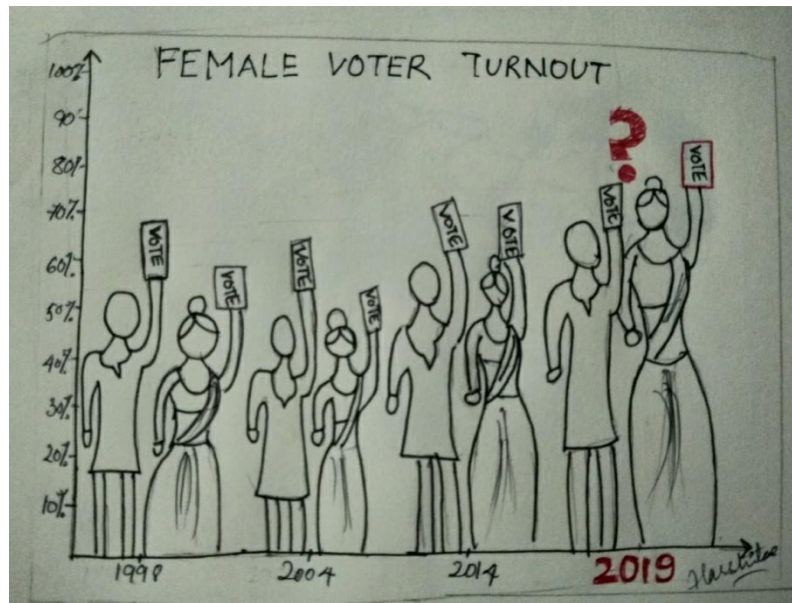
The stage is set for the upcoming 2019 Lok Sabha elections with the first phase beginning from 11th April. While parties are leaving no stone unturned to win in what is being claimed as the biggest election in Indian history, the first year political science students of Miranda House took the initiative to conduct a survey to analyse the voting patterns of the youth since they constitute more than half the population.

Through the survey which covered several universities and colleges, it has been found that 57.8% of the youth is willing to vote while 32.4% feel otherwise. 9.8% are still unsure whether they wish to vote or not. Their basis of voting is largely based on party performance with 59.8% people agreeing with it whereas only 8.8% feel that the personal appeal of the candidate matters. Moreover a whopping 73.5% youth is eager to vote based on their free will rather than being influenced by family or friends' political affiliation. The major election issue for 48% of the sample is unemployment, followed by national security, farmer's distress, Ayodhya issue and with only 1% viewing Rafael as an election issue. On being asked their preferred Prime Ministerial candidate, 64.7% voted for Narendra Modi, 3.9% for Rahul Gandhi and only 1% for Mamata Banerjee. However the current government's performance is rated excellent by only 31.4% people with 8.8% rating it as poor. 52.9% of the sample views foreign relations and diplomatic ties enhanced by the present government as its biggest achievement while 42.2% see the rise in Hindutva politics as its principal failure. On being asked about the factors working in favour of the Congress, if any, 26.5% people feel that no factors are working in their favour and 22.5% feel that the secular nature of the party coupled with the recent wins in the elections of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh may work in its favour. Only a meagre 10.8% people feel that the entry of Priyanka Gandhi into politics will make a difference for the Congress. All this can be inferred from the pie charts on the adjoining page.

From the above it can be inferred that while there have been shortcomings in the Modi Government, the youth still feels that the most suitable alternative is bringing back the BJP to power with Modi as the PM. While his popularity may have dipped due to certain factors like demonetisation and growing unemployment, the recent strikes in Balakot have countered these negative effects and increased his popularity yet again. However the congress is also trying to put its best foot forward in a bid to save grace by doing all that it can; be it introducing Priyanka Gandhi or forging pre poll multi party alliance or more recently introducing its NYAYA scheme for the poor in its manifesto. When it comes to elections, Narendra Modi is still a preferred candidate hence the BJP may manage to garner majority. Although the intricacies are still uncertain, the opinion polls till now have shown a lead for BJP led NDA. It is still the

early days and public mood may swing as the elections draw nearer. Irrespective of whichever party comes to power, it is the voters who will emerge supreme, with the youth playing a pivotal role in the 2019 elections.

Arunima Maini
BA(H) Political Science, First Year





VoTE



2017-2019

Handwritten signature