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Contents

Editorial Perspective	7
AAP : End of A Dream	
The Modi-BJP Juggernaut Marches on Jammu & Kashmir : Reconciling the Opposites	
1. North-East Scan	
Meghalaya & Nagaland Elections 2018: Does Anyone Care About Issues?	15
<i>Patricia Mukhim</i>	
Liberating Northeast India from its Geographical Isolation: The Unfinished Agenda	19
<i>Professor M. P. Bezbaruah</i>	
If Answer is Impossible, the Naga Question Must be Changed	22
<i>Pradip Phanjoubam</i>	
2. J&K: What Next?	25
<i>A.S. Dulat</i>	
3. Kashmir, Dialogue is the Key	29
<i>Bashir Manzar</i>	
4. The Idea is the Enemy	34
<i>David Devadas</i>	
5. Kashmir At a Threshold: Recovery of Integrity or Surrender to Violence	41
<i>Rajiv Vora</i>	
6. Youth Radicalization in Kashmir	51
<i>Mushtaq Ul Haq Ahmad Sikander</i>	
DIALOGUE, Volume-19 No. 2	5

7. Jammu Down with Complex of Least Priority Area and People <i>Binoo Joshi</i>	57
8. Kashmir, What Next! <i>Sajjad Hussain Kargili</i>	66
9. An Essay on the Rohingya Crisis <i>Jayanta Kumar Ray</i>	73
10. Vision for Developing Andaman and Nicobar Islands <i>Air Marshal (Retd.) P. K. Roy</i>	90
11. Nature and Implication of Radhakrishnan's Idealism <i>Sanjay Kumar Shukla</i>	102
12. The Political Frame of the Bhagavadgītā <i>Dr. Binod Kumar Agarwala</i>	123
13. Quest for Academic Autonomy and the Making of Public Intellectuals: Some Reflections on Martha Nussbaum's Humanity Project <i>Vaibhav Shah & Ravi Saxena</i>	143
14. Configuring Kibithoo as an Entrepot in India- China Border Trade <i>Jajati K. Pattnaik</i>	159

Editorial Perspective

AAP: End Of A Dream

It is too early to write the obituary of AAP as a political party. But with the recent developments within the party, the last being the two nominations (January 2018) to the Rajya Sabha and manhandling (February 2018) of the Chief Secretary, Delhi government by party MLAs in a meeting, in the presence of the Chief Minister, Arvind Kejariwal, one can with confidence say that the dream which gave birth to it has ended rather ignominiously. Born out of a successful anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare since 2011 against the hubris that the second UPA had become, it promised to usher in an alternative political discourse in which people would be participants and determinants. It was a promise of a new paradigm of governance with the citizens at the core. Tired of the shenanigans of the UPA government people, particularly the urban new generation, middle class and those on the margins embraced it. Nothing else explains its prompt success. It was a dream and promise of a change that drove it, despite dire warnings of the simple Anna Hazare to avoid the cesspool of political mess.

Many thought that the AAP leaders led by Kejriwal betrayed Anna by entering politics (November 2012) to realize the cause of anti-corruption dreams. Within a short while of three years, the AAP ended up betraying the dream itself. Besides the internal bickerings and break-ups, the nomination of two Gupta's as its Rajya Sabha nominees and manhandling of the Chief Secretary in an official meeting by party MLA's will prove the last nail in its coffin. The irony is what began as an anti-corruption drive has ended, in popular perception, in money bags. It may or may not survive as a political party, but the popular trust it has betrayed will rankle for long and people will be loathe to extend their support easily to a similar social/political movement for sometime. The last one was the Total Revolution of Jayaprakash Narayan

in the 1970's with similar philosophy but collapsed due to conflicts, ambitions, and petty power politics of the Janata Party leaders. Recent efforts of Anna Hazare to revive his movement is unlikely to enthuse the common man in this background.

The end of Aap dream after an unprecedented 67 seats out of 70 in Delhi Assembly elections in December 2014, has been a function of several factors. Besides mainly the ineptness and lack of political experience of the Aap leaders and an obstructionist role of the BJP- led Central government, which did not allow them to function as an effective government. Despite this, it must be acknowledged that it delivered creditably on power, water, education and health fronts. But their real failure was in managing the popular perceptions about the party and petty ambitions of its leaders and their party management. The fact that the party today is in tatters controlled by a faction led by the Chief Minister, Kejriwal, lacking popular credibility is, because it betrayed the very principles of popular participation which catapulted it to power; backed by enthusiastic volunteers, and prominent public figures with credibility. The crucial difference was that it was backed by volunteers and had no party cadres worth the name. These volunteers who formed its core and its backers had hopes and believed in them. But these were belied and prominent credible names left one by one, including Aruna Roy, Admiral (Retd.) Ram Das, Mayank Gandhi, Raj Mohan Gandhi, Damania, Yogendra Yadav, Prashant Bhushan, banker Meera Sanyal etc. The latest one to be humiliated were Ashutosh and Kumar Vishwas, over Rajya Sabha nominations. Crucial factor was not that Kumar Vishwas and Ashutosh were denied tickets, but who were given tickets instead – viz., moneybags with no party links or record of service. One cannot ignore the fact that today the disillusioned Kumar Vishwas has an iconic following on social media as a poet, and enjoys greater credibility than the ruling coterie in the party. It will damage the party considerably. With the kind of majority that it has the Aap government in Delhi may last its term till 2019 but without much popular support. Its 20 MLAs in the Punjab Assembly will also ensure its existence as any other political party. In retrospect, Aap is not merely guilty of failure in political terms, but of a more serious crime of betraying a cause and dream. That also for petty power politics. Its leaders are becoming an object of ridicule. These leaders who earlier held popular Mohalla meetings are reduced to issuing press statements as they cannot face people. What a fall and what a tragedy.

The Modi-BJP Juggernaut Marches On

The election results (March 3, 2018) of three North-eastern States of Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya have only confirmed that the Modi-led BJP juggernaut marches on unimpeded. There is jubilation in the BJP ranks as the North-east with Christian majority States, like Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram its entry was considered improbable. But now it is in power in all the States of the North-east, except Mizoram, either on its own or through coalition partners. These triumphs, however, have to be seen in perspective. Smaller States like Arunachal, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, even Manipur, by and large, like to go with the ruling party at the centre and hence, frequent defections and new alignments. That's how the Congress despite being the largest single party in Meghalaya, and earlier in Manipur, and NPP in Nagaland it is the BJP led or supported coalitions which formed the governments.

However, the BJP victory in Assam (2017) and now Tripura (March 2018), is remarkable. Congress has been in power in Assam for decades and the CPM in Tripura for the last 25 years. These victories of the BJP are the result of detailed planning, adjustments and above all daring. There are not many Parliamentary seats from NE, but it's a psychological advantage for the 2019 parliamentary elections. As in all such elections, the difficult part begins now, that of delivering on the promises in an area with fickle loyalties, strong local identities, a pervading belief of being neglected, and an apprehension of Hindu agenda in the region. So far, unlike the Congress, the BJP is exhibiting the panache to meet the challenge.

These developments in the North-east are only an extension of what has been happening in other parts of the country. Ever since the 2014 Parliamentary election, Narendra Modi-led-BJP has kept up its victorious march across the country, and now controls directly or indirectly, 21 States and nearly 70 per cent of the population. The Punjab and Karnataka seem small blips and the latter is in danger in the forthcoming elections towards the end of the year. It can be said that the BJP has replaced the Congress as a truly national party. Some of the liberal and secular experts are aghast at the developments, and see in it the triumph of the communal Hindutva agenda of the RSS and fear for the future of the country as a secular State. They even feel that the Constitution itself will be under threat. But the life and politics have a tendency to balance itself, and in a diverse country like India,

Hindutva as philosophy is unlikely to dominate, as Hinduism as a religion or belief system is not a monolith and there are any number of variations. Moderation is the life-blood of Hinduism and its defining character. Hindutva elements only represent an angry and resentful minority among Hindus against the Muslim-British rule in the last millennium and the post-independence marginalisation at the hands of the secular – liberal elite, who treated them as untouchables. On their part BJP/RSS saw themselves as fighting for the perceived Hindu past and glory. This estrangement from power centre is at the root of the current assertive and abrasive behaviour of Hindutva elements. As the BJP achieves the dominant status in Indian politics, the moderation is likely to set in. The only fear is, that with clueless opposition and the Congress in steady decline, some Hindutva elements may entertain dictatorial ambitions of a Hindu Raj and even try to tamper with the Constitution. Such fears at the moment are in future, based on past prejudices and lack of understanding of the new generation of the non-urban and non-elite Indians.

In all these developments, two things are important for the future. One is to understand the reasons for the success of the BJP, its strengths and weaknesses. The second is to fashion a democratic response to resist the future temptations of a one party-rule or making India a Hindu State. Both are inter-connected.

The unprecedented Modi-led BJP victory in 2014, was a function of the two factors of the people's disillusionment with the hubris that the second UPA regime had become, wracked by allegations of corruption, and cronyism and the Modi, led vision of development and new clean leadership. In comparison to the Congress, Modi and his campaign came out as a credible alternative. Till date, the BJP's success in elections (the losses in the Punjab and some by-elections, notwithstanding) is built around the sincerity and credibility of the Prime Minister. Its surprising that nearly four years in his tenure as the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi retains the trust of the majority of citizens and the youth. Even controversies like demonetisation, GST, issues of Hindu vigilantes etc., have failed to dent his image. He is always a step ahead of his political opponents. Another factor is that unlike the Congress in the past, the BJP never hesitates in cobbling up coalitions, conceding seats and even playing second fiddle to regional parties to consolidate its hold. Another factor favouring the rise of the BJP is the ruthless shedding of the old deadwood both at the national

and State levels. The new crop does not carry any baggage and can operate freely. The main weakness of the BJP is its total dependence on prime Minister to garner votes. Once his image starts declining, BJP will face great difficulty in converting Modi votes into BJP votes. It's a paradox that even those opposed to RSS/BJP favour Modi.

A consummate tactician, the Prime Minister constantly keeps harping on the corruption, family-centric and caste-centric opposition parties and the leaders in his public discourse. This is backed by widely accepted perception of a corruption free rule at the Centre and the BJP ruled States – which forms the core of his credibility and trust of the people. In all this and his foreign policy initiatives he has projected an image of a sincere person trying to do something for the country, which remains his primary concern. This attracts even fence-sitters and some liberals. This attribute of trust and sincerity had also impacted the image of BJP and was one of the reasons of success in the North-east. On his part as a clever politician, Modi never gets involved in public debates and arguments, including in the Parliament, and never addresses press conferences, lest he is questioned. He sticks to his discourse agenda, including through Man-ki-Baat, which connects him to people. The recent example of the theme of examinations connected him to crores of students appearing in exams. In politics, where perceptions matter, PM's perceived sincerity covers up inadequate delivery and related failures.

On the other hand a dispirited, divided and clueless opposition has failed to cobble up a credible contrary narrative and programmes. It is busy lamenting successes of the BJP without any positive response. Psychologically, it continues to see the BJP backed by the RSS as an evil while the people at large necessarily do not. There is obvious disconnect between the urban liberal-left perception of the BJP/RSS and the new generation of Indians. The core virtue of Hindu moderation will take care of the Hindu zealots and efforts at Hindu consolidation. We should not forget that it is this 70 per cent of the Hindu population that had kept the BJP/RSS at the margins for nearly 60 years. They will not stand for the excesses of Hindu nationalists if challenged. The PM's popularity to a large extent covers up people's reservations about BJP and its political agenda.

The continuing decline of the Congress as a national party and that of the left as a cadre based people-centric party, is equally responsible for the non-emergence of a national level opposition group. The BJP

is today perhaps the only cadre-based (ala RSS) party. Former communist/left leaders came from the grass-root trade-union and farmer's movements. Now they are produced in the campuses of the JNU and like institutions. No wonder their ersatz revolutionary credentials do not evoke public trust. The public discourse has shifted from grievance to expectations and aspirations. It is a poor reflection that nearly four years after the 2014 elections, the opposition, Congress and others do not have any clear vision of their role in a changing scenario. Incessant harping on threat to secularism is now an overused and misused narrative. The role of opposition is left to the regional parties like the, TMC, BJD, TDP, TRS and DMK/AIIDMK. BJP is already trying to woo some of them.

The BJP is taking full advantage of the present disarray in opposition ranks and is busy writing the obituary of the Congress and the communists in the country. The future for the opposition parties in the country looks bleak at least for the 2019 elections, although it is hazardous to predict anything in politics and the dance of democracy. But the rule is that there is never a political vacuum. It is possible that in due course, a party or a credible coalition will emerge to challenge the BJP domination. Presently, none of the opposition parties have exhibited enough strength or will to fill the emerging vacuum. Gujarat and now Rajasthan indicate that Modi's popularity will be severely tested. If Congress retains Karnataka, the opposition will get a leg up for 2019. The opposition requires a different narrative to bridge the credibility gap which the PM and BJP enjoy.

While the BJP's efforts to electorally fashion a Hindu consolidation is unlikely to succeed in the long run, the opposition narrative have to move from lamentation to reflect the positivity of the nation. Protests, boycotts and rallies are passé and now wasteful exercises. More imaginative initiatives are needed. The first one has to reflect sincerity and grasp of popular mood and compete. It has to be ready with a saleable alternative post-2019 elections when the BJP will increasingly be questioned on what it has delivered, and attempts to navigate the post-Modi phase of transferring votes for Modi to the BJP, jettison the lot of jetsam and flotsam it has collected in its ranks in its quest for power. Like the BJP the opposition must also shed the old guard to "margdarshak mandals," and promote fresh faces; a difficult proposition in the caste and family based parties where the patriarchy is well-entrenched, including in the regional parties like the TDP, TRC, and

the BJD. Despite all the negative pulls of the caste, communal, regional and linguistic divides the emerging new India, a decade hence, is likely to be different needing a different political discourse. Both opposition and BJP will need new idioms, around the ever present caste, communal and regional pulls. Presently, the BJP is not being really tested because of lack of meaningful opposition. In the Punjab and Gujarat where credible opposition leaders surfaced the BJP faced problems.

One can only despair for the opposition but not the future. There are no constants in politics, particularly in a diverse country like India. But for the present electorally, it is the BJP vs the rest. As long as the BJP does not make the mistake of converting its emerging political monopoly into the BJP vs the people. Not a very unlikely scenario if one remembers as to how in 1989 the dominant Rajiv Gandhi led-Congress was humbled by hastily cobbled-up Jan Morcha, months before the Parliamentary elections. Or the early 2004 defeat of the BJP's "Shining India" ploy on the back of resounding victories in State elections of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. Politics is a strange arena where surprises abound more than certainties.

Jammu and Kashmir: Reconciling the Opposites

In this issue we have tried to introduce the writers from the J&K to restore balance, since earlier articles were mostly from outside experts. In this exercise, we find amidst the despairs generated by the militant violence and the State response, there is a glimmer of hope if both sides react less and reflect more on the underlying positives and the need to change their narratives. Protagonists have to outgrow the past prejudices and shibboleths and move beyond the Islamisation and Pak-hand etc. generalisations.

It appears the anger and radicalisation of the Kashmir Valley youth is indigenous in origin and grounded in day-to-day indignities and denials implicit in the current violent scenario in the State. It would appear that the youth anger has been accentuating via internet, influenced by what is happening elsewhere in the Muslim world. This generation of the angry youth, whose age profile has been coming down since the 2010, seems to be influenced by slick video and postings on social media eulogising the IS fighters and empathisers, with the view that Islam world over is under siege. What should worry authorities is that the teenage radicalization and anger has no links with the separatist

movement, Madrasas or the mosque. Hardships implicit in current spiral of violence only provide a context to the siege mentality.

What the State has to explore is a new paradigm which can sincerely and transparently reduce the quantum of violence and empathetically address the legitimate concerns of the young Kashmiris, where the citizens and they, enjoy respect, personal dignity and freedom for peaceful protest and dissent. Engagement with them may reduce radicalization. All this is possible only if the current phase of armed militancy ends and people do not extend support to it. Unfortunately, all the interlocutors etc. cast all responsibilities on the State, including winning the heart and minds of the people of the Valley without mentioning that it would be only possible if the people do not support militancy and their cause. Otherwise, security forces have to respond and the AFSPA is part of that response mechanism. Those complaining about the day-to-day indignities and hardships faced by the people due to security forces actions are being disingenuous. Security forces are there because of armed militancy, and hence people's difficulties are inherent in the ground situation. One cannot support and sympathise with the cause of militancy on one hand and want normalcy on the other. These are opposites and cannot be reconciled unless interlocutors and other critics demand stoppage of armed militancy as a precondition. The current spiral of violence and its dynamics is the real villain. Peace dividend is not possible in a situation fraught with violent conflict. The Chief Minister herself has pointed out the fallacy of supporting militants and then complaining about alleged security forces excesses.

In broader perspective, only dialogue can ease the situation. But for that to succeed, one has to be honest and not constantly play the card of victimhood. The special representative Dineshwar Sharma has his task cut out of reconciling the opposites, where some want the peace and normalcy, yet sympathise with and support separatists. Only peace can ensure movement towards meaningful dialogue. It cannot happen under the shadow of the gun.

—J.N. Roy

North-East Scan

Meghalaya & Nagaland Elections 2018: Does Anyone Care About Issues?

Patricia Mukhim*

As Meghalaya and Nagaland go to the polls today, many issues crop up about the aftermath of the voting. What were the issues this time that are different from the 2013 elections in both states? Undoubtedly, this time in both states the churches have played a prominent role in trying to influence voters not to vote a party or parties that have no respect for religious diversity and religious minorities – in this case the Christians. The Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) the apex body of all Baptist churches In Nagaland have a clarion call not to vote the BJP and the Neiphiu Rio -led National Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) an ally of the BJP. They reminded people of incidents that happened on Christmas this year where carollers were attacked and some priests were taken to the police station for questioning in Satna District in Madhya Pradesh.

Turning Christmas Day to Good Governance Day and Good Friday last year as Digital India Day have all added to make Christians in these two states with a Christian majority population jittery and insulted. While the BJP has fielded its Tourism Minister K.J. Alphons, it's only visible Christian face to woo the electorate here, the former civil servant seems to have bungled big time. In Meghalaya, he publicly declared that the Tourism Ministry assist churches with Rs 70 crore to give them a facelift so that they become tourist destinations. Church leaders did not take too kindly to this offer and felt that Alphons was actually trying to woo them with money. At least two churches publicly declined

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the offer. So a bad strategy cancels out the good intentions that Alphons may have had.

That said, this election has seen one of the worst forms of mud-slinging between the BJP and the Congress. When Rahul Gandhi visited Meghalaya, all he could talk about were the evils of the BJP-led NDA Government. He raved and ranted on the same old theme. So, except for his ardent supporters, Rahul Gandhi's rhetoric failed to convince the voters that the Congress which was given an eight-year tenure in Meghalaya and has failed in several fronts but especially for failing to come up with policies on key areas of human development, another chance at ruling the state. But what are the alternatives? The BJP is unlikely to cross the single digit mark in Meghalaya. It is the National People's Party (NPP) which although it calls itself national is seen as a very local and regional face considering it was born in Meghalaya. Late P.A. Sangma had formed this party in 2013, just before the Presidential elections which he contested. The Party is now led by Conrad Sangma – a graduate of the Wharton School of Business, USA and currently the MP Lok Sabha from Tura, Garo Hills. The NPP's baggage is that it is aligned with the NDA Government at the Centre. So the NPP is termed by rival parties as Team B of the BJP. Both parties have been denying this and saying they are fighting each other in several constituencies but voters know better.

The major issues confronting both Nagaland and Meghalaya are poor communication and a huge infrastructural vacuum. The number of school and college dropouts is on the rise and successive governments have failed to come up with strategies or a long-term vision on how to integrate these disaffected youth, many of who get into substance abuse. While Nagaland has been in the radar for drug abuse, the police in Meghalaya have stated that drug peddling and drug use will be the biggest challenge for the state because of the spin-offs from both. Meghalaya does not have an education policy. Nor does it have a health policy. According to the NFHS survey 2011, Meghalaya's health indicators particularly in Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Infant Mortality Ratio (IFR) are very poor. In both, the state has very little or no data since only 17 per cent of women go in for institutional delivery. The rest give birth at home and hence maternal or infant death is generally not recorded.

The Socio-Economic-Caste Survey 2011 has revealed that 76 per cent of rural Meghalaya is landless. For a tribal state that used to boast of community ownership of land, this figure is frightening because it

means that the traditional institutions have failed to safeguard the rights of their people and the modern state too has reneged from its responsibility to ensure equity and fair play. So why has the rural population of Meghalaya become landless? Is it because of the land guzzling coal mining activity? Or have the cement companies in the state taken over large tracts of tribal land despite the existence of a Land Transfer Regulation Act (1978)? Both answers are in the positive. There is a lot of benami ownership of land in Meghalaya. While land is in the name of an affluent tribal elite, it is being used by non-tribal businessmen who see the huge limestone resources as natural capital they can extract and turn to cement. Coal mining and trading is a huge business until the National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned coal mining in April 2014, after a PIL was filed by a student's body from Assam, stating that rivers flowing downstream from the Jaintia Hills coal belt are toxic and no longer sustain riverine life. The NGT asked the state government to come up with a Mining Policy but that is still hanging in the balance.

The Congress led, Meghalaya United Alliance (MUA) government served two terms. Within those terms foundations stones were laid for two medical colleges five years ago. Till date not even a single brick has come up. Meghalaya's state assembly building was gutted in 2001. Till date the state could not come up with an alternative building, although architectural designs have been submitted by several firms several times. Things just don't work here. Shillong used to be the capital of the entire North Eastern Region which was then the undivided Assam, yet the state does not even have a functional airport till date. It must be the only state in the North East without an airport. Even the rail link came only three years ago and only to Garo Hills.

The tribes of Meghalaya practice matriliney where lineage is from the mother's clan line. But a careful study will also reveal that this state has the highest number of female headed households. This is because marriages are brittle and divorce and abandonment very high. When a man divorces or abandons his wife, the children are left to be brought up by the mother because of the matrilineal system. This places a huge burden on the woman. It is intuitive to note that in a society that never had beggars, we now have street children selling bookmarks, betel nuts and cigarettes at car parks because they are too poor to study and because their mothers cannot support their education. If this is not an issue for the government in Meghalaya then what is?

The Report on Fifth Annual Employment-Unemployment Survey (2015–16) from Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of

India shows Meghalaya's unemployment rate to be 48/1000. There is no data for Nagaland. When the demographic dividend of a state or country is not absorbed into its workforce it can become a huge liability. Imagine 48 young people out of every thousand not having any work to do. How do they spend their waking hours? Is this also the reason why militancy in both states is an alternative, lucrative employment avenue?

Sadly, all the above issues have been given short shrift by all political parties. Early into the campaign the BJP came up with a document called "Chargesheet" against the Congress Government in Meghalaya. It listed out all the wrongdoings of the Government including a particular one called the White Ink Scam where there was large-scale nepotism in the appointment of primary school teachers by the then Education Minister, Ampareen Lyngdoh. The BJP manifesto addresses all the gaps in governance that Meghalaya has been suffering and promises to turn the economy of the state around if elected. The Congress on its part came up with its manifesto only three days ago. What does this mean? That the Congress does not think a manifesto matters? Interestingly, the BJP is wooing the coal mafia big time. The Party has said it will revoke the ban on coal mining if it comes to power in Meghalaya!

The NPP has taken up mainly local issues and so too the regional parties but no one has made a commitment for radical reforms in areas that demand it such as Land Reforms, Educational Reforms, Health Reforms et al. The Regional Parties too have stuck to local issues as if Meghalaya is an island. In terms of addressing issues that matter both to Meghalaya and Nagaland are in the same boat.

So, on this dismal note, people have come out to vote and judging by the long queues at polling stations people still seem interested to vote but the EVMs are all playing up. Reports from different parts of Meghalaya have spoken of EVM malfunction and in some villages reporters have returned home or gone to their places of work. After all who gives a holiday to daily wage earners?

March 3, when the result are out should tell us what our fates for the next five years will be but in Meghalaya as we have to brace ourselves for vigorous horse trading since as of now, no party – the Congress, BJP, NPP, Regional Parties (UDP+HSPDP) can hope to win an absolute majority. This is Meghalaya's chequered history.

And as far as Nagaland is concerned, it is almost certain that the NDPP+BJP combine will give the NPF a run for their money. The

Congress with only 18 candidates in the fray has lost its clout in Nagaland. Besides, we cannot lose sight of the fact that in Nagaland it is the government that the NSCN(IM) chooses, which will come to power. Neiphiu Rio is known to be an NSCN(IM) sympathiser. So it is almost sure that he will lead the next government.

Liberating Northeast India from its Geographical Isolation: The Unfinished Agenda

Professor M. P. Bezbaruah*

It has been stated time and again how the Northeast Region of India, which was growing and “industrializing” under British colonial rule, began to stagnate in independent India, following its virtual geographical isolation, as a result of partition of the country in 1947. For decades the region was viewed from outside as a remote outpost riddled with security concerns while the people within carried a sense of neglect bordering alienation. Fortunately, the situation within and the outlook from outside started to change significantly by the end of the twentieth century. Two important factors have been responsible for this positive change; (a) emergence of East Asian economies as world’s new growth region and (b) central governments proactive involvement with the developmental aspiration of the people in the region, especially since the mid-1990s.

Once the Shukla Commission Report¹ had amply documented the extent of deficit in infrastructure and basic services that the region had suffered from, infusion of central development funds to the region was significantly enhanced during the 9th, 10th and 11th Five Year Plans (1997-2012). The step-ups in the economic growth rates in the states of the region over the last decade or so clearly has been aided by, inter alia, this liberal inflow of central developmental funds.

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Emergence of East Asia as a new growth zone of the world in the last quarter of the twentieth century, finally brought to the consciousness that the new hubs of bustling economic activities such as Hong Kong, Bangkok and Singapore are just a short flight away from Guwahati, the gateway to and from Northeast India. When the 'Look East' policy was initiated by the Government of India in 1992, this virtually landlocked region saw a ray of hope of shedding its partition-inflicted geographical isolation and getting linked with the new growth centres in East and Southeast Asia. This hope was further fuelled by such utterances as 'Northeast India must be economically integrated with Southeast Asia while the remaining be politically integrated with the rest of India' and 'Southeast Asia begins in India's Northeast.' However, from enunciation of the 'Look East' policy in 1992, for over two decades the region failed to harvest any visible and tangible benefit from the policy. While India's trade volume and other transactions with East and Southeast Asia increased manifold, very little of the busy traffic moved across the Northeast India corridor. The region continued to be unlinked with the new centres of growth as it remained insulated by economically anachronistic Myanmar in the east and none-too-friendly China and Bangladesh on the north and the southwest. As hopes from 'Looking East' was gradually turning to cynicism; the expectation were revived when a new government in New Delhi vouched to invigorate looking east by upgrading the policy to 'Act East.' As in case of its earlier version, the contents of the 'Act East' policy also were not spelt out officially. But from the policy actions that followed, it became clear that 'Act East' has been taken forward through two broad strands; (a) expeditious completion and enhancement of connectivity projects within Northeast India and out of it, and (b) more energetic engagement with countries in the east for broadening and deepening of economic, cultural and strategic ties. Apart from these more vigorous interventions of the government of India, what contributed further to the revival of positive expectations in Northeast India were the changes in political-economic regimes in the two major neighbouring countries of Bangladesh and Myanmar.

More than the political regime, the economic regime in Myanmar used to be a major impediment for India to get across it to Southeast Asia through its Northeast Region. Fortunately, following the change in the political regime in Myanmar, the economic regime in that country has also undergone reform and since been quickly coming into sync with the systems in India and the other ASEAN countries. Thus, a major impediment in external orientation of Northeast India began to clear up. With Shiekh Hasina coming back to the helm of affairs in

Bangladesh, India's tie with this important neighbour has undergone a major uplift. Many pending issues between India and Bangladesh have since been resolved and the subject of revival of Northeast India's traditional outlet to the rest of the world through Bangladesh has been seriously pursued.

Amidst these positive turn of events it is necessary not to overlook the fact that considerable uncertainty still remains in the path of the region getting liberated from its seven decades old geographical isolation. While Myanmar's economic system has been gradually syncing with that of India and the rest of the world, the situation inside is still too fluid to take forward major projects such as India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway. The rise of conservative and extremist elements in Bangladesh does not augur well for furthering trans-national economic cooperation. Relation with China, at least as far as the Northeast region is concerned, has not improved if not deteriorated. Though India's relation with Bhutan has remained cordial and mutually supportive, the hydro-power projects in that country have been looked upon with some apprehensions in the downstream areas in Northeast India.

Within the Northeast, notwithstanding the connectivity improvements and a step-up in the pace of economic growth, progress in the areas of land reforms other institutional changes has been precious little. Institutional backlogs can put a drag on the economic resurgence by restricting growth of modern productive enterprises. Moreover, institutional vacuum in the face of weakening of traditional community bonding can threaten the age old equity sustained under old tribal order. Besides the institutional deficit, the ethnicity and identity related divisions among people have continued to be a problem as conflicts continue to surface albeit with lesser frequency and intensity in recent times.

To make the resurgence of Northeast India irreversible, action will have to be sustained on two fronts. Government of India has to continue to vigorously sustain economic diplomacy with the eastern neighbours with interest of the Northeast region as the central focus. Governments within the region need to engage with civil society much more vigorously to overcome the institutional backlogs and deal with the identity issues, so that broad based participatory development gets precedence over divisive and xenophobic tendencies.

Notes

- ¹ 'Transforming the Northeast: Tackling Backlogs in Basic Minimum Services and Infrastructure Needs,' High Level Commission Report to the Prime Minister, Government of India, Planning Commission, New Delhi, 1997.

If Answer is Impossible, the Naga Question Must be Changed

Pradip Phanjoubam*

The unexpected turn of events in Nagaland on the eve of the state Legislative Assembly election scheduled on February 27 is yet another indication how intractable the problem of peace in the state is. Responding to a call for “No Election Before Solution” by a newly formed Core Committee of Nagaland Tribal Hohos and Civil Organization (CCNTHCS), all political parties which were expected to be in the fray, have now signed an agreement that they will not be fielding any candidates. There are indications that some of the national parties, in particular the BJP, are not happy with the decision of their local units, but it remains to be seen if they will disown the decisions of the latter and go along with the election process. Whatever their decisions may turn out to be, the air of uncertainty suddenly introduced is palpable and now the field is wide open for speculations and punditry on what scenario might emerge in the next few weeks.

This startling development comes even as election fever is heating up, besides Nagaland in two other Northeastern states of Meghalaya and Tripura, where Assembly elections are also due next month, the terms of their current Assembly expiring at about the time. While it seems it will be business as usual for Meghalaya and Tripura, with their battles of the ballots fought as they are normally meant to be fought, it is Nagaland which has now seemingly changed the rule of the game. What then could be the likely outcome in this beleaguered state?

Given that all parties have ostensibly agreed not to participate in the election, if even a single party, say the BJP, takes the bold step of deciding to field candidates, it is a foregone conclusion that most or all of them would win uncontested, a scenario not altogether new in Nagaland, as such a situation did emerge in 1998, about two years after the Naga ceasefire came into effect. The then ruling Congress decided to go against a similar boycott and as reward, ended up as the uncontested victors in 53 of the total of 60 seats, with seven seats going to independent candidates.

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Would the BJP or any other major party in the state now dare to do an encore is a question every election watcher in the state would now be desperate to find a clue. Again, if one party decides to enter the fray, would the dam burst and all other parties also decide to jump into the contest? If on the other hand, what would be the scenario if all parties do decide to stay firm on not contesting? Apart from the commentaries on the prudence or the lack of it, in such an eventuality one thing is certain – there would be a constitutional crisis as the state would be without a new Legislative Assembly to replace its outgoing one. The provisions of Article 356 then will have to be invoked to meet the emergency, and a spell of Central Rule through the office of the Governor of the state will have to take over the administration until another Assembly can be elected through popular mandate.

Would this be the resort? And if this does come about, would the Naga solution become suddenly possible so that the deferred Assembly election can be held at a later date? What if the solution is still not forthcoming at the end of the first spell of Central Rule? Would President's Rule be extended by its constitutional leashes of six months at a time till such a solution comes about? What if the solution continues to elude for years and decades, as it has been all this while? Nagaland is indeed headed for very interesting times, and we hope as good neighbours that it is spared of unwarranted trauma.

The excruciating Nagaland dilemma will not be just for the people of Nagaland, but also for those who are in the peace negotiations, which incidentally has been going on since 1997, but with an added sense of urgency since August 3, 2015, when a Framework Agreement was signed rather hurriedly between the Government of India and the most powerful of the Naga underground groups, the NSCN(IM). However, after more than two decades, it is difficult to imagine not only what exactly could have been agreed upon so far, but also what exactly can possibly be agreed upon without upsetting too many apple carts, and dangerously too. This is given the fact that certain intractable questions have come to mark the Naga question, and these are still hopelessly unanswered, if not unanswerable.

Under the circumstance, it is difficult not to recall the familiar timeless piece of wisdom that if a certain question does not seem to have an answer at all, the courageous and prudent thing to consider is changing the question instead. We wonder then if it is not time for those searching for an answer to the Naga question to also not consider this proposition. Naga sovereignty is now more or less redundant, and so probably is

Greater Nagaland or Nagalim. They probably have no answers, so should not the effort be to find alternate ways?

As we see it, there is no other way out. Only recently we have seen how even a hint in a section of the online media that an RSS sympathizer suggested that the final solution to the Naga problem must involve creation of a Greater Nagaland by incorporating certain districts from neighbouring Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, resulted in mayhem in the Dima Hasao area of Assam's formerly North Cachar Hills district, resulting in the death of two young agitators. Assam Chief Minister, Sarbananda Sonowal has thereafter reaffirmed that no territory of Assam will be sacrificed under any circumstance. Reactions in Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh are hardly likely to be any different or any less violent if this proposition is pushed any further. It is clear then that what needs to be realized and accepted by all stakeholders is that no ethnic exclusive homelands can be carved out of what are essentially shared homes of multi-ethnicities. This is one of the characteristic features of the entire Northeast.

On the other hand, if sovereignty and Greater Nagaland are out of the question, what would the Naga solution be like? After more than six decades of struggle for sovereignty, and all the sufferings that came with it, would the Nagaland be happy with a settlement that has chiefly to do with refashioned autonomous councils for Naga areas in Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Indeed, at this moment, no solution to the Naga problem, we are certain is in anybody's sight. The election boycott proposal in Nagaland in this sense is also an expression of this deep frustration. On the other hand, the slogan "No Election Before Solution" is also reminiscent of one of the logics forwarded for the Crusades of medieval Europe, in which rulers invoked lofty ideas of external aggressions to divert attention from mounting irresolvable domestic problems. The turncoat political class in Nagaland may be trying to divert attention and thus salvage themselves from a complete loss of public faith, particularly in the wake of the unprecedented and fickle floor-crossing drama amongst the ruling Naga People's Front, NPF, legislators, toppling and resurrecting chief ministers several time in the span of a few months.

J&K: What Next?

A.S. Dulat*

“—And from the death of each days hope another hope sprung up to live tomorrow.”

- Charles Dickens.

The best news for Kashmir in a long time has been the appointment of a representative “to understand the legitimate aspirations of people in Jammu and Kashmir” as Union Home Minister, Rajnath Singh put it. At the very least, the appointment provides hope. Kashmir has been a cauldron of repressed anger of late. Not surprisingly there was palpable excitement in Srinagar. And Dineshwar Sharma is the right man for the job.

There is no better listener available in Delhi than Mr. Sharma, who has all the attributes of an interlocutor. He is humble, talks little, understands and feels for Kashmir and has infinite patience. Plus, he has loads of experience, including a stint in Srinagar during the most difficult days. That is exactly the reason he has been appointed interlocutor to try and alter the situation in Kashmir by investing in trust-building new bridges and repairing the old.

Unfortunately, Dineshwar’s two visits to Kashmir have not exactly set the valley on fire, not due to lack of purpose on his part but Delhi’s usual ambiguity. On Independence Day, the Prime Minister said Kashmiri’s needed embraces not bullets but on the eve of Mr. Sharma’s visit, the Army Chief warned civilians of “stern action, if they persisted in disrupting anti-military operations.” Unfortunately, the Prime Minister himself likened former Home Minister, P. Chidambaram’s call for

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restoration of J&K's autonomy to an "insult to the martyrs." What hope does that leave Kashmir with?

As Omar Abdullah said: "a dialogue without a purpose was meaningless," there was confusion in Delhi about Mr. Sharma's role. The Minister in the Prime Minister's office refused to acknowledge him as an interlocutor.

"But engagement even for the sake of engagement is not a bad idea." As Professor Abdul Ghani Bhat, who met Dineshwar Sharma in Srinagar on November 27th said: "dialogue is the only effective and civilised way of addressing issues bedeviling relations between nations or people." On the eve of the interlocutor's third visit to the valley, Prof. Bhat pleaded for a full fledged dialogue between India and Pakistan to resolve Kashmir. He said the resolution of all issues between India and Pakistan "passes through Kashmir." This may amount to wishful thinking at the moment, but it is a sentiment expressed by all Kashmiri leaders which needs to be taken note of for the sake of peace in South Asia. The Prof. added that it enjoined on the Kashmiri leadership to work for peace.

Kashmiri's crave for peace and desire engagement. Not talking has brought Pakistan back into the game, when it was totally out of the equation in Jammu and Kashmir. There is still no great love lost for Pakistan; Kashmiri's realise they have no future across the border, but it remains the most convenient fall back. Alienation, disillusionment and of late, anger and disgust bring out the green flags. Kashmir was never mentioned in the 2013 elections in Pakistan, but will almost certainly be an issue in 2018.

Added to that is the Kashmiri's ultimate fear that they could be reduced to a minority in their state. Threats of scrapping Article 370 and 34 A of the Constitution only add to Kashmiri's apprehension, leading to unnecessary turns in the debate on autonomy, a legitimate Kashmiri aspiration. Thankfully, the Government has said that there was no move to scrap Article 370 or 34 A, at least for the time being. Mehbooba Mufti had warned sometime back that there would be no one left in the valley to raise the national flag once 370 was removed.

2017 has been a comparatively peaceful year even though the Kashmiri has not got out of his sulk and radicalism grows apace with alienation. Anti-militancy operations have been more successful than in the past, with a number of top militants having been neutralised. But even Operation 'All Out' has its limitations. It is estimated that there were about 150 militants in the valley at the time of Burhan Wani's

killing in July, 2016. Now there are said to be 250 militants even though the security forces have neutralised 210 since then; and locals mainly from South Kashmir still outweigh foreigners.

The older generation has had enough, so too have those who have been across and witnessed Pakistani ruthlessness. It is the new generation, not knowing what Pakistan is like that are still attracted by the gun because of our neglect. The majority of youth are opposed to the gun, but see little hope elsewhere; we are choking our own space by not providing the youth a way out.

“Dialogue is the only way forward in Kashmir. There is no other way,” as Mufti Sahib had once said. If there is one message which comes out of Kashmir, not today, not yesterday, but as far back as one can remember, it is that one can achieve a lot through love and compassion but you can never achieve it by force. Kashmir is not a military or law and order problem but a political and emotive issue.

Dineshwar Sharma understands this better than anyone else and has been quietly acknowledging it during his interactions in Kashmir. One would not be surprised, if during his next visit to the valley, Mr. Sharma drives straight to Gilani Sahib’s residence. He is not one to throw in the towel so easily. He has a job on his hands and knows how to deliver on Kashmir, understanding fully well that any dialogue without the Hurriyat would be almost redundant. It cannot be deferred for too long.

Unfortunately, all political activity is at a standstill except for Dr. Farooq Abdullah’s occasional foray in North Kashmir. As a J&K Police officer complained, how long could they keep dispersing crowds when politicians refuse to do their bit. Kashmir being a political problem can only be resolved by politicians. As far back as 2001, the Army Chief, General Padmanabhan had said much the same thing; the Army’s job was done and it was for politicians to sort matters out. More recently, another former Army Chief, General V.P. Malik opined that the Army could not be kept interminably in Kashmir. Whether the Army stays or not and after almost 30 years it is difficult to visualise Kashmir without the Army, but as a confidence building measure, AFSPA should at least be diluted or partially revoked. The Kashmiri anger against bunkers is a signal for removal of AFSPA.

The Chief Minister says little or nothing; the PDP is in reverse gear. There is increasing murmur of discontent in the party. Mehbooba will need much more than the induction of her brother in the Cabinet to resurrect the party. The National Conference too needs to pull up its

socks to prepare for the next elections. Anti-incumbency alone may not suffice to see it through. It is high time the party broad based itself by reaching out also to separatists and others looking for political space. The old shop still the best bet for Delhi could do with a facelift.

The detention and arrest of separatist leaders serves no purpose except that it may provide Dineshwar Sharma a ready concession to offer the Hurriyat. Invariably, the release of their colleagues is their first demand. To that extent, it could facilitate dialogue. But as Mehbooba said: “the National Investigation Agency needs to step back to facilitate talks.”

Whether credible or not, Hurriyat thinking is still a factor in Kashmir as much as Pakistan. Basically, the Kashmiri is not at peace with the status quo. The peace with honour he bargained for still eludes him. The reason that we have reservations talking to the Hurriyat and to Pakistan are the very reasons we need to talk to them. The magic of democracy is that hardliners get moderated and mainstreamed. The vast majority realise that their future lies within India. They deserve a chance.

The sentiment of sub-nationalism in Kashmir is not very different from many of our other states except that in Kashmir it is guaranteed by the Constitution.

War, we realise is not an option, so we are content with managing Kashmir. But management can go out of control as it did for most of last year. We need to find a way forward. Dr Farooq Abdullah has repeatedly said that a settlement on the line of control was the most practical solution. Kashmiri's still prefer Musharraf's four point formula. Whichever way we need to pick up the threads on Kashmir with Pakistan. Dr. Manmohan Singh and Musharraf had nearly done a deal.

There can be no peace or forward movement in Kashmir, so long as we keep relating to elections elsewhere in the country, just as we do our relationship with Pakistan. We need to talk to Pakistan as much as we need to engage with Kashmir. If engagement is to depend on elections then we have no hope till 2020. Peace like truth is an indivisible burden.

Kashmir, Dialogue is the Key

Bashir Manzar*

The situation in Kashmir is really worrisome – troubling, because there is a huge multitude of actors who are working overtime to just ensure that the situation here remains forever on the boil. And mind it, these provocateurs are present on both sides of the political divide — non-state actors as well as the state actors.

The new-age militancy with a strong dose of radicalization is emerging as a serious challenge not only for the security apparatus but also for Kashmiri society itself. Young boys, from well-to-do families are joining militant ranks and unlike the youth of 1990's, who took to arms, by and large, in reaction to rigged election of 1987, today's youth are driven by fanatic religious ideology. That is the reason they get attracted to groups like Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and even idolize groups like ISIS.

On the political side, while the mainstream polity is struggling unsuccessfully, to gain some credibility, the separatists are virtually following militants and the street. Following Hizbul Mujahideen poster boy, Burhan Wani's killing, the separatists have almost lost the grip over the situation and have been following the street, which is violently angry. Instead of giving any political direction to the unrest, separatist leadership comprising Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Mohammad Yasin Malik have confined themselves to calling strikes and attending funerals of killed militants.

The ruling PDP-BJP coalition seems clueless and has failed to make any mark on the ground that would have helped improve the situation. While one has to appreciate that after becoming the Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti didn't get any time to breathe easy because

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of the turmoil in the Valley. It goes without saying that her inability to convince her coalition partner to open up communication channels with the stake-holders, particularly separatists, has dented both her own and her party's image.

Right from its birth, PDP has been strongly advocating dialogue with separatists as well as Pakistan for resolution of the Kashmir issue. However, three years in power, Mehbooba has failed to convince the Central leadership to move even an inch toward this direction.

Though the appointment of Dineshwar Sharma, former IB chief, as interlocutor has brought in some relief for ruling PDP, but the fact that the largest mainstream regional party National Conference (NC) and the separatists decided to stay away from Sharma has diluted any prospective gains of the process. Though Sharma has been meeting cross-sections of people all over the state, but as of now any worthwhile outcome seems unlikely.

Whether one likes it or not, unless New Delhi does something serious to open up communication links with the separatist leadership, things are not going to improve. Recent history stands witness that whenever there has been some sort of communication between New Delhi and the separatists, the ground situation in the Valley has shown considerable improvement. However, with no movement forward on the dialogue front, it is cynicism, desperation and depression that are driving Kashmiri youth towards the extreme right – as they see no light at the end of the tunnel. New Delhi will have to realize that separatist leadership, despite all their shortcomings, is still an asset which has to be kept intact.

Kashmir's new-age militancy has already taken away much sting from the separatists here. The talk of establishing an Islamic Caliphate in the Valley emerging from militant camps is also eating on their significance. In such a situation, New Delhi's indifference towards this leadership would only add to their irrelevance, and undo whatever little leverage they have. So the question worth asking is: Will an irrelevant and discredited separatist leadership fit in the broader game plan of New Delhi? Given the ground realities here, the answer is a big "no."

The young boys joining militancy in Kashmir are a radicalised lot. They do not care about historical realities, United Nations resolutions or Pakistan. They seem to have just one agenda – the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Kashmir – a dream akin to the ideology of terrorist groups like the Islamic State, Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Once the separatist leadership is out of the picture, New Delhi is likely to be

confronted by these largely faceless radicals, who believe in an ideology where there is no scope for any dialogue or reconciliation.

Some security analysts may argue that it would give the government a free hand to deal with it militarily. However, such thinking, if it exists, is fraught with so many dangers.

Violent conflicts are like fire. Fire can cause wanton death and destruction; but it is also true that fire, if channeled and regulated properly, can also drive super-engines of progress and development. So, wisdom lies in handling fires with due care and caution, so as to control its mechanics the way it is harnessed constructively inside our kitchens, factories, and engines. Now as the common sense has it, bare hands cannot be used to control and manipulate fires. States suffering violent conflicts have traditionally kept handy some kind of tools – akin to a fire-poker, a spade and tongs – that they use as and when they need to manage the fire, or to keep its thermo-politics from burning up the state and its structures.

The Hurriyat Conference, Kashmir's separatist political leadership, has so far performed the role of these fire tools. Now, by throwing them away, the Government of India is actually exposing itself to the dangerous prospect of burning itself. At the time of need, it will no longer have the privilege of using these tools to regulate the thermo-politics of the Kashmir conflict, which, right now, is facing the added threat of radical groups like ISIS and Al Qaida, blowing fresh air into it.

New Delhi would have to move beyond Dineshwar Sharma initiative if it really wants to have some breakthrough in Kashmir and engage with the separatist leadership. That said, nobody can shut eyes to the influence and control that Pakistan has over the separatist leadership. Therefore, it will be naïve to suggest that separatist leadership will agree to join any dialogue process unless it gets a go-ahead from the neighbouring country. And this necessitates opening of communication links with Pakistan as well.

Even when one cannot deny that in the aftermath of Pakistan's unabated attempts to strengthen and support militancy in Kashmir, the tempers in the Indian political circles are running high, and understandably so, but here former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's quotable quote – "One can change friends but not neighbours" – comes handy to support the need of dialogue with Pakistan.

Regrettably, the political functionaries of both governments (Pakistan and India) have remained so carried away by their respective self-interests that they are simply being indifferent to and ignorant of the larger interests of their countries. Just for the sake of showing off their political loyalties, they are pushing both countries towards a sure-loser and deadly confrontation – loser because modern-day warfare does not throw up any winners.

Even when some indignation over ‘having been wronged time and again’ by the western neighbour makes perfect sense, but it is also true that New Delhi’s troubles in Kashmir are not essentially and exclusively about Pakistan’s machinations alone. So people of Kashmir must be spared of this unnecessary burden of being seen only as an “enemy’s extension.” And should it happen, it will make life easy both for New Delhi as well as for the people of Kashmir, who have otherwise only looked at and suspected each other as the ‘political other.’

For years together, India and Pakistan have peddled their negative nationalisms at the cost of Kashmir and its people, and yet both have clearly and repeatedly failed the people here and the ones in their respective mainlands as well. Insecurity, poverty, ambition are stated to be the three roots of destructive nationalism. Since all three of these conditions are endemic in both countries, the ambitious political executive has taken recourse to appropriation of a myth of God “being on our side” and is actively pursuing this mythology over the heads of poverty-stricken ignorant masses and pushing them towards certain insecurity of life, and bread and butter. Nationalism centred around religion as the only marker of identity is a convenient wrapper both countries are using to shield their inherent incapacities and deficiencies – of governance, of poverty alleviation, and everything pledged by a welfare state.

Caught up in the midst of two mill-stones, Kashmir and its people have all along bore the brunt of this constant India-Pakistan rubbing and friction, and yet their own willful ignorance runs so deep that they too have been blinded by negativity to the extent of taking to “a new idolatry of blood and soil”, which according to the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm, springs from an incapacity to recover from the loss of “our pre-modern” social structures.

When nationalism becomes a culture of belonging, rather than a civilization of culture, the democratic and humanist ideas of civilization, society and community – all dependent on our ability to imagine the ‘other’ – those who are not part of ‘our’ ethnic or religious in-group – are pushed to the margins, and demonized. This is what is happening in

India and in Pakistan and, courtesy of their politics Kashmir too is no longer different.

In the early 1997, F. W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela described the journey they (and South Africa too) had taken from war to peace after realizing that the conflict was stalemated. Continuing the violence would spell defeat for everyone; only through negotiations could both sides hope to meet their needs – and this is what they did.

“If both sides could lose through a spiral of violence, then perhaps both sides could win through a spiral of dialogue.” As Mandela put it, “I never sought to undermine Mr. de Klerk, for the practical reason that the weaker he was, the weaker the negotiations process. To make peace with enemy one must work with that enemy, and the enemy must become one’s partner.” (EOM)

The Idea is the Enemy

David Devadas*

‘Radicalization’ is understood in various ways, but one may broadly talk of two kinds of radicalization — political radicalization and religious radicalization. Let us take political radicalization as the spread of those ideas that lead people to try and overthrow the established government, or even the established system of governance that is currently in place, that is, the Constitutional arrangement. Religious radicalization has generally referred in the past to ideas that call for different sets of religious and social practices. Such movements seek exclusivism, that is, they are intolerant of other faiths.

A difference which has existed for long has become more prominent in the recent past: religious radicalism has become a form of political radicalism. So, there are movements that not only insist on a particular form of religious practice, but also seek to replace the established government with a regime that is part and parcel of their particular sort of religion-based belief system.

One often hears talks about ‘defeating radicalization.’ This is an inadequate frame of reference, for ‘defeating’ is based on a war-like framework of friendlies-versus-enemies, winners and losers—a scenario that imagines something like a battalion of the radicalized ranged on a hill, who have to be defeated with the smart deployment of tactics and war strategies. It is the sort of scenario that comes naturally to a soldier’s mind, to anyone steeped in war and battle tactics. But this sort of framework might prove inadequate, for it confuses the ideas that motivate

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the enemy with the enemy. I would rather think of the idea as the enemy.

In a situation such as Kashmir, we should differentiate between trends, currents, and movements within society, and the geopolitics of the situation. If we make this differentiation, we might see that the person with the idea is only the pawn who is very useful to the real enemy, that is the external enemy. It is those enemies that gain, and gain tremendous leverage, when we have large numbers of citizens with radical ideas, that is, people who wage war against the state from within, whether for political or religious, or politico-religious reasons.

Focus on Citizenship

In fact, since that person with the idea is a citizen, is within the country, he or she actually should be a friendly. Let us recall the vital role of citizens within society in Kashmir in 1947-48 and in 1965. As a Citizen rather than as a Terrorist, that person could be the biggest enemy of the external Terrorist. So, if our purpose is stability, then the effort should be to turn those who have radical ideas into friendlies. To quote Mao from the days of the Long March, guerrillas are like ducks, who cannot survive without the pond, i.e. the support of the local populations among whom they live.

If the person who is radicalized is from our country, the first priority should be to contest the idea in his or her mind, and to work towards a trusting and responsive relationship between state and citizen. The alternative is a potentially unending stream of persons taking up arms, and bloodshed becoming self-perpetuating.

This prospect is even more likely in light of the power of social media and other forms of motivation. For, we are witnessing a steadily increasing number of militants in the field, and on the other hand, a steadily decreasing age profile. Both factors are worrying but perhaps the latter—the age profile—should worry policymakers the most.

Decreasing Age Profile

Not only are teenagers taking up arms, videos of small children supporting jihad and martyrdom are spreading. Even infants are picking up ideas that validate violence on the basis of radical ideas. As they grow, these boys will lob stones as soon as they can. And, they will pick up guns with great ferocity, and a readiness to die. To combat the

boy's willingness—in fact, his desire—to die is extremely tough. The child has become the person who is affected by the idea. And parents and care-givers encourage those ideas.

In this context, I am wary of such terms as LWEs¹ and ANEs². Such terms tend to bunch together various kinds of persons, groups, ideologies, and agendas. They obscure the possible differences between genders, locales (such as towns, villages, and jungles), ethnic particularities, and, perhaps most important, generations. Each of these categories could potentially have different ideas, at least to some extent. If we don't dis-aggregate the different types, we could actually end up adding to the problem while trying to sort it out—like a scalpel incision that pushes a cancer to spread.

Over the past few years, I have stressed the urgency of engaging with young Kashmiris. The response of policymakers has tended to be dismissive. A very powerful policymaker asked me how he could possibly engage with 'young Kashmiris' at large. Instead, he said: 'tell me an organization and I can deal with it.' Seeking an organization with which one might deal stems from an established sort of mindset—let's either buy over their leader, or threaten the main activists, or actually decimate the individuals who can be identified as belonging to that organization. But the sort of approach leaves the battle of ideas aside. It leaves the ideas to spread.

This sort of approach and mindset particularly distresses me, since it continues even after I have witnessed, living in Kashmir, how vibrantly the Jamaat-e-Islami has re-emerged over the course of this decade. The attempt to crush it through ruthless tactics, including daylight killings at their doorsteps, by the mercenaries of Ikhwan (or men associated with the police Special Operation Groups) from 1994 on has made no difference to the strength of Jamaat on the ground two decades on. In fact, if anything, those ruthless tactics may actually have won the organization the sympathy of other Kashmiris—many of whom were very skeptical about Jamaat in the past.

Methods of Spread

Let me briefly turn to the ways in which 'radicalization' came about in Kashmir. Internet, mainly via telephony, has been a major input. Since the early years of this decade, students at colleges and schools have been receiving sophisticated, slickly produced videos valorizing Islamic State commandos. Yes, that is what they looked like in some of those

videos— highly trained, motivated, and successful commandos. A lot of people get mystified by the number of young Europeans and others who went to fight for Islamic State, but they would not be mystified if they focused on the inputs the young receive to motivate them.

The discourse at some mosques has also played a role. The preaching of men like Mushtaq Veeri of the Ahle-Hadith is particularly notable. In south Kashmir, Veeri overtook the much less radical Maqbool Akhrani by the middle of this decade. He has openly called for support to Baghdadi and the Islamic State in sermons. Over the past year or two, even Veeri's level of radicalism has been overtaken by some of his acolytes. One of them, Ashiq Salafi, called for support to Zakir 'Musa' soon after Musa's audio rejecting nationalism and democracy went viral on 12 May last year. There has been much speculation about who might be backing Musa. It really doesn't matter beyond a point. What matters is the level of support, even hero worship, Musa's radical Islamist ideas attract among young Kashmiris, mainly teenagers.

In this age of mass media, televangelists have played a bigger role than preachers. Their messages often privilege, even valorize, religion-based exclusivism. Apart from televangelism and social media messaging, the discourse in schools, colleges, and universities has played a much greater role to radicalize young Kashmiris than preaching at mosques. The curriculum and teachers' training are major concerns. During the past few years, Kashmir University has become a hotbed of anti-India radicalization. It is now under the strong influence of radical activists. This is a major change since around the turn of the century.

Global Trend

Another dimension of this issue needs to be recognized. Radicalization, in political and religion-based terms, is spreading in various countries and in various religions. It is a global trend. Three kinds of trends are visible. One, more and more people are influenced by exclusivist ideas of identity — 'who are we' as the title of one of Huntington's books put it. Two, support is gaining ground for a strong uniting leader who will protect what is seen as the interest of a pure identity. This trend is gaining ground at the cost of earlier ideals of consensus, inclusion, and the autonomy of regions and of religious, sectarian, and ethnic groups of various sorts. This boils down to a move away from democratic functioning, as it was understood a few decades ago. Three, there is

increasing acceptance of, if not backing for, violence of one sort or another against those not considered to ‘belong’ to one’s own kind.

Some studies have drawn links between this trend towards violence and exclusive identities on the one hand, and such trends as climate change, stress in agricultural sector, water-related crises including drought, urban migration, etc. in places like Syria. But those dimensions of increasing radicalization are beyond the scope of this article.

Genie Out of the Bottle

If we recognize that radicalization is not just rising, but is global, how should we understand it, if not as a battalion ranged on a hill, on which it must be defeated? I prefer to think of it as a genie—a genie which is out of the bottle. It has spread in society, in minds. And yet, it has not spread uniformly. It is far more common among younger persons than middle-aged or older Kashmiris. Now, ‘young’ covers a very large part of the population. Almost 70 per cent of the Valley’s population is said to be below the age of 30. Such are the demographic trends that almost half the population in the Valley is below the age of twenty. That means that half the people are teenagers or in their pre-teens. These are the people who matter—or rather, the ideas in their minds matter. In fact, several of the leading militants, even those who call themselves ‘commanders’ are below the age of 22.

I have argued in my forthcoming book, *The Generation of Rage in Kashmir*, that the term ‘stone-pelter’ is inadequate to understand who we are dealing with in Kashmir. There have been three uprisings over the past decade that have been described by the term ‘stone-pelting’—in 2008, 2010, and 2016. The reason the term ‘stone-pelter’ is inadequate is that it misses the point that those who were on the streets in 2008, after land was transferred to the Sri Amarnath Shrine Board, were broadly speaking not on the streets in 2016, after militant commander Burhan Wani was killed—at least after the first three or four days. Typically, those who were on the streets in 2008 were in their 20s and 30s. Some were even older. Those who were on the streets in 2010 were typically in their early 20s, some were in their teens. Now, those who were in their early 20s in 2010 were in their late 20s by 2016. Those who were in their late teens in 2010 were in their mid-20s by 2016. Even those who were in their early teens then were mostly past their teens by 2016.

After Burhan was killed, many young Kashmiris even in their late 20s were introspective. They talked of how pelting stones had done them no good, and about the futility of violence. But those who had become teenagers by then more than made up for them. These young people were typically born around the turn of the century. They had grown up with ideas about a global war on terror, about 9/11, ideas about Muslims being oppressed in Palestine, Chechnya, Iraq, Afghanistan. We will get nowhere unless we deal with these ideas—which are often carried by the extremely slick videos of Islamic State, and about abuses in various parts of the world. The vehicle for those ideas is social media. It is almost impossible to contain the internet, but the genie is flying around the net.

The teenagers who are glued to cell phones are precisely the age group that is most easily influenced by ideas of ‘pure’ religion, and by sophisticated videos, which play subtly on emotions and sentiments. One could categorize such videos very broadly as positive influencers and negative influencers. Positive influencers are those videos and messages that show preachers, historical allusions, Quranic verses, and the glorified actions of militants, including those of such organizations as the Islamic State. Negative influencers include videos and messages that showcase cruelty and human rights abuses by the forces, including the police.

Dealing with the Genie

Responses need to be carefully thought through. If we imagine radicalization like a genie outside a bottle, let us think of it as invisible smoke in the air. The more one beats at it, the more it will spread. And the minds that perceive that beating will take it as proof of the messages of radicalization. That assault will be seen as proof that ‘they hate us.’ That theme was studied ad infinitum in the US in the years after the 9/11 attacks. Most of those studies failed to grasp that those who hate have come to believe that they are victims of hate, and are only responding to something started by the other side.

Responses need to be based on insightful study, and be far more imaginative and thoughtful than they have hitherto been. Since one is dealing with thoughts, ideas, and values, the projection of one religion, or one sect, or one school of religion against another will only result in strengthening that stream of thinking—about religion as the dominant and rightful frame of discourse.

The antidote to a certain sort of understanding of religion is not another form of religion. It certainly is not a criticism of religion, for that only gets people's backs up, and makes them defensive in a 'us against them' framework. The ideas that need to be promoted as counters must be about inclusion, engaging, accepting, and looking forward towards the future. If this is a contest of ideas, it has to be held on the battlefields of minds and of perceptions. In those battles in the mind, the language of combat and offence will lose.

To begin with, this phenomenon requires understanding. There is no point talking of 'misguided youth' in propaganda campaigns, but not engaging with the ideas that guide—or misguide—their minds. It is vital that they be engaged in a spirit of understanding, forgiveness and acceptance. It must not be a patronizing, top-down approach. One needs to understand the narratives, discourses, facts, and perceptions that constitute the genie that is out of the bottle. Only then, can one discover the points that can be counters.

Notes

¹ Armed forces tend to use the term, short for Left-Wing Extremists, for Maoism.

² Short for Anti-National Elements.

Kashmir At a Threshold: Recovery of Integrity or Surrender to Violence

Rajiv Vora*

Kashmir that we know through politics, media and tourism is not the same it opens up in trust. The challenge for anyone with a responsibility to melt the frozen doors and channels of dialogue with people and stakeholders in Jammu & Kashmir is to win their lost trust in “Indians” and earn their confidence. Govt. of India’s Special Representative puts youth radicalization at the center of his agenda. Observations of this writer are based on his engagement with Kashmiri youth in dialogues on non-violence since 2010, more than 20 visits and more than two dozen dialogues including on Kashmiri Muslim-Kashmiri Pandit rapprochement, as a part of experiment in non-violence. Ultimate answer to any human misery, rationalized violent radicalization must come from reawakening of inner cultural-spiritual resources of people. Kashmir has it in abundance. Besides a cursory view of the situation into which GoI’s Special Representative’s task is cut out; politics and the dynamics of dialogue, the writer discusses a less attended and explored socio-cultural dynamics triggering internal cultural-spiritual alienation and loss of identity which in turn is a cause of radicalization as religious radicalization affirms, recovers a sense of lost identity. The breakage of pluralism, the ‘rishi-culture’ and its recovery are closely related with radicalization and legitimacy of violence. Kashmir is a complex culture, and so are its problems of violence and radicalization.

Dineshwar Sharma, appointed in late October 2017 “to start a substantial dialogue in Jammu & Kashmir” in the words of Home

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Minister Rajnath Singh, while concluding his first visit to Kashmir said he “*would try to make every effort to meet Hurriyat leaders*” during his next visit. Commentators voicing skepticism and cynicism may be right in following text-book lessons on making political predictions, but the uncommon factor of radical departure, a turnabout, on issue of talks with the Hurriyat leaders, do not suggest an insincere time-passing tactical move or a show for an international credit. Radical departure become morally binding, for it suggests radical review of earlier public position, a conviction and not a clever calculation. Cynicism is good only as a reminder of earlier experiences of hopes raised and let down, but not good for clearing the path of hopelessness and loss of trust; – the twins borne of loss of meeting ground between Indian Govt. and resistance leadership.

Right at the outset, Shri Sharma must have found how unenviable is his task when reports suggesting a counter-line within the BJP appeared in the J&K media; and when the news of his highly confidential meeting with senior Hurriyat leader, its former Chairman, Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat, got leaked to the media and the great possibility of bringing the Hurriyat on board was sabotaged. Such things only underline the complex, rather treacherous, power play to which Kashmir’s peace process is subjected to. That makes Shri Sharma’s task unenviable. But the possibility of exhausting his mandate reasonably can restore the lost trust in the institution of interlocutor. Notwithstanding the title of his designating, he perhaps can give to Kashmir more than earlier interlocutors. That is a rewarding side of his task. To say the task is a challenging one, is an understatement.

However, people in Kashmir know that they have greater stakes in peace process than the critics and those who play the power game to which peace is an anathema. Many Kashmiri youth are meeting Shri Sharma, in spite of the fact that Indian state has lost its ground in Kashmiri people’s mind considerably post-2016 mass uprising. But, the main issues apart, people want the day-to-day life, its dignity and democratic space to be secured first and foremost as a matter of duty of the state. Militancy and terrorism are beyond them, but if the state too remains beyond them, Kashmir would be a much harder case than it is already; disaffection will be beyond repair. Within such tender circumstances it is an evidence of a sense of responsibility when Kashmiri youth and others choose to meet Shri Sharma, a warm hearted unassuming gentleman with a lot of goodwill and respect for Kashmiri

people. If interactions continue, it may create conditions for the Hurriyat leaders to open their doors that they closed on the All Party Parliamentary Delegation, which was not considered prudent by many. An ordinary Kashmiri knows that they cannot wish away India. Their leaders need to engage in talks. Therefore, in spite of people meeting Shri Sharma, the Hurriyat leaders are watching and keeping silence over what otherwise may be seen as defiance against them. All the Hurriyat leaders do not hold the same stand as its present Joint Command. Senior Hurriyat leader and its former Chairman Prof Abdul Gani Bhatt did take the initiative. Had it not been sabotaged, it would have perhaps worked towards opening up more doors and opportunities.

A keen observer of Kashmir would not fail to notice expressions among the youth of frustration and, at times, of disaffection towards resistance leadership and attempts at critique of the glaring weaknesses of the movement. Such frustration does play critical role internally in the benefit of their cause. In relation to Delhi it does not, for general disaffection towards Delhi is the glue that binds them together in spite of internal differences. Had the disaffection towards Delhi been of the level of post-summer- 2010 when politicized youth would assert that they do not hate India, they have complaint against it, the internally growing disaffection towards their leadership could have worked favorably for Delhi. Betrayal of the trust they reposed repeatedly in interlocutors; mass uprising in 2016-17; indiscriminately lethal use of so-called non-lethal pellet gun; blinding of innocent young ones, and what followed, poisoned the minds of ordinary youth. Now they say “we hate India.” How and who engineered the violent uprising is beside the point. What matters is: the mood changed radically adverse.

Challenge of popular mood and that of the armed militancy are dissimilar. Armed militancy may have, as it has, since 2002 onwards reduced considerably and is confined to some pockets only; but, anti-India mood has grown from limited pockets to larger population including school going children. It is easy to shoot down a gun-wielding militant – which the security forces are doing fairly efficiently, but you cannot shoot down widely spreading and deepening public sentiment. What has grown has far more serious consequences than what has declined. Unlike armed militancy which carries with it long standing structure, training, organization and international network, public mood is largely autonomous, fed on sudden matters that swing sentiments: sense of right and wrong; just and unjust; and, propaganda.

Since the ideas of right and wrong, just and unjust on universally held humanitarian principles are commonly respected; and, as none of the parties can claim to be above the count of morality and righteousness, give-and-take has its rationale and legitimacy. Both the parties know what is un-bargainable and what is not. No sane party in a long drawn conflict starts with the un-bargainable. Thus, even one party is sincere if not the other; the seemingly frozen layers over relationship can be melted. Resistance leaders know it too well, and so do all reasonable people, that armed militancy coupled with international terror groups on the one hand; and, on the other Islamist agenda of some, make deadening space for ISIS-like mindset that has changed the very paradigm of security, legitimizing the use of force by the state.

Rationale of Dialogue

As excess is inherent to the use of force; communion and empathy are inherent to dialogue. Dialogue presupposes a level of trust. Interactions, talks, as frequent and as open as possible build familiarity, help clear negative stereotypes, build a relationship of listening, recognizing the 'truth' of the other, developing respect for the other's views and bearing with uncomfortable questions, recognizing where one has faulted the other, accepting the wrongs of oneself, and right of the other.... And, slowly trust develops, talks transform into dialogue. However, there is one catch here: while the Govt. representative may have less freedom than the people to open up, he has more power to execute within the limitations of the mandate. It is thus upon the people of Kashmir to use Shri Sharma's powers to the maximum in order to realise the meaning of PM's declaration on the Independence Day, 15 August 2017: "Kashmir issue cannot be solved by bullets or abuses, but by embracing every Kashmiri." The spirit and message of this statement equals the spirit and message of the then PM Bajpayi's statement in Kashmir: "Kashmir is not a constitutional issue, it is a humanitarian issue" PM Mody's statement establishes policy continuity with Bajpayi's statesman – like statement that won every Kashmiri's heart. Home Minister's several statements encourages every stakeholder, whoever is positively concerned with Kashmir situation. He has gone one step ahead this time by appointing an official with open mandate. This again is in continuity with his earlier statements and efforts. Though the damage done by the indiscriminate use of the pellets is more than ever recognized, a sincere initiative cannot go unrecognized. The present

initiative being signal of his commitment and resolve binds him morally. This is significant, for political binding is conditional to power play and its changing equations which implicates other parties too, while moral binding implicates the self, including one's politics.

Commitment and sincerity will be on the test, for Kashmir's past experience with interlocutors and their reports destroyed the very ground for trust and confidence in the motives of Indian state. All the three reports: K. C. Pant, N.N. Vohra and latest by Dilip Padgaonkar and team were unceremoniously shelved. The very word 'interlocutor' lost its meaning, became a symbol of betrayal for Kashmiris. Henceforth, promise for dialogue and talks symbolized for them Indian state's dishonesty, deception and hypocrisy, for words were not followed up by right action. When talks are initiated, – and this is what Kashmiri stakeholders need to recognize – the very dynamics of sitting together for talks, and of dialoging, is such that even a complete disagreement does not close doors on future communication. Parties in dialogue at least share a sense of having tried, done a duty, and accomplished a responsibility. It would not destroy a sense of having followed up on a promise. And, even this much that they have not betrayed declared purpose is enough to keep trust alive. To fail is one thing – it is a part of a process; one gets up and tries again. But to deceive is to rob one of his trust and confidence. Kashmir's loss of trust drives their youth towards radicalization and armed militancy; makes them easy prey to the religious extremism and terrorism. It works as emotional, psychological refuge and reaffirmation of faith.

Statecraft and politics swing between two extremes: in a stable society it remains restrained out of honor of self-aware public opinion; or, in an unstable, ever changing society it remains fearful of ever changing public opinion, or it turns its back on it. Accordingly, governance may symbolize awakened human sensitivity – a characteristic of an ideal democracy we know as 'Ram Rajya;' or, its human sensitivity remains depressed, confused, perplexed and in conflict with itself – a characteristic of modern democracy in which power depends on manipulation of public opinion and mood; or, it is totally crushed, run over – which is the trait of dictatorial rule. A politician's challenge is to resolve the innate conflict of modern governance between two obligations: an obligation to the systemic unyielding cold hardness of the state on the one hand; and, on the other the democratic-value based obligation to humane sensitivity towards legitimate popular aspirations and sentiments. Balance between the two in favour of making state

receptive to legitimate popular sentiments is ruler's challenge. Kashmir poses this challenge. In 2010 a senior professor at Kashmir University told this writer: "We have seen only the hard and harsh face of the Indian state."

Success of a political leader lies in that he/she does not allow state's mechanical hardness to disfigure his/her humane image. This is the distinction between them and the non-state stake holders. Hence, arguments in justification of such hardness that over-runs the obligation to the fundamental values of democracy are in a final analysis counter-productive; for, the state is dealing not with an enemy nation, but with its own people. PM's independence day declaration: "...not by bullet but by embracing ..."; and, Home Minister declaring his doors open for everyone, are in the nature of invocation of that depressed, perplexed sensitivity, for which Kashmir has been thirsting. Kashmiri stake holders, the Hurriyat leadership would do service to their own people by cooperating. Perpetual cynicism is a sign of defeat.

2

Disinheritance, Loss of Identity and Aggression, Violence and Radicalization

People in conflict with the State and within themselves may find redresses for human right violations, social-political violence and repression, economic and political grievances and disputes etc. through mundane, repetitious, tiresome politics of struggle; but, redress of the basic cause of aggression, religious-political radicalization, fanaticism, extremism and violence cannot be had unless they are brought face-to-face with society's inner cultural-social-intellectual-spiritual resources by identifying them and then removing the blockages that have caused the discontinuity in the transfer to the present generation of their inheritance of the treasure of plural culture which is the authentic form of social-religious life of Muslim, Hindus and Buddhist in Jammu & Kashmir. Radicalization on fundamental issues, issues central to life does not and cannot have an answer in economism. What has taken roots in the mind must be tackled at the level of the mind. Factors that can assist, cannot take place of the factors that cause a phenomena.

The political discourse, which dominates the discourse on peace in a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, pluralistic society-in-conflict, can neither be the measure of its reality, nor can it be representative of the inner voice of the people. Vote-bank politics keeps the inner voice of society,

its culture moorings on the extreme margins. Cultural democracy weakens. This could be corrected, a dialogue that can mitigate mutual mistrust – generated by circumstances created of a time – loss of confidence in the ‘other,’ which, fed by vested political and communal interests breeds antipathy, aggression and violence. This is easily exploitable by extremism. If people’s narratives are recorded they will show that the plural religious-social consciousness is their living reality in their aspirations, it has not receded into the unconscious. And, that is their best inner resource for recovery.

Two Forces and the Making of a Violent, Aggressive Situation

One, the forces, mostly overt, that seek sense of self-assertion, power and identity in religious extremism and in communalism; the other, covert, which, seeing religion based politics breeding fundamentalism and its extreme dreadful forms and communalism and social divide, find it unacceptable. They are in search of their Kashmiri Identity and dignity. Religion being central to their life, an authentic Kashmiri Islam is their ideal religious–social anchorage, and intellectual-spiritual soul’s dwelling. But this is disrupted due to two factors: One, the change in the religious-communal demography of Kashmir due to mass exodus of the community of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990 at the height of insurgency and its Islamic ends that left Kashmir society mono-religion, mono-community society. Second, related with the first is disconnect of the post-1990 generation, the present generation, of the youth from the tradition of plural social culture, their disinheritance from their cultural treasure. They have grown up amidst reigning environment of fear, terror, violence, atrocities and death. These disoriented, traumatized mass of youth provide recruits to the path of violent militancy.

Religious radicalization has relevance to the question of identity. It has two aspects: one, orientation towards false, corrupted religiosity of politics of religion, fundamentalism and extremism as affirmation of religiosity. Here the identity is entirely a creation of casual incidents; and two, orientation towards pure religiosity and tradition as source of identity. An average Muslim youth comparatively more bound by religion, is also comparatively more conscious of religious morality and ethics and open to Islam’s uncommon Kashmiri form; and, similarly, a Hindu, also Buddhists, too are more open and in tune with Kashmir’s syncretism.

Thus, to find one's identity in Kashmiri form of social-religious life, its famed tradition inherited by their ancestors almost up until their grandparents and parents, is for a Kashmiri youth – Muslim, Hindu and Buddhists – a matter of dignified self-affirmation as worthy sons and daughters of the land of Kashmir. It is an altar at which the question of disinheritance and loss of identity can be resolved, and so of aggression, fundamentalism and violent militancy, if discourse could be reformed.

A Unique Inner Strength

Violence is often legitimized for the cause of religion. Fear thus keeps many aspirations suppressed. Similarly anti-insurgency and special power to armed forces curtails normal democratic freedom. Those youth in the Valley away from militancy feel suffocated. Space for non-violence can only give their voice and aspirations articulation. Radicalization among the youth has entered a new phase post-2008 and 2010, and finally 2016-17. The unresolved issue of the return of Pandits to their homes in the Valley and religious radicalization of the youth keep the fire on. However, there is another side to Kashmir, – of its very rich social-religious and intellectual-spiritual resources, another realm of inner turmoil of far-reaching, deeper consequences.

Kashmir has been a unique experiment in human history, at least in the history of this region, of a successful synthesis between Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. That syncretism gives Kashmiri a unique strength and identity that has transcended religious-communal otherness and evolved into a social-religious and intellectual-spiritual culture so unparalleled. Its worldly, societal form is symbiotic merger into a one Kashmiri identity, while being in one's own religion.

Youths' vision is circumscribed by their post-1990 experience of militancy and suffering, while the older generations place them in a larger cycle of history, the history and tradition they have inherited, but the post-1990 generation has not. In a society with cultural and spiritual depth, the life of its people and related phenomena manifest in multiple forms of expressions, experiences and interpretations. This complexity is both the cause of its despair and anchor of its hope. The disconnect of the post-1990 generation from the tradition of a plural socio-religious culture is a cause of its despair; while the elder generation's nostalgia of the past that they have lived is a justification for hope, for it can become the anchor if cause of interruption in transference of the inheritance is removed. Past is not passé yet.

Recovery of Integrity or Surrender to the Aggressive Violent Force

The eternal truth of Kashmir, its people, has been subjected to modification according to partisan political needs of specific historical juncture; hopefully, only as an interruption. It is thus not in continuity with Kashmir's destiny in eternity, the eternal journey of its people. This present historical juncture does not have in it the presence of its past as an aspect of the wholeness of the identity of its people. If the present generation gets bound to the fate of their age, "the created circumstances" as Thomas Aquinas puts it, "they lose" what A. K. Saran explains as "the fundamental freedom"; – the freedom of their Kashmiri essence, and that leaves the entire space only for the communal politics, religious fundamentalism, extremist forces of aggressive violence and destruction.

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Youth Radicalization in Kashmir

Mushtaq Ul Haq Ahmad Sikander*

The contemporary roots of Kashmir conflict can be traced down to the partition of Indian subcontinent. The partition was responsible for the division of State of Jammu & Kashmir. Since 1947, the international dimension of Kashmir conflict has encouraged the movement for the implementation of right to self determination to be the most vocal one. The movement has passed through various phases during the past seven decades. The current phase that initiated after the 2010 mass agitation certainly needs to be witnessed in the context of the year 2008 Amarnath Land Row agitation and 2009 Shopian double murder and rape case of Asiya and Neelofar. The post 2010 years is what I term as the Post militancy phase. Post militancy does not in any way signify that the phase of armed insurgency is over but it translates to the fact that the contours of insurgency have changed. This militancy is mostly indigenous, ideologically thick, pan-Islamist in its outlook and lethal in its execution.

Why only post 2010 did insurgency become more lethal, radicalized, ideologically too strong and universal in its agenda? The reason being that during 2008-2010, the non-violent intifada in Kashmir was met with an iron fist policy of the Indian state. The response of the state was quite similar as to that of combating insurgency. It sent a wrong message across different sections of youth that the state does not understand the language of non-violence. Also the spread of internet to almost every nook and cranny of the valley made it possible for the army and state atrocities to be given a wider dissemination, thus reinforcing the ideology of secessionism. Further the tech savvy young insurgents utilized the internet to its maximum potential particularly

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the social media to reach out to the youth and it became a potential theatre for recruitment of new insurgents.

The socio-political movements like the Arab Spring that has now retrograded to Arab Winter and the rise of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) had a considerable influence over youth. Add to it the rise of Hindutva in India, with the news of daily harassment, lynching, communal riots once again gave a new lease of life to the two nation theory debate in Kashmir, that upheld the belief that the future of Muslim valley is not safe with India. To add insult to injury, the electronic media and prime time debates added more fuel to the fire by humiliating the Kashmiri panelists and branding them as agents of Pakistan. Everytime they are made to prove their identity, the perception is strengthened that Kashmiris are second class citizens or new dalits of India.

Given this context and background, a new debate has been generated among the media circles, policy makers, political analysts and security experts about the radicalization of Kashmiri youth. The term radicalization is debatable, subjective and relative. Who goes on to define the term radical and to whom can we term as a radicalized youth? A youth who sports a beard, wears a skull cap, dressed up in a long loose tunic with a *keffiyeh* around his neck? This is the stereotypical image constructed by media of a radicalized Muslim youth. This image is quite synonymous with everything vice including terrorism and being misogynist. For a lady if she is adorned with whole body cloak, how does it translate that she is oppressed and needs to be liberated?

At the heart of this debate is the modernization of madrasas and Sufi versus Salafi or Wahabi debate. All the security and political experts fail at this juncture as they buy the dominant media discourse that states that madrasas and wahabis are promoting radicalization among the youth of Kashmir. As far as the madrasas in valley or even of India are concerned, they are/were never a part of Muslim radicalization, though they are vocal about the issues of Muslims identity that includes Triple Talaq, Babri Masjid row and uniform civil code. Madrasas in India do reinforce radicalization but it is of different sort and type and very few madrasas are exception to this rule. Each madrasa upholds and propagates an interpretation of Islam and each interpretation is antagonist and exclusive of the other. The interpretation is based on the school of thought a madrasa adheres to. It is for this reason that they declare each other as 'deviated' and in extreme cases label each other

as *Kaafir* or *Mushriq* too against whom a social boycott should be the way of life.

Thus, instead of being a threat to the state or non muslims, they are a threat to the Muslim community itself as they are dividing the community internally. So, the alarm in the different institutions of the state is a false one. Further, if we go for a background check of the insurgents we will find that rarely there is an insurgent who has a madrasa background. Madrasa alumina are not fuelled by a religious zeal to declare *Jihad* and *Qitaal* against their opponents. Most of the radicalized youth belong to the mainstream or secular educational institutions who either drop out or after completion of their studies venture out for a tryst with insurgency. So, the debate about the modernization of madrasas and having a strict vigil over their activities will just be a waste of time and resources. Any such action will be counterproductive and certainly will alienate the Muslim masses as they will brand it with Islam phobia and intervention in their religious affairs.

Coming to the second debate of Sufi Islam versus Wahabi Islam. It again is a stereotypical debate invented, generated and given currency by half baked media men and analysts who have very little information about Islam and its relationship with radicalization. To add to the confusion a new term Kashmiriyat has been invented too. This term was never used by any literary, cultural and religious stalwarts or icons of Kashmir's syncretic, plural and tolerant culture including Lal Ded or Laleshwari, Nund Reshi, Arnimal or Wahab Khaar. The best term to describe the syncretic culture of Kashmir is Rishism that developed as a result of influence of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam over the Kashmiri society. This is the culture that has retrograded and is endangered not some hoax Kashmiriyat, an obscure term till media gave it currency. Rishism is under constant threat at the hands of narrow versions of both Hindu and Muslim nationalism. Joint efforts need to be made to stop the erosion of Rishi culture further.

The Sufi/Wahabi debate is quite new to the valley, as our culture was Rishi one. Also to brand a certain version of Islam as Sufi (read Bareilvi) and others as Wahabi (read Deobandis and Salafis) is flawed one. Further to make Sufi synonymous with Peace and Wahabi similar to War is to commit grave injustice. This dichotomy is the creation of post 9/11 U.S. media and think tanks who without bothering about the genealogy of these terms used them indiscriminately. Sufis in different

parts of the world including India have been active in fighting aggression against oppressors and colonizers. Imam Shamil was a Naqashbandi Sufi who fought against Czar of Russia, Omar Mukhtar better known as the Lion of Desert was a Sufi belonging to the *Silsila* (chain) of Sanusi Sufis, Syed Ahmad Shaheed and Shah Ismail Shaheed who were among the first to fight the Britishers in India were Sufis too. The British used the term Wahabi for their resistance movements, whereas factually they were Sufis. In Kashmir too, Sarjan Barkati who is known as Pied Piper or Azadi Chacha and moved the crowds through his innovative slogans during 2016 mass agitation is a Sufi (read Barelvi). So this discourse again is very problematic and does not help in understanding the radicalization of youth in Kashmir.

Also the increase in number of mosques of Wahabis has not helped in any way in radicalizing youth, so that they will become a threat against the state. Infact youth and few sections of insurgents term the mullahs, imams and preachers as timid and impotent because they do not talk about Kashmir issue or condemn the human rights violations at the hands of security forces. Rather than the local grown influence of wahabis or for the fact Barelvis or others in no way should be constructed as the reason for the growth of radicalization among Kashmiri youth. More than that, the influence of preachers of other places, distant lands and events taking place in various countries have a direct influence over Kashmir as internet and electronic media has rendered it possible. So internet and electronic media are one of the potent sources that are responsible for making youth quite sensitive and politically conscious if not radicalized. Add to it the fact that Muslims all over the world experience to be under siege, so it helps them inculcate and articulate rabid political discourses, extreme and exclusivist worldviews.

The paradigm of unemployment, progress and engaging the muslim youth of Kashmir in productive sports and creative activities will be met with a limited success because these issues do not demotivate youth from becoming radicalized and indulging in violent subversive activities. This radicalization has deeper roots, mostly native and few transnational. The native roots are nurtured as they witness the daily humiliation, torture, disrespect and worthlessness of a Kashmiri at the hands of security forces. These security forces behave differently in other parts of India while controlling mobs, but for Kashmir brutality and naked violence is the order of the day. For every move without distinction whether it is violent or non-violent activity, the response of

the state is a violent one. Pellets and their havoc is just reserved for Kashmir and not for anybody else in the rest of India. Pellets have made their victims particularly those rendered blind as the living testimony of India's brutality that will continue to fuel radicalization in the coming decades.

Add to it the institutional apathy, nepotism, corruption and mistrust of everything Indian. Also the state does not tolerate even the slightest dissent. The student unions in colleges and universities are banned, youth groups are nonexistent and youth are being booked and implicated in false cases even if they circulate anything that state considers 'seditious' over the social media.

The J&K Police has become notorious for pushing the youth to the wall, through harassment and implicating them in false cases or booking them under draconian laws like Public Safety Act (PSA) in connivance with bureaucracy. These high handed tactics have rendered many youths with no option but to seek refuge in the shadow of the gun, as they feel frustrated once they are on the wrong side of the state. The security forces want that violence should continue as huge economic interests are associated with it. The flow of money in the name of counter insurgency is massively huge. This perpetual harassment has resulted in radicalization of youth.

The transnational roots of radicalization are the reaction of growing populism and rise of right wing in many countries including India. Also the armed movements and groups fighting dictators, oppressive governments and U.S. occupation in Muslim lands has also radicalized a section of Muslim youth in Kashmir. The romantic ideal for creation of an Islamic state is also inspiring a section of youth and insurgents to be radicalized to the extent where they are calling for the assassination and annihilation of all those who believe in anything except their version of Islam. Zakir Musa and his men represent this trend among the radicalized sections of Kashmiri insurgents. It is pan-Islamic in its outlook but mostly it is located in local context because secular or religious leadership could not mitigate the sufferings of a common man and failed to put the requisite pressure on the state to resolve the crisis. So, they are now offering a new outlook to reorient and reshape the insurgency, though there is resentment against them among the general masses and resistance camp particularly but for many this approach is essential to breakdown the stalemate. The use of ISIS flag and then their disapproval should be witnessed in this context because Kashmiri society does not approve massive violence like that of ISIS.

Thus, radicalization is a reality, but it is connected with excessive militarization, brutality, black draconian laws, absence of freedom of speech and dissent. If these obstacles and roadblocks are removed, the issue of radicalization will be a relic of the past. Very little scale of radicalization has been generated even by the influence of pan-Islamist or Jihadi movements on Kashmiri youth. The debate about radicalization needs to be looked afresh and the yellow glasses of wahabi and madrasas broken down, only then can a pragmatic strategy for countering the same evolve.

Jammu Down with Complex of Least Priority Area and People

Binoo Joshi*

On October 23, 2016, when Union Home Minister, Rajnath Singh announced the appointment of former Director of Intelligence Bureau, Dineshwar Sharma as the special representative on J&K to meet and talk to all the stake holders in the state, there was lot of skepticism instead of hope and promise. Kashmir Valley was keen to know the mandate of the new man who, in the next few months, was to talk to the “stakeholders” in the state. The past experience of the leaders in Kashmir had made them more skeptical because their experience of the past such exercises by the Centre was sheer disappointment. Their disappointment had deepened because the Centre had not only failed to address the political issues but faltered on its economic promises despite recommendations by the experts and the working groups constituted by the UPA government in May 2006. Barring the ruling People’s Democratic Party that runs the government in the state in alliance with the BJP, other Kashmir-centric parties in the Valley were not enthused at all.

Most of the times, Jammu – a different world of its own – views things through diametrically opposite prism than that of Kashmir Valley– because of the historical, geographical and demographic valley reasons. But this time Jammu too had not much hope because its arch of disappointment and disillusionment had spread from Srinagar – that represents the Kashmir-centric rulers for the people of Jammu region to Delhi that they once trusted as their sincere caretaker. Currently, the people of Jammu are more disillusioned with Delhi and hence any move by Delhi is seen as addressing the grievances of the people of Kashmir Valley, where they think the Government of India has become a party to

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the appeasement of Kashmiris. They believe that the BJP regime at the Centre is no different from the previous Congress governments.

Jammu had its own reasons to doubt whether the fresh exercise initiated by the Government of India would be of any use to the region, which is divided on religious and sub regional lines. Jammu had engendered a grouse against Kashmir Valley and the rulers coming from there, because it believes that the Valley was trying to subjugate their ethnicity, culture and languages. Their greater grievance is that Jammu is being systematically denied its share in the power politics and decision making. Despite having a larger area than the Valley and almost equal population, the region's share in the seats in the Assembly stays lower than that of the Valley. Jammu has 37 seats as compared to 46 of the Kashmir Valley. Four seats are represented by the two districts of Kargil and Leh of Ladakh region. They have been calling for the delimitation of the constituencies, but the Kashmir-centric parties have overruled that plea time and again. It is cited that since there is a moratorium on the delimitation at the national level till 2026, therefore, Jammu and Kashmir cannot undertake this exercise. Jammu and Kashmir is a special status state under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution and the national laws are not applicable to it, unless endorsed by the state legislature. The Centre too failed to push the state government to listen to and act on the plea of Jammu, though the national parties like Congress and BJP, the latter in particular, have been paying a lip service for the equal share for Jammu in all matters.

With such denials of their rights, the people in Jammu region have come to the conclusion that their nationalism and patriotism are being taken for granted by Delhi. They also believe that Delhi goes out of its way to please Kashmir, hence it is also an exploiter and perpetuator of injustice to the region. This perception is now shared by almost everyone. One of the pitfalls of this is that the Jammu Muslim population, particularly from the erstwhile Doda district, now fondly called "Chenab Valley" – for the Chenab river flows through all the three districts of the hilly region of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban – lying adjacent to the south of the Kashmir Valley, has started looking for deliverance to Kashmiri political groups. As Muslims are in majority and there are relations between Kashmiri Muslims and the community members in the hilly region of Jammu, the bonds are stronger. In 1990s, this region was notorious for the massacres of Hindus and lot of attacks on the security forces. Now the level of violence has come down to zero level, but the voices of secessionism are becoming quite vociferous. This is where

this region is getting distanced from the plains of Jammu, where Hindus were once in a clear majority. The sentiment of isolationism and distinct identity that Chenab Valley people have also infected the twin border districts Rajouri and Poonch of Jammu Region.

Rajouri and Poonch run parallel to the Valley on one side and the Line of Control – that divides Jammu and Kashmir – on the other. This has widened the influence of Kashmiri Muslim psychology, which is invariably identified with that of secessionism, or at least sympathetic to the secessionist sentiment that has driven the violent troubles across the Valley for the past 28 years now.

Jammu drew the conclusion that Sharma's appointment was primarily to address the issue of Kashmir, where separatist leaders Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti and others would matter more than any of the Jammu leaders. The Kashmir-centric National Conference's Jammu leaders too toe the Kashmir line. They boycotted meeting with the special Representative because the National Conference Kashmir leadership told them to do so.

A widespread perception, rather belief, in Kashmir is that Jammu has no problem. It's only Kashmir that is having its issues with Delhi. That is the thinking in Kashmir. Delhi is cornered on two different counts – the mainstream parties National Conference and PDP believe that Delhi has eroded special status of the state, which they believe, should be restored. That is their issue with Delhi, while the separatists see Delhi as a problem for not agreeing to "Kashmir being a dispute." Delhi is also charged with complicating matters by not talking to Pakistan on Kashmir. Now this sentiment has gained further credence as the level of violence in the State is going up. For Kashmiri leaders, Jammu makes unnecessary noises about the discrimination against it and its people. For them, the real problem lies in Kashmir where the people have launched a "resistance movement" against the "Indian occupation" and "sacrificed hundreds of thousands of lives." They have tried to give situation in Kashmir a splendid expression to make it look and sound attractive to the international audience. Jammu's Hindus are having no such pretensions nor they intend to embarrass Delhi by siding or endorsing with Kashmiri sentiment, which is isolationist and thrives on exclusiveness. Of late Kashmiri leaders have started incorporating the erstwhile Doda and Rajouri and Poonch districts in their scheme of things – seeing them as part of their struggle against the Indian rule. Increasingly, Jammu Muslims are also thinking on the similar lines. Religious affinity and geographical proximity have

overridden the ethnic and linguistic identities. It is this religious affinity that has facilitated the settlement of the Rohingya Muslims in Jammu, defying all the logic that why should have they been travelling such a long distance from Myanmar or erstwhile Burma – the country of their origin – where, of course, they are allegedly suffering persecution, to settle in Jammu which is Hindu majority. There is a definite design. It became clear and it was voiced with equal concern by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who in the wake of the February 10th and 11th terrorist assault on Sunjwan, a military station, located in the suburbs of Jammu, observed that “there was a local support that facilitated the terror attack.” Whenever Jammu’s Hindus raise these concerns, they are dubbed as communalists. The blame is laid at the doors of RSS which is accused of seeking to evict the Rohingyas because they are Muslims. These are the new fissures within the population and the political narrative. It became more than clear when on February 10, Kashmir-centric National Conference members protested against remarks of the Speaker in the J&K Legislative Assembly, that the terror attack at Sunjwan camp could have been made possible with the local support of Rohingyas and Bangladeshis who are settled in the area. They protested so much that the Speaker had to adjourn the House. This was given a communal colour.

It is very difficult for Sharma to address the two regions on the same scale. As he himself acknowledged to some of the people whom he met in Jammu region, that it appeared that there were two worlds – Kashmir Valley and Jammu Region. There is no ground for their reconciliation, and the narrative in Jammu is mostly against Kashmir. It is this particular reason that Jammu has not been able to make its own narrative nor present its own case in an effective manner at any forum.

Jammu suffers from a complex. Its problem stems from the fact that it swings from extreme ego to beseeching vis-à-vis Kashmir. Some of the people in this region live in the past, when Dogras used to rule the state and would deal with Kashmiris with utmost contempt. They think that Kashmiris have not been able to shun their mindset of slavery. But this is misplaced ego and has no connect with the current reality. It is getting increasingly aware of the fact that its identity is getting dominated by the Kashmiri identity. Kashmiris have used both hard and soft power to expand their influence and that’s why Jammu region is unable to think itself in independent silos notwithstanding the noises for the independent state or separation of Jammu from the Valley. This thinking is deep rooted. But there are no channels to air that. The channels that air these grievances,

primarily focus on their political interests. With Delhi giving them no credence or acceptance, they ultimately fall in the lap of Kashmiri parties.

Jammu is facing a peculiar situation. It has become a land of refugees that have come to the region from Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir, displaced people during the wars of 1965 and 1971, 1999 Kargil war, as also West Pakistan refugees. Then there are Kashmiri Pandit migrants whose number runs over 300,000. All these are considered the natural consequences of the wars and conflict that Jammu and Kashmir has seen since 1947, but what is inexplicable is the settlement of Rohingyas and Bangladeshis in Jammu city and its surroundings.

This reflects two situations in which Jammu region feels that it has a right to speak for whatever happens in the Valley, for it is having a large chunk of population from PoJK and also from the Valley, who cannot be denied their say when it comes to looking for Kashmir solution or peace within the state, particularly the Valley. Second, is that its resentment against the outsiders Rohingyas and Bangladeshis is rebuffed by the Kashmir-centric leaders who defend their stay in Jammu because of their hardcore Muslim community feeling. What is more bizarre for the people of Jammu is that while the Kashmiri Muslim leadership is for extending all the help and facilities to the Bangladeshis and Rohingyas, it is opposed to giving any rights to the West Pakistan refugees who came here as a result of Partition when the displaced people from either side of the border were free to go and settle at any place of their choice. This kind of conflict between Jammu Hindus and Kashmiri leadership has made the situation in this region more volatile. There are more issues in Jammu region, but the people here are frustrated by the fact that no one listens to them. Dinewshwar Sharma has listened to them, but these are some of the issues that need mutual confidence not the persuasive power or knowledge of the Special Representative to undo the wrongs of seven decades.

That is more dangerous than that of the Valley. The dangers here have angle of communalism. That is not the case in the Valley because Kashmir is almost exclusively Muslim after the forced exodus of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990s. Sikhs are having negligible population.

Within Jammu, of course the clashes at ideological level are increasing between Hindus and Muslims, and there is a danger of these getting manifested in physical violence and riots. Ugly signs of such a situation become visible from time to time. Now the Kashmiri Muslim leadership, both mainstream and separatists, have started fuelling the communal sentiment, and the Hindu leadership across the country are

also engendering the sentiment the other way round. The communal clashes in Jammu are just waiting for a flash point.

For example, rape and murder of an eight-year old Gujjar girl Asifa in Kathua district, that should have been treated as a serious crime and the culprits should have been punished, has become a communal issue. The Muslim leadership of the Valley and that of the hilly parts of Jammu region have started accusing the local Hindu leaders of stalling the probe and also harassing the Gujjar population. A heinous crime has been given a communal colour.

When the criminal acts assume communal colour, the social and community relationship suffer fracture which deepen because of the mutual lack of trust almost over everything. Particularly disturbing is the fact that the Gujjar population lives close to borders and have been found involved in facilitating the infiltrators. Their loyalties have become suspect in the eyes of Hindu population. There has been a marked dilution in the original trust that Gujjars were nationalists and had chosen India as their country. They were uninfluenced by the Sunni Muslim “jihad” and anti-India activities. But now that is changing. It is an ominous sign. The PDP ministers have started playing with the communal sentiments of Gujjars and the matters have been made worse by the government that has forbidden eviction of Gujjars from the encroached forest land. It is in a way encouraging the encroachments and any anti-encroachment drive against them is dubbed as communal.

This makes the task of the Special Representative difficult for unless there is one voice on any issue, he cannot address the issue or suggest the remedial measures. The hostilities between communities have complicated his task. And, it is not his job to fix the fractures between the communities because that is something that has to come from the communities themselves. There are problems common to both the communities but their trust deficit prevents them from talking in the same voice. There is no way that Dineshwar Sharma can bridge the trust deficit between the communities. It becomes near impossible task, when the deficit rests on sharing of the pathways and natural resources.

Since the political groups ruling the state – PDP is patronizing the Muslim population and warning law enforcing agencies against taking action against Gujjars settled in forest land, without taking cognizance of the breach of law – and BJP opposing such moves, the chances of dialogue inevitably get dim. Dineshwar Sharma’s mandate, if any, is to address the issues that can bring peace, but when the State government

itself is involved in creating and expanding fissures, he can do little. There lies his biggest problem.

For the past few months, Jammu's border areas have become a theatre of virtual war, where Pakistani shells are raining like never before in the otherwise "peace times." There have been a record number of ceasefire violations – that is a misnomer because ceasefire is violated once or twice in a year or two, when exchange of fire becomes a daily routine, the ceasefire gets replaced by undeclared war. To restore peace on borders requires government to government dialogue. To end this crisis on the borders, the dialogue between the Indian and Pakistani government becomes a necessity. Of course, Pakistan, too, is faced with the similar crisis on the borders on its side because Indian side is "retaliating" with equal or rather more force to Pakistan's unprovoked firing targeting military and civilian targets, but there is no let up in the firing from Pakistani side. This has resulted in hundreds of people fleeing their homes and taking refuge in makeshift camps. The civilian population suffers casualties and death. Schools become out of bounds for the children.

Terror Attacks

Ever since the appointment of Dineshwar Sharma as the Special Representative, things for him have become difficult and complicated owing to the series of the terror attacks that have taken place across the State. The most startling among them were the "fidayeen" attacks in Lethpora, Awantipora in Kashmir, and Sunjwan army military station in Jammu. These attacks cause a setback to the ground covered by Sharma in meeting the youth and other stakeholders in peace in Kashmir. There is nothing that he can do to reverse the impact of the terror attacks and the narrative that they generate. Why dialogue and what for, if the terror attacks are not going to end?

It is known beyond any doubt that Pakistan and Pakistan sponsored terrorist groups are behind such attacks, therefore to address the issue with Pakistan is not within the brief of the Special Representative. That is his limitation, which has also undermined the original mandate that he ascribed to himself – addressing the problems of the youth, particularly their alienation and also to arrest their drift toward radicalization. The radicalization and alienation are two different things, but in the context of Kashmir, the two are intrinsically linked.

The germs of alienation have grown on several planks e.g., political, economic and religious and societal. These need to be explained in detail. A general impression, and to a large extent true also, is that the Indian democracy has never been allowed to enter and function in Kashmir. The rigged and manipulated elections over the decades have given birth to such views wherein it is taken as given that the Centre can manage and manipulate elections. It decides who rules the state. There are various examples. The opposition votes were not allowed to be cast or they would be counted in such a manner that the ruling party candidates would win somehow. The alleged 1987 rigged elections are the most cited example. It is widely believed that the Congress of Rajiv Gandhi at the Centre and the National Conference of Farooq Abdullah connived to deny the victory to some of the Muslim United Front (MUF), candidates. That is thought to be at the root of the political disillusionment. Mohammad Yusuf, now better known by his nom de guerre Syed Salaha-ud-Din, was one of the candidates whose victory in Assembly elections from Amira Kadal constituency in Srinagar was converted into a defeat. This kind of cheating was unbearable for the youth of the times, who had taken part in the elections or voted on the slogan of “Yahan Kaya Chalega, Nizam-e-Mustafa” (It will be Islamic rule here). The fears of Pakistan getting a majority voice in the Assembly through MUF, a combination of many Muslim groups, including Jamat-i-Islami that time led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani were exaggerated. This was the biggest turning point of the political disillusionment or alienation that till date has not been bridged completely, despite relatively clean elections since them.

Economically, there are two prominent aspects that need to be taken into account. One, there is lack of enterprise among the people of Kashmir. They would prefer a casual labourer’s work in government rather than setting up their own self-employment units or doing some private job or tending the fields. Since the government jobs are limited, they tend to get frustrated. This frustration deepens when they find that those close to the politicians or those who bribe them get the jobs when more qualified are left out. The latest round of troubles for the past 28 years has shrunk the avenues in tourism and related activities. The drastic decline in tourists footfall has also caused huge problems for them. They have either taken to violence or support the forces of violence, while some of them have shifted to Jammu and elsewhere where they offer competition to locals, thus create economic and social difficulties in this region.

Religionwise, the Muslims in the Valley, and now increasingly in Jammu, too, have developed a sense of community persecution. Despite

being in a majority in Jammu and Kashmir, the community views the developments in the rest of the country – be it cow vigilantism, few cases of lynching and overall narrative in which the utterances of some of the leaders are deemed as a systematic prosecution of the community. That is what is causing more problems in Jammu where Hindu population also has its own concerns.

Hindus' concerns are focused on the linkage of the terror attacks with the "local support" that emerged from the residential enclaves of Rohingya Muslims, who have been given all facilities by the politicians who used them as vote bank. But the dangers were too obvious for the army. This was clearly spelled out by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 12, when she said that the terror attack was possible because of the "local support."

In such a communally charged atmosphere where the communities have developed mutual suspicion, the task of dialogue and repairing the relations has become extraordinarily difficult. It is not for Dineshwar Sharma to bring the communities together on a single platform because even if he attempts do so, any fresh terror attack can derail that effort. The terror attacks in J&K cannot be ruled out despite the heavy presence of the army and other wings of the security forces. In fact, that makes the terrorists' task easy for they get plenty of targets. Now almost a two-year-old phenomenon, stone throwing mobs interrupting the anti-militancy operations by hurling stones at the vehicles and patrols of the army, has created a situation where certain new conditions have appeared for the continuation of dialogue. For example, Hindus in Jammu, are not convinced that they are safe in their own land with drastic change in the demography of the region and particularly the plains. The settlement of the Rohongiyas combined with the ever-continuing flow of the population from the Valley are becoming causes of serious concern for them. Now it is being viewed with suspicion that not only the outsiders are settling in Jammu but they have set up their business ventures and stake claims to government and private jobs. This is becoming a communal issue as also that of the economic competition and shrinking job opportunities for the narratives. All this has been narrated to Dineshwar Sharma, but he has to find a roadmap that is acceptable to all. But, at the moment, it seems, that his plan of talks is not following a particular schedule. That is being hobbled by the turn of events and the political narrative crisscrossing between secessionism and clouds of war hovering over borders. In all this, Jammu and its aspirations enjoy the least priority.

Kashmir, What Next!

Sajjad Hussain Kargili*

After decades of conflict, normalcy was returning in Kashmir Valley but soon after the killing of Hizbul Mujahedeen Commander Burhan Wani in July 2016, the situation in Kashmir further worsened. Many people have been killed and numerous injured in the last two years. The situation still doesn't seem under control. The opposition parties are accusing BJP-PDP coalition government for its failure to tackle the ongoing crisis. However, the Chief Minister of the State, Mehbooba Mufti on her part made statements often about the peaceful dialogue with all state stakeholders of Kashmir, including Hurriyat and the government of Pakistan. But its alliance partner BJP opposes such proposal from CM.

The BJP, however, claims that their government is serious about the peaceful dialogue in Kashmir and for that very purpose the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh has called several meetings with the various stake holders of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and later the union government has appointed former Intelligence Bureau Chief, Dineshwar Sharma, who was tasked to talk to all stakeholders to find a possible solution to the 30-year-old insurgency in the Jammu and Kashmir. Sharma will also have three officers as point persons for three regions of the State – the Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Ladakh – to address the grievances of the local population.

After repeated turmoil's in 2010, 2013 and 2016, people of Kashmir seem to be losing faith in the process of dialogue, through interlocutors by government of India. The turmoil in 2010 left nearly 120 people dead. Members of the J&K Interlocutors Group, who had submitted a report on the reasons behind that violence and ways to prevent its

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recurrence, insist that the present situation in the Valley would not have arisen if the UPA government had not ignored their recommendations and the NDA government had taken necessary action in time.

The interlocutors, Late Padgaonkar, Mr. Kumar and former Information Commissioner M.M. Ansari in their report, urged the Centre to reduce the army's visibility, urgently address human rights violations, review the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) which gives the forces powers without corresponding accountability, and lift the Disturbed Areas Act. They also said: "by and large the report was ignored by the UPA. They had been assured that the report would be tabled on the floor of the House and that there would be a debate on it and all the parties would be allowed enough space to deliberate on the recommendations, but that was not done. And the present government has not done it either. Had they taken some serious notice of the recommendations we had made, perhaps we would not have reached the situation we have in Kashmir today."

In Ladakh (Kargil & Leh) people are realizing a sense of alienation and misuse of their patriotism by the union government. It has been seen in the past that the peaceful people of Ladakh region are not even considered at any level for dialogue. They are kept deprived in terms of social and economic development. But whenever any issue comes up in Kashmir, the union government reminds them that Ladakh is very much loyal towards the nation. For the people of Ladakh, historically and geographically the issue of Pakistan Administered Gilgit Baltistan (PAGB) is actually important. The issue of PAGB has become one of the central issues between India and Pakistan after the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) became operational. The region of PAGB remained neglected for decades and has now become the cause for controversy between India and Pakistan, after the latter indicated its intention to declare the region as its fifth province. This development ignores the fact that PAGB is essentially a part of the Kashmir dispute. At the same time, the people of PAGB have been demanding constitutional rights with full autonomy, which has been accorded to Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. However, the Pakistani Government is reluctant to agree, as there is pressure from India, which claims this region.

Local leaders and stakeholders in Ladakh region have put forth demands before the current tension boils over into a conflict. In addition to an airport and the Zojila tunnel, there are demands for all-weather road connectivity. As part of CPEC, around USD 46 billion will be

invested in Pakistan in general and specifically in Gilgit-Baltistan, where several hydro-power projects are planned. If and when these projects materialize, Gilgit-Baltistan will become like other parts of China.

It's also needed to mention here that the Government of India has recently approved Zojila tunnel which was widely welcomed by the people and leaders of Ladakh. But unfortunately, the government has again tried to focus that the tunnel is going to be constructed due to ongoing problems with China rather than for the development of the people of Ladakh region.

CPEC has already complicated relations between China and Pakistan. In the past, their relationship was largely driven by the elite with regard to military and political cooperation. However, this relationship now faces greater scrutiny from the general Pakistani public. The current discourse in Gilgit-Baltistan also suggests growing dissatisfaction with CPEC despite its potential in terms of generating local employment and revenue through electricity generation.

The political status of Gilgit-Baltistan remains disputed. In 1994 India had unanimously passed a resolution in Parliament declaring Gilgit Baltistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir as an 'integral part of India.' Unfortunately, mainstream politicians and media in India remained ignorant of Gilgit-Baltistan. With the exception of security and intelligence agencies, most people in India are unable to differentiate between Baltistan and Balochistan. Earlier Gilgit-Baltistan were known as Northern Areas, which was the term imposed on the region by Pakistan government to dilute the unique regional and ethnic identity of the region. In 2009, the then Pakistani government granted temporary federal status to Gilgit-Baltistan. This was opposed by the Hurriyat Conference, which argued that if Gilgit-Baltistan was given provincial status, India would respond by abrogating Article 370 to absorb Jammu and Kashmir.

Political activists and religious personalities in Gilgit Baltistan, who do not comply with the dictates of the Pakistani Government or make demands for basic rights, have been framed under anti-terrorism laws. Several eminent nationalist leaders from Gilgit-Baltistan have been detained over the years and popular newspapers like Bangesahar have been banned by the Pakistani authorities.

Government of India continues to be in a state of denial with regard to Gilgit-Baltistan. In 2012, a terrorist attack took place in Chilas, Gilgit, during which they massacred Shias travelling from Gilgit-Baltistan to Islamabad. Unfortunately, no one in India or even the pro-

freedom Hurriyat Conference uttered a single word of protest or outrage over this terrorist act. The mainstream political leadership and establishment in India lack a clear vision and policy for Gilgit-Baltistan. They generally use the issue of Gilgit-Baltistan to counterweigh the conflict over Kashmir. It's about time that India developed a clear policy for Gilgit-Baltistan.

In Ladakh the national leaders of Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) and the BJP leaders of Leh district made promise for union territory status and separation from Jammu and Kashmir. But the story is opposite in Kargil, where leaders have previously rejected the demand of a Union Territory. I do remember once, a journalist asked an eminent leader and cleric from Kargil, late Sheikh Ahmed Mohammadi about trifurcation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territory status for Ladakh, he replied: "We are against any kind of division of the state on the basis of region, religion and language." I also remember that current MLA Kargil, Asgar Ali Karbalai also demanding the status of Greater Ladakh and Ladakh Division status and rejected the Union Territory status for the region. On June 2004, when I was invited for youth initiative for peace conference in Pune, Qammar Ali Akhone, a senior leader of National Conference – conveyed a message for greater Ladakh and oppose any kind of division. The day I heard this statement of the leaders of Kargil, I tried to understand about Union Territory demand.

Actually, Union Territory is a sub-national administrative division of India, in the federal framework of governance. Unlike the states of India, which have their own elected governments, Union Territories are ruled directly by the federal government or central government. There are many UTs like Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Lakshadweep or Pondicherry in India. But Jammu and Kashmir has their own identity and special status in the India union. The current state has its own constitution and identity. While on the other hand, nearly half of the area of the State is under the administrative control of Pakistan, including Gilgit and Baltistan on Ladakh side. On 22 February 1993, Government of India unanimously passed a resolution in Indian parliament that these areas under Pakistan control are the part of Jammu and Kashmir and India. It also mentioned that India can take these areas anytime. But it's unfortunate that India has just passed this resolution and forgotten about it. Keeping all these things in mind, if the Government of India will consider and accept the demand of Union Territory by a small section of society of Leh district,

who are not even in majority, then a new crisis will begin in the region. The leadership of Kargil district is demanding to preserve unity in diversity. Though, they are demanding divisional status for Ladakh region in the current scenario and when the issue of Jammu and Kashmir is resolved, including the region of Gilgit, Baltistan with Ladakh, greater Ladakh should be given to this area. The demand of Union Territory will change the unique culture of Ladakh; it will go in the lap of corporate mafia. Union Territory is a serious threat to the social, cultural values of Ladakh. The identity and culture of Ladakh will disappear. While demography of Ladakh would be changed, the governance powers would officially be surrendered to New Delhi and we would have no right to challenge any decision of New Delhi. Moreover, the people of Ladakh are enjoying the benefits of hill council powers, ST status, article 370. All these powers and special status of our territory will slowly vanish. Kargil has cultural, historical, religious bonds with Kashmir. The bonds of thousand year's civilizations will be automatically wiped off. And it would be very tough to start new bonds and build new relations. Kashmir can understand the problems and crisis of the people of Kargil more than Delhi.

In 2016, the Department of National Security from Jammu University organized a workshop titled Confidence Building Measures: Cross-border Trade in Kargil and Leh districts of Ladakh region. After this workshop, a report was submitted to Government of India, which highlighted various issues and made recommendations. Some of the recommendations of this report felt that there is a lack of strategic thinking among the elites and public intellectuals on Ladakh. Ladakh itself seems inclined to play only a limited role since it does not want to punch above its weight. Opportunities must be created to cultivate strategic thinking about this region. Trade is the new game in the region and New Delhi should view developments through its geo-economic interests not just through a security prism. Some recommendations were:

- (1) Geopolitical changes and the current strategic environment have created an opportunity for Ladakh to assert its identity and its role in terms of leveraging India's Central Asia Policy. For Ladakh to play a meaningful role in the geopolitical competition, it needs a dynamic and charismatic leadership to reconnect its glorious past with the present.
- (2) Opening up of the Nubra Road to Baltistan should be included in the Sino-Indian bilateral border meetings; this would provide easy access to India to reach Central Asia.
- (3) There is a growing interest among a certain section of the public and of security experts to visit Kargil, Drass, Batalik

and Tiger Hills. Security Tourism could be proposed or introduced in collaboration with the Indian Army.

- (4) An alternative route for the Kailash Mansaravor Yatra through Demchok Road to Mount Kailash would be just 504km long and can be done in 3 days.
- (5) All India Radio stations should be set up along the LoC, especially Batalik, Drass and adjacent sectors to broadcast news and views from India regularly to the people in Gilgit-Baltistan. The station could also air weather reports as well as local pop and folk songs.
- (6) A Research Hospital run by DRDO to deal with high altitude medical issues especially trauma cases faced by the civilians as well as military personnel should be set up in Kargil and Leh with 200 beds.
- (7) Leh attracts students to do research on Earth Sciences. A state-of-the-art laboratory on Rare Earth Elements also needs to be built. This facility could later be managed or maintained by a consortium of IITs or Universities specializing in these disciplines.
- (8) There is a need for all-weather connectivity via Zojila tunnel or any other road route which the people of Kargil can use all through the year.
- (9) The Kargil airstrip is ready for use but is not functional. Until the all-weather road connectivity materializes, connecting the region by air could be the best alternative solution. A civilian airport would also enhance tourism in Kargil. Confidence Building Measures on Sub-Regional Trade & Connectivity.

Besides there are some other issues also which people of Ladakh would like to be addressed. There are more than 18,000 divided families in Ladakh and the members of these families' desire to visit their relatives across the border. To visit Gilgit and Baltistan, they have to go through the Wagah border which is a cumbersome affair for poor families. The government should consider facilitating a meeting point at the Kargil-Skardu road where divided families can meet and people-to-people contact enhanced. In this age of connectivity, the people of Kargil are unable to connect with their relative's across the LOC as mobile service providers in Kargil do not allow outgoing calls to the Gilgit-Baltistan region. The people from across the LoC, however, can make calls to their relatives in Kargil in addition to internet chats and voice calls between the people on both sides. India should consider permitting mobile service providers to allow connectivity to the other side.

There is huge trade scope for apple and apricot cultivators but the 1974 ban on its export is preventing the growth of this sector. Currently, the Kashmiri apple growers' lobby is against the export of fruits from this region. The government needs to review its export ban and reopen trade of Ladakhi apricot and other fruits from Kargil and Leh.

People of Kargil are living at the Zero Line near the LoC but the benefits under the ALC (Along Line of Control) notification continue to elude them.

Except for the cross-border shelling in 1999, Kargil has remained peaceful. However, the Kargil-Skardu trade route (the traditional centuries old Silk Route) has remained closed, while trade on Poonch-Rawalkot and Uri-Muzaffarabad routes remain unaffected despite cross-border violations, firing, and high tensions between India and Pakistan. This situation must be rectified.

The FM Station of Kargil has 200KW setup which can reach up to Gilgit-Astore but the station does not even broadcast news items. Radio in short and long wave can become a bridge between the people of the divided region.

An alternate route for Amarnath Yatris through the Baltal-Sonamarg track would reduce pilgrim congestion in Kashmir. More infrastructure facilities along this route are required.

There is much scope for development of Zaskar and Suru Valley as tourist destinations to attract domestic as well as international tourists.

If construction of the Manali-Leh-Kargil route could be expedited, any unrest in Kashmir will not affect economic activity in Kargil and Leh, and keep the region connected with the rest of India at all times.

Given the potential to reach Central Asian markets, and of Ladakh serving as the gateway to increasing trade with Central Asia, India should consider opening the Kargil-Skardu trade route.

Besides, heavy military deployment at Ladakh border with Pakistan, particularly at Siachen Glacier is an environmental hazard. Glacier is already melting and may have adverse effect on hill communities of the area. Measures to prevent militarisation of the area is required.

In Short, the people of Jammu and Kashmir in general and Ladakh in particular strongly feel that there is a need to have peaceful and fruitful dialogue with all stakeholders to maintain peace and stability in the region. All nuclear neighborhoods must remain peaceful. Both the Government of India and Pakistan should understand that, the use of power cannot bring any solution to the conflict and the war can only worsen the present situation of the State.

An Essay on the Rohingya Crisis**

Jayanta Kumar Ray*

Rakhine (known as Arakan during British rule) is a province of Myanmar. Buddhists form a majority in Rakhine. But, Muslims, according to one assessment, emerged in Rakhine (Arakan) as early as 8th century AD, and the distinctiveness of Rakhine Muslims (Rohingyas or Chittagonian Muslims or Chittagonian Bengali Muslims) became evident by the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries.¹ A UN Report on Rohingyas, prepared by a human rights organization, also claims that Rohingyas came to the region in the 8th century.² However, there is another view that Rohingyas never had millennia long connection with the Arakan state, as it is a fabricated story that has no academic acceptability.³ Interestingly, from 1950s, the term 'Rohingya' began to be used by the direct descendents of Muslim migrants from Chittagong.⁴ In 1785, the Konbaung Dynasty of Burma occupied Rakhine. Later, the Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26) started, and the British conquered the whole of what they called Arakan (currently Rakhine). Bengali Muslims began to migrate to Arakan, which was encouraged by the British. From 1826 onwards, British companies had been recruiting Bengali Muslims in Arakan in commercial ventures, like mining, cutting of teak trees, constructing roads and bridges, etc. It led to massive Muslim migration, which continued for more than a century. There was a significant economic reason behind the massive migration of Bengali Muslims from Chittagong to Burma. Compared to Bengal, wages in Arakan were very high.⁵ In the estimate of Burmans, who comprise the ethnic majority in Myanmar, a majority of the Muslims currently living in Rakhine are the descendants of the migrants from Chittagong, located

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in present day Bangladesh. During colonial rule, Chittagonian immigrants turned into a dominant group in some parts of Burma.⁶ Burmans form the ruling circle, although since 1962, the military have (visibly or invisibly) governed the country, and their concept of the essentials of Burmese national culture excludes Rakhine Muslims, obliterating even the distinction between Muslims living in the pre-British era, and those arriving in the British era.⁷ It is important to keep in mind that the Government of Myanmar considers 1826 as a watershed regarding the issue of conferring citizenship rights on the Rohingyas.⁸ One striking fact is that unlike any Muslim-majority country, despite having its own Buddhist identity, Burma was a tolerant country and did not declare Buddhism as state religion. Moreover, non-Buddhists had complete freedom to practise their religion, and more significantly, public opinion in Burma was not in favour of conversion from one religion to another.⁹ None of these progressive features can be observed in any Muslim country in the world. Indeed, British conquest of Burma drastically changed the status quo of Burmese society, due to a significant Muslim migration from India. With the substantial growth of immigrants in Burma, Muslims began to develop their religious activities to the fullest extent, such as building of mosques and other religious institutions, which Burmese Muslims had never done before.¹⁰ After the declaration of the British government that Arakan was a part of Bengal presidency, Muslim population in Arakan increased in a huge fashion, and subsequently reached twenty per cent of the total population. Ceaseless Bengali Muslim migration to Arakan led to clashes between Bengali Muslims and the Buddhists. The clash between Buddhists and Rakhine Muslims, currently called Rohingyas, became inevitable, especially because of aggressive anti-Buddhist activities of the Rohingyas, such as destruction of Buddhist temples, forceful conversion to Islam, etc. The British did nothing to stop such conduct of the Rohingyas. Later, during the time of the Second World War, Rohingyas supported the British, whereas Buddhists supported Japan. The British government provided arms to Rohingyas, which were used to kill Buddhists. In 1942, Rohingyas killed 20,000 Buddhists in Northern Arakan. When Japan occupied some parts of Burma, the British government formed *Volunteers Force* to provide arms training to Rohingyas to fight against the Japanese, and Rohingyas used those arms against the Rakhine Buddhists, killing Rakhine Buddhists and destroying their religious institutions.¹¹

In 1948, when Burma got independence, Rohingyas refused to be citizens of Burma, and requested M.A. Jinnah to include Arakan in

East Pakistan. Nevertheless, Jinnah turned down their request. The reason behind Jinnah's refusal was not far to seek. The Eastern part of Pakistan (called East Bengal till 1956) had a population already exceeding that of the Western part of Pakistan. To add Rakhine Muslims to East Pakistan was to aggravate the population disparity between the two parts of Pakistan—which was a distinct disadvantage in the political arithmetic of any democratic system. Under these circumstances, Rohingyas formed the *Mujahid Party* in 1948, with an ambition of establishing a Muslim state in Northern Arakan. From 1948 to 1962, Rohingyas destroyed countless Buddhist temples and cultural centres.¹² Subsequently, in 1962, this situation changed, when General Ne Win came to power through a military coup. The Ne Win government passed an exclusionary Citizenship Act, which made three categories of citizens—National, Associate, and Naturalised—in 1982. Full citizenship was conferred on 135 national races, officially declared as indigenous groups, who have proven record of ancestry in Burma before 1823, i.e. prior to the first Anglo-Burmese War.¹³ It is important to remember that even in 1971, Burma (called Myanmar since 1989) provided shelter to 75,000 Bengali Muslims, who had been tortured by the West Pakistani military, seeking safety in Burma.

The Islamic terrorist organisation, *Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army* (ARSA), formerly known as *Harakah-al-Yakin*, wants to establish an Islamic state in Myanmar. It is an undeniable fact that Islamic terrorism is largely responsible for today's crisis in Myanmar. Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and a number of Arab states are providing resources to these Muslim groups in Myanmar, which plays a key role in the crisis.¹⁴ Significantly, for a long time, Bangladesh has been patronising the Rohingya terrorists. In 1978, the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO) was formed in Chittagong, and it provided arms training to the local Rohingya youths with the help of Imam Abdul Karim of Markaz-e-Islam located in Neela, a border town of Rakhine; all the meetings of RSO used to be held in a hospital, Rabta-e-Islami, located in Chittagong.¹⁵

On 25 August 2017, *Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army* (ARSA) concurrently attacked 30 police posts and an army base located in the northern part of the Rakhine state, which led to the present day Rohingya crisis. Indeed, the emergence of such an Islamic extremist group in the region is a matter of serious concern.¹⁶ Abdullah, a representative of ARSA, says that the purpose of the attack of 25 August was self-defence and the restoration of rights of the Rohingyas.¹⁷ Ataulah abu

Ammar Junjuni, chief leader of ARSA, was born in Karachi, Pakistan, and he was also an Imam, i.e. Prayer Leader, of the Rohingya community in Saudi Arabia. Also, he took training in guerrilla warfare under the Taliban in Pakistan.¹⁸ Thus, the role of ARSA behind the emergence of today's Rohingya crisis is undeniable.

According to news agencies, in response to the 25 August attack, Burmese troops retaliated against the rebels and burnt down 1,000 homes in 10 areas of the Rakhine state.¹⁹ Facing severe counterstrike by the Myanmar Army, ARSA proposed a ceasefire, which was turned down by the Myanmar Army as it was unwilling to negotiate with the terrorists.²⁰ Undoubtedly, Rohingya terrorists are the primary and the consistent source of disorder in Myanmar. On 7 January 2018, Rohingya terrorists launched an ambush on the Myanmar Security Force in Northern Rakhine.²¹ Thus, Rohingya terrorists are largely responsible for the misfortune of the Rohingyas, who face retaliation by the Myanmar Army.

As an immediate consequence of retaliation by the Myanmar Army, since 25 August 2017, 290,000 Rohingyas migrated to Bangladesh, says Joseph Tripura, spokesman of UN Refugee Agency.²² An interesting thing is that 66 per cent of the migrant Rohingyas are women, and the rest of the people are old, sick, and men below 18 years. Almost no man between the age group from 18 to 40 has migrated to Bangladesh as they have joined the ARSA to fight against the Myanmar Army.²³ Strikingly, in a Rohingya refugee camp of Cox's Bazar, 18,000 women are pregnant and 200 children have already been born, which is a matter of concern for Bangladesh government.²⁴ However, the Relief Minister of Bangladesh, Mofajjel Hussain Chowdhury, states that newly born Rohingya babies are the citizens of Myanmar, and he describes Rohingyas, who are currently living in Bangladesh, as infiltrators.²⁵ London based human rights organisation, Amnesty International, appeals to the international community to ensure that no Rohingya is pushed back to Myanmar from Bangladesh until normalcy returns in Rakhine.²⁶ Surprisingly, Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim state, is unwilling to provide shelter to its co-religionists, the Rohingyas, on the ground that they are Myanmarese. However, it is written even in the Bangladeshi school text books that Rohingyas had migrated to Myanmar from Bangladesh.²⁷

India cannot be blamed if its position in the Rohingya crisis is favourable to that of the Myanmar government, as India itself is a victim of Islamic terrorism. Therefore, Ashraf Asif Jalali, a Sunni Jihadi

Council Cleric, who preaches jihad by Myanmar's Muslims and recruits them, even children, in jihadi activities, goes so far as to announce that Modi and Suu Kyi should be hanged.²⁸ The United States promised to press a diplomatic solution, and if its attempt failed, it alerted Myanmar to the possibility of application of a variety of sanctions.²⁹ The United Nations Security Council, too, escalated pressure on Myanmar, as it put forward a unanimous statement calling upon Yangon to terminate its military moves in Rakhine, as also to extend cooperation to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.³⁰ India has set in motion a diplomatic process with Myanmar and Bangladesh, which has sheltered more than 600,000 Rakhine refugees, whereas India finds 40,000 of these illegal immigrants on its soil as also 14,000 registered by the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees.³¹ The United States Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration has pointed out, following a visit to Bangladesh, that Bangladesh is commendably supporting Rakhine refugees, and that they can voluntarily return to Myanmar if political reconciliation takes place, and conditions become safe.³² An interesting thing is that unlike Rohingyas, Hindus of Myanmar are willing to return to their homeland.³³ This is because Myanmarese forces are not hostile to the Hindus as Hindus are not involved in the terrorist activities in Myanmar.

An interesting fact is that during the time of the Rohingya-Buddhist conflict, Rohingyas killed even the Hindus. The Myanmar Army discovered mass graves of 28 Hindus, who were killed by the Rohingya Muslims, in the Rakhine state.³⁴ Moreover, in Cox's Bazar of Bangladesh, Rohingya refugees beat Hindu refugees, some of these Hindu refugees were able to escape, whereas a Hindu refugee, Nirendra Pal, was missing, and his brother, Rabindra Pal, was killed by the Rohingyas.³⁵ Hence, it is correct to observe that the 'peace loving' Rohingyas are not ready to tolerate any non-Muslims, no matter Buddhists or Hindus. One striking thing is that unlike Muslims, the Hindu community was integrated with the Buddhist community in Burma.³⁶ Unlike the muslim Rohingyas.

As already mentioned, in a Rohingya refugee camp of Cox's Bazar, 18,000 Rohingya women are pregnant. Significantly, a survey, conducted by 'Save the Children,' indicates that around 50,000 children will be born in 2018 in the Rohingya refugee camps of Bangladesh.³⁷ It is apprehended that thus the steadfast increase of Muslim population, will outnumber Rakhine Buddhists. According to a politician of Myanmar, Shwe Maung, "they [Rohingyas] are trying to Islamise us through their

terrible birth rate.”³⁸ Likewise, a spokesman of Rakhine State, Win Myaing, said that “The population growth of Rohingya Muslims is 10 times higher than that of the Rakhine [Buddhists],” and he opines that “Overpopulation is one of the causes of tension.”³⁹ There are numerous grim examples in history on how Islam used the strategy of population growth to destroy indigenous religion and culture. For instance, centuries ago, Indonesia was a Hindu state, whereas now 87.18 and 1.7 percent of the total population of Indonesia are Muslims and Hindus, respectively.⁴⁰ Similarly, Malaysia, which used to be dominated by the non-Muslims, especially Buddhists and Hindus, has now turned into an Islamic country, with Muslims comprising 61.3 percent of the total population.⁴¹ In addition, it has been shown below how the growth of Muslim population has been changing the demographic patterns in Chittagong and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh.

Decline of Non-Muslim Population in Chittagong and CHT region (%)⁴²

Year	Religion	Rangamati	Khagrachhari	Bandarban	Cox's	Bazar Chittagong
1981	Muslim	32.64	39.19	41.66	91.76	88.81
	Buddhist	59.65	49.98	43.84	2.34	1.94
	Hindu	5.91	17.29	2.67	5.75	14.08
1991	Muslim	39.27	47.45	47.62	92.13	83.92
	Buddhist	53.83	35.51	38.00	2.17	2.01
	Hindu	5.62	16.69	3.52	5.60	13.76
2001	Muslim	36.82	43.52	49.33	92.92	85.62
	Buddhist	56.06	39.28	34.88	2.01	1.79
	Hindu	5.31	16.43	3.62	4.91	12.37
2011	Muslim	35.15	44.67	50.75	93.97	86.90
	Buddhist	58.23	37.68	31.69	1.65	1.59
	Hindu	5.07	16.81	3.38	4.26	11.31

One can infer from this statistics that the process of infiltration and gradual settlement of Muslim population in this hilly region is a major reason behind the relative decline of non-Muslim population in the Chittagong and CHT region. Whenever they thought it necessary, Rohingyas migrated from Myanmar and settled in Chittagong.⁴³

Here it is important to mention that for decades the policy of the Bangladesh government and political leadership has been to replace gradually the non-Muslim population in the CHT by Muslims. A matter of added concern is that in South Asia, there are views that Bangladesh

has an aspiration to form a greater Islamic region, comprising West Bengal, Assam, and parts of Arakan, of Bihar, of Meghalaya, and of Tripura.⁴⁴

In this context, the following figures are relevant.

Decline of Population of Hindus in Bangladesh (1941-2011)⁴⁵

Year	Percentage
1941	28.00
1951	22.00
1961	18.05
1971	13.05
1981	12.01
1991	10.05
2001	9.02
2011	8.05

It is unfortunate that in India, some political parties are campaigning to provide shelter to the Rohingyas for their vote bank politics, although it has been proved that Rohingyas have some connection with terrorism. For instance, Hyderabad police arrested a Rohingya, Muhammad Ismail, who was able to get a birth certificate issued from Dumdum, Kolkata. First, he migrated to Bangladesh from Myanmar; then he came to Kolkata from Bangladesh. A matter of great concern is that he had all the crucial documents of Indian citizenship, such as the Aadhaar card, Voter card, Pan card, and also Refugee card issued by the UN.⁴⁶ It is evident that without the help of local political leaders, no foreigner can get these documents, and in West Bengal, leaders of Trinamool Congress (TMC) allegedly are helping the Rohingyas. It is important to mention here that TMC, the present ruling party in West Bengal, is illegally providing shelter to the Rohingyas. For instance, in the Ghutiyari Sharif of South 24 Parganas, which is a strong centre of TMC, Rohingya infiltrators obtain shelter and financial support illegally from a wealthy local Muslim, Hussain Gazi.⁴⁷ Under the political patronage of TMC, Muslims are extending their support to the Rohingya infiltrators. Therefore, TMC is vocal about providing shelter to the Rohingyas, and determined to disobey any order on Rohingyas by the Central government. Significantly, in Kolkata, several Muslim organizations, along with the Communist Party of India (Marxist)-(CPM)-and the Congress Party, organised pro-Rohingya, anti-Myanmar, and anti-Centre campaigns, whereas Pir Zada of Furfura Sharif Twaha Siddiqi praises the Chief Minister of West Bengal for her pro-Rohingya and anti-

Centre policy. Twaha Siddiqi also threatens that Muslims have the capacity to damage the Consulate of Myanmar in Kolkata. Moreover, in this campaign, Adhir Choudhury, an MP (Member of Parliament) of the Congress Party in Baharampur, West Bengal, openly asks for refugee certificates from the West Bengal Government for the Rohingya refugees illegally settled in Lilua of Howrah.⁴⁸ Despite the fact that all Rohingyas are not terrorists, it is important to remember that even a small number of jihadis are capable of causing mayhem.⁴⁹

On the question whether India should provide shelter to the Rohingyas or not, the Governor of Tripura, Tathagata Roy, says that when one crore Hindu refugees migrated from East Bengal in the 1950s, and spent days in the Sealdah railway station in Kolkata, no political leader shed their tears, whereas Muhammad Selim of the CPM says that India cannot deny its responsibility towards Rohingyas; this is a direct support for TMC on the issue of Rohingyas.⁵⁰ Besides the above mentioned pro-Rohingya political parties in West Bengal, a number of intellectuals are quite vocal about providing shelter to the Rohingyas.⁵¹ Moreover, from West Bengal, Muslim organisations, like the All India Minority Association, Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind, Ahl-e-Hadith, Sunnat-al-Jamat, and Anjuman-e-Jamat-e-Ulema, etc. are consistently sending relief to the Rohingyas located in Bangladesh.⁵² Unfortunately, no organisation sent such relief to the Hindus and Buddhists in Bangladesh or even raised voices against the Muslim jihadis when, to take a few among numerous examples since 1947, Bangladeshi Muslims tortured Buddhists in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in 1990, destroyed many temples, and in 1992, again, tortured Hindus and Buddhists. From 2001 to 2004, moreover, during Khaleda Zia's rule, inhuman torture on Hindus forced a large number of them to migrate to India. Subsequently, in 2012, a number of Buddhist temples were destroyed.⁵³

One can observe that India is not a signatory of the UN Refugee Convention of 1951. Contrary to India's position on the UN Refugee Convention of 1951, there is a claim that the non-refoulement policy is recognised by article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and as India is a party to international treaties, like the International Covenant on Civil Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), which corroborate non-refoulement policy, India cannot turn away its face from the Rohingya refugees. Hence, it is feasible to recommend the formation of a legal structure for refugee settlement in India.⁵⁴ Such a recommendation, favoured by pro-Rohingya individuals/

agencies, if carried out, can severely damage the internal security of India. Indeed, it is unfortunate that although Indian secularists and liberals are earnestly pleading in favour of Rohingyas, they never protest against the torture by Indonesia of the people of East Timor, by Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Middle Eastern Muslims on the non-Muslim religious communities, such as Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Zoroastrians, Yazidis, Jews, etc. They also prefer to stay silent on the torture by Boko Haram in Nigeria of the non-Muslims.⁵⁵

Significantly, according to the reports of the Indian intelligence agencies, Rohingyas are a serious threat to India as there is ample evidence that Rohingyas are backed by the Pakistani terrorist organisations, like Lashkar-e-Taiyaba and Hujbul Mujahidin, and can anytime carry out Islamic State (IS) type 'lone wolf' attacks in India. The Central government of India has impressed such data on the Supreme Court of India in response to the petitions filed by two Rohingyas asking for shelter.⁵⁶ As RAW (Research and Analysis Wing), and Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, has reported to the PMO (Prime Minister's Office), Rohingyas have links with Jamat Ud Dawa (JUD) of Hafiz Saeed. Moreover, several Indian intelligence agencies affirm that Rohingyas have links with ISIS or IS. However, opposition groups ignore national interest and urge upon the government of India to provide shelter to Rohingyas. Islamic organisations, such as the Zakat Foundation of India, Jamat-e-Islam, Hind, are supporting Rohingyas. Similarly, Mani Shankar Aiyar, a top Congress leader, argues that India should open its doors to Muslims as much as to Hindus, whereas Bangladesh and Pakistan are opposing Rohingyas for their terror links.⁵⁷ Moreover, a marriage between a Bangladeshi and a Rohingya is an offence punishable with seven years' imprisonment. Recently, Dhaka High Court imposed a fine of 100,000 Taka (Bangladeshi currency) on Babul Hossain, because his son, Shoaib Hossain Jewel, married a Rohingya woman and ran away, while his father, Babul Hossain, submitted a writ petition to the High Court for registration of Shoaib's unlawful marriage.⁵⁸ Interestingly, Bangladesh denies the fact that Rohingyas are Chittagonians.⁵⁹ Significantly, Brussels-based think tank, International Crisis Group (ICG), reports that Rohingya insurgents have connections with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.⁶⁰ It is evident that Pakistan is using Rohingya refugees to destabilise India, as Ashraf Asif Jalali, who is a Sunni Jihadi Council Cleric linked with Lashkar-e-Taiyaba (LeT), has decided to recruit one lakh young jihadis to carry out attacks on India.⁶¹ A matter of concern

is that Lashkar-e-Taiyaba and its brother organization, Falah-I-Insaniyat, are very active in the Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar.⁶² Interestingly, one Thai intelligence agency has observed that jihadis are recruiting the Rohingya refugees in the southern provinces of Thailand, which proves that the jihadis have a grand plan to terrorise the region.⁶³ Therefore, the Central government has no option but to inform the Supreme Court that Rohingyas are 'illegal immigrants,' and that they are posing serious threats to the national security of India.⁶⁴ Subramanyan Swami, a BJP leader, confirms that Article 2 of the Constitution of India restricts some rights for the sake of sovereignty and security of the country.⁶⁵

It is also important to note that despite not being citizens of India, Rohingyas are able to use the legal instrument via an appeal to the Supreme Court in order to set aside the plea of the Central government that Rohingyas are infiltrators and should be thrown out of India. Significantly, Article 19 of the Constitution of India ensures that only Indian citizens have the right to reside and settle in any part of India; so, illegal immigrants, e.g. Rohingyas, cannot ask for this fundamental right reserved for the Indians, as stated in the affidavit filed by the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Supreme Court.⁶⁶ Surprisingly, Rohingyas are able to establish settlements in Kashmir, whereas no other Indian from outside Jammu and Kashmir is allowed to settle in the valley. For instance, around 14,000 foreigners, including Rohingyas and Bangladeshi nationals, are settled in Jammu and Samba Districts, and from 2008 to 2016, their population increased by 6,000.⁶⁷ Contrary to normal Muslim practice, in order to stay in India, Rohingyas have requested the Indian government to consider them as 'Human' instead of 'Muslim.'⁶⁸

Indeed, from the above mentioned discussion, one can easily observe that the Rohingyas are a serious threat to the national security of any country, not to speak of multi-religious and multi-cultural countries, like India. Hence, one cannot take the risk of considering the Rohingya issue from an exclusively compassionate point of view.

Myanmar's most influential civilian leader, Suu Kyi, has visited Rakhine and tried to spread a message of peace.⁶⁹ But, neither the international human rights groups nor the refugees themselves appear to feel assured. The Secretary General of the UN, Antonio Gueterres, has met Myanmar State Counsellor, Suu Kyi, and requested Kyi to facilitate the return of refugees to Myanmar.⁷⁰ Interestingly, Suu Kyi appears to benefit from the relative inaction of Association of South

East Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the issue of Rakhine Muslims, as was manifest in course of the ASEAN summit in Manila in mid-November 2017.⁷¹

According to a 1992 Joint Declaration, Myanmar is to receive 300 Rakhine Muslims from Bangladesh everyday through two check-points. But today Myanmar claims that this repatriation of Muslims will be conditional on Rakhine Muslims supplying proof that they have been inhabitants or citizens of Myanmar, that they are returning voluntarily, that guardians of children born in Bangladesh must be inhabitants/citizens of Myanmar, and that Bangladesh courts can guarantee the nationality of Muslims separated from their families.⁷² Obviously, few in Bangladesh rehabilitation camps can fulfil such conditions. Therefore, in the foreseeable future, Rakhine refugees may have to continue to live in squalid camps, although visits to these camps by such eminent persons as foreign ministers of Germany, Sweden, Japan and the diplomatic chief of the European Union, can only raise a faint glimmer of hope.⁷³

The Rakhine Muslim problem—which the world depicts briefly as the Rohingya problem, whereas Myanmar prefers to call it the issue of illegal Muslim immigrants from Bengal/East Pakistan/Bangladesh—is not a sudden phenomenon, nor can it be viewed in total isolation from such other problems affecting India as the illegal Bangladeshi Muslim migration problem in eastern-northeastern parts of India. The Rohingya problem, moreover, can be placed in the larger framework of the Saudi-sponsored movement for establishment of the extreme Salafi version of Wahabi Islam in different parts of the world. This is the assessment of the highest religious head of Syrian Islam, the Grand Mufti, Ahmad Badreddin Hassoun. Grand Mufti, Hassoun, recently visited New Delhi, Srinagar, Lucknow and various other religious centres in India, and provided extremely valuable assessment noted above, while he expressed his amazement at how temples, mosques and universities were operating independently in India and serving comprehensively the interests of the people. In contrast, as Grand Mufti Hassoun appeared to stress, Saudi Arabia was taking advantage of divisions in the Muslim world and promoting its own authority by the dissemination of extremist Islam. He pointed to the compelling need for redeployment of militias, trained by Saudi Arabia (and the United States) after the establishment of peace in Syria, as agents of Salafī Islam in new centres of Islamist extremism, e.g. Rakhine. As to Jammu-Kashmir, Hassoun observed that those who equated Islam to terrorism were really conspiring to

destroy Islam, and could hardly claim themselves to be Muslims. Hassoun revealed that the spread of Salafism among Rakhine Muslims was planned by the chief of the ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army), Ataullah or Hafiz Toha, since 2012, when he received necessary instruction and support from Prince Bandar Bin Sultan, the Saudi Ambassador to the US. The Rohingya uprising of 25 August 2017 was planned for a long time by Ataullah, who formed Islamist sleeper cells in Rakhine. The scale of the uprising was such as to provoke massive military retaliation as also a chain reaction. Whereas Rohingya infiltrators have been arrested from Assam, Manipur and Tripura (where they entered illegally through Bangladesh), West Bengal remains a free territory with no report of arrested Rohingyas.⁷⁴

ARSA, significantly, is in the proud company of such other terrorist agencies as Pakistan's Jamat-ud-Dawa (JUD), Jaish-e-Muhammad (JEM), Lashkar-E-Taiyaba (LET), Bangladesh's Jamaat-e-Islami (JEI), Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ICS), JEM Bangladesh (JMB), as also Myanmar's Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Arakan. The activities of all these militant agencies in three countries are reportedly being orchestrated by Pakistan's ISI and Al-Qaeda for fulfilment of the objective propounded in the 2014 videotape of the Al Qaeda Amir, Ayman Al Jawahiri. The objective is to repeat in Assam in 2019 what was done in Kashmir in 1989, when Hindus in different Muslim-majority areas of Kashmir were driven out by a deft use of terror and propaganda, so as to create free jihadi areas without any presence of Hindus. Wahabi groups, in collaboration with ISI and Al-Qaeda, are alleged to be engaged in the formation of 'Operation Assam 2019' that they have been able to influence NATO countries, especially Turkey, to campaign in favour of rehabilitation of Rohingya refugees. 'Operation Assam 2019' has received some impetus from the preparation of the National Register of Citizens in Assam, alleging discrimination against Muslims. Arshad Madani, the President of Jamiat Ulema-E-Hind, has complained of discrimination as a conspiracy. He has even threatened that the situation is so explosive as to lead to Myanmar-like disturbances in Assam.⁷⁵

Along with India, however, Bangladesh too faces the threats of militancy and destabilisation due to the recruitment and training of Rohingya refugees by global terrorist organisations in the Cox's Bazar refugee camps of Bangladesh. Reportedly, a Pakistan Army Major has been entrusted with the supervision of the process of recruitment and training of Rohingya refugees. Some ostensibly charitable agencies, e.g. JUD and Falah-I-Insaniyat, are also enthusiastic participants in this

process. One provocation for such activities targeting Bangladesh Government has arisen out of trials of war criminals of 1971 by the Hasina Government. Nevertheless, any militancy/instability in Bangladesh, caused by Rohingyas, cannot but overflow into India, especially Assam and West Bengal.⁷⁶

By way of mitigation of such instability, India took a positive step on 20 December 2017. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed with Myanmar on that date, signals India's intention to assist Myanmar in achieving normalcy in Rakhine, while facilitating the return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar. For this purpose, India has promised to build pre-fabricated residences in Rakhine. Significantly, unlike the Muslim or Western countries, India has not tried to exert any unwelcome pressure or apply sanctions.⁷⁷

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Vision for Developing Andaman and Nicobar Islands

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Introduction

Francis Sempa, in his book *Geopolitics: From the Cold War to the 21st Century* has brought out how geography has been a major factor in influencing the geopolitical orientation of a country. It is an accepted fact that a continental setting of a nation is likely to orientate it towards land whereas an insular or island location would orientate it to sea. In case of countries that are situated on continent but also have access to ocean, it could be either a sea or land orientation. However, the modern day 21st century reality is that even though geography is constant, its impact can change with the technology and scientific advance being made. Therefore, the national power, national interests and national strategic thinking could also be attributed to geographic factors.

India, the seventh largest country in the world, shares its 15000 kilometers land borders with Pakistan, China, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. The narrowest distance between India and Sri Lanka is only 64 km. Large part of Jammu and Kashmir area is disputed with Pakistan, and the Aksai Chin area of Jammu and Kashmir is disputed with China, as is the border of Arunachal Pradesh in northeast India. The decades old pending border demarcation with Bangladesh has been resolved in 2015.

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India shares maritime borders with five countries. Its 7,516 kilometers long coastline comprises 5,422 km for the mainland, 132km for the Lakshadweep Islands, and 1,962 km for the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Indian peninsula extends 1,980 km into the Indian Ocean. Fifty per cent of the Indian Ocean basin lies within a 1,500 km radius of India, a reality that has strategic implications. India has 1,197 islands in the Indian Ocean. (572 in the Andaman and Nicobar – 37 of which are inhabited – and 23 in the Lakshadweep – 10 of which are inhabited. In addition, there are 447 islands off the western coast and 151 islands off the eastern coast.

Indian Strategic Thinking

This unique characteristic of the Indian geography has guided its culture and strategic thinking over the years. Its strategic thinking has been profoundly influenced by its geography, history, culture and over two centuries of the British rule. Geography, in the ultimate analysis has had a profound effect on the thinking of Indian leaders/ decision makers.

Regular invasion of India from the North-West over centuries has been responsible for the mindset of the Indian leaders adopting a continental orientation over the oceans. The 20th century military conflicts with a belligerent Pakistan in the West (Indo-Pak conflicts of 1947 and others thereafter) and that with China to the North/ Northeast (the 1962 conflict and the continuing border issues) have reinforced this strategic thinking. Even today Pakistan in the northwest occupies most of our attention followed by China in the north and north east. However, South India which was relatively shielded from these invaders has had an outlook more inclined towards the oceans. They have had a very rich maritime heritage and culture with bustling trade nearly 2000 years back. India's failure to appreciate the maritime domain has led partially to the neglect of our strategic, security and economic prosperity. All these are indicators of absence of a comprehensive vision on maritime outlook except for a few states in South India.

What emerges, therefore, is that India has been hesitant to exploit its maritime strength in general and that of the strategically located Andaman and Nicobar Islands specifically. The ever evolving strategic dynamism of the 21st century in the Indian Ocean Region re-emphasizes the strategic importance of these islands.

Brief Historical Background of Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI)

Located on the busiest Sea Lines of Communications of the world, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have historically been inhabited by tribal population. These islands find mention in the writings as far back as the 7th century (Chinese Buddhist monk I-ching). Occupation by the Chola dynasty, its use as a maritime base for Maratha ships in the 17th century, exploits these islands by Admiral Kanhoji Angre, its occupation by the British and the Japanese indicates the appreciation of the strategic significance of these islands since time immemorial.

Lord Cornwallis, the governor-general of India, in 1788, sent Lieutenant Archibald Blair and Lieutenant R. H. Colebrook to check the suitability of Andaman and Nicobar Islands for establishing a British Colony. They established the first settlements on Chatham Island, a small island near Port Cornwallis. The British, thereafter, founded a penal settlement in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, after the 'Sepoy Mutiny' of 1857, with the sole intention of housing the ever increasing number of rebels accused with disloyalty towards the British empire. In 1887, construction of the jail at Port Blair commenced – which came to be known as 'Cellular Jail' or 'Kalapani.' The large number of so-called convicts who were housed at the Cellular Jail suffered shocking atrocities under the British rule.

The Japanese occupied the Andaman and Nicobar Islands during the WW-II in 1942 and continued their occupation till 1945, when the islands were recaptured by the British. Thereafter, these islands became a part of India on the 15 August, 1947 when India got its independence. The government of India decided to populate these islands through settling of the Bengali community mostly from erstwhile East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, which lasted from 1949 to 1970s. Many mainland settlers including ex-servicemen belonging to various communities – the Tamilian, Marathi, Malayali and Punjabi communities were also encouraged to rehabilitate there.

Strategic Significance of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Unfortunately, the strategic significance of Andaman and Nicobar Islands has somehow never been completely appreciated by the Government of India. Very few know the fact that during the transfer of power to India, these islands were almost lost out as the British wanted to exclude them from the transfer of power and keep them as their base in the

region. Pakistan too had laid claim on these islands as an extension of East Pakistan. Fortunately, better sense prevailed and on the advice of Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy and Governor General of India, it finally became a part of India. The government actually seems to have awakened to significance of these islands only during the 1965 Indo-Pak War, when Indonesia had threatened to occupy some of the Islands on behalf of Pakistan. Unfortunately, even today there is little change in the strategic orientation despite extensive geo-political changes. The strategic potential of these islands has not yet been fully appreciated. This is despite the fact that IOR (Indian Ocean Region) has once again become the Ocean of the 21st century.

The 21st century IOR, one of the most complex regions has become an oceanic highway for the resource hungry growing economies of Asian region, especially China and beyond. The existing locations of oil and gas production platforms, Ocean based resources, movement of energy resources through the IOR SLOC (Sea Lines of Communication) are vital to the region's economic productivity particularly that of the developing states. Energy flow through the East Indian Ocean region is controlled by five choke points namely Malacca Straits, Lombok Straits, Sunda Straits, Six Degree Channel and Eight Degree Channel. An economically buoyant China is looking beyond its region of influence for access to resources as well as markets – into the Indian Ocean Region through these choke points. It is using its economic power and advantages thereof to realize its security and strategic goals in the region of Indian Ocean. IOR would, by all accounts be the focus in Chinese aspirations in enlarging this influence specially in the region where it feels it is vulnerable and suspects interference by others including India. These choke points located in the vicinity of the Andaman and Nicobar islands, make these islands sentinels or gateways to this oceanic highway and resource rich area as they sit astride the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC).

Andaman and Nicobar Islands are a valuable strategic asset for India that can play a pivotal role in the emerging 21st century maritime competition between India and China. Chinese ever increasing demand for resources, its dependence on the maritime route for transporting them from the Middle East/Africa and the need to look for alternate source of resources i.e. sea bed resource manifest in its determination to expand its influence in the Indian Ocean region. It considers the ability of some countries including India to block its trade route by blocking the Strait of Malacca – the “Malacca Dilemma,” as the greatest

threat to its development and prosperity. This threat manifests itself through its ever increasing establishment of bases along the length of Indian Ocean Region.

The Chinese presence in and around the Malacca Strait in the Andaman Sea, Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea should be a cause of concern for the Indian decision makers. Some of the major moves by China that threatens Indian interest, especially in and around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are described in the succeeding paragraphs.

80 per cent of China's resource imports and exports of finished goods have to pass through the Strait of Malacca. The Chinese believe, and rightly so that – whoever controls the Strait of Malacca will control its energy route through the IOR. In order to secure its energy and trade routes, China over the years has initiated steps to enhance its naval capacity and capability. This author can recall how way back in 2002-2005 during his tenure as the Military and Air Attaché at Embassy of Ukraine, China bought the 70 per cent completed under construction aircraft carrier 'Varyag' from Ukraine under false pretenses of utilizing it as a floating casino through a Hong Kong based businessman. This vessel was under construction at the bankrupt state-owned Ukrainian shipyard at the time of disintegration of the Soviet Union. It was later taken over by China's armed forces, refurbished and launched as China's first aircraft carrier in 2012 – "Liaoning."

China has been funding and executing construction of new ports/modernizing existing ports in a large number of countries along the Indian Ocean Region that form a part of its Maritime Silk Route initiative.

There have been reports of China developing runways and other monitoring infrastructure at Coco Island (Myanmar). If true, then their presence so close to the ANI, would provide it with tremendous advantage.

It is modernizing the Chittagong Port (Bangladesh) and attempting to get a preferential access to it. It is also funding the modernisation of Mongla port and is competing with Japan for construction of a deep water port at Sonadia. It has been providing military hardware to Bangladesh over the years and is now has provided submarines recently.

Construction of Hambantota port marked the beginning of the establishment of "string of pearls" in the IOR. China is also supporting Sri Lanka in establishment of the South Colombo Port's, Colombo International Container Terminal (CICT) under a BOT contract. Visits

by Chinese warships and submarines have reinforced this belief i.e. Chinese objectives in Sri Lanka may not be merely commercial.

Pakistan has always been a Chinese proxy and the recipient of enormous Chinese aid and investment. The Gwadar Deep Sea Port (GDSP) and CPEC (a US\$ 46 billion project) linking Gwadar with China through road and pipeline passing through the Indian territory of Gilgit, Baltistan and Pak occupied Kashmir (PoK) are the latest examples of the same. The Pak military has acquired a large number of different types of naval platforms like ships and submarines from China making them dependent on the Chinese military hardware. Gwadar, located close to Strait of Hormuz provides excellent support to the PLAN (People's Liberation Army Navy) in its operations in the IOR.

With Malaysia, China has recently commenced construction of a new off-shore trading port in Malacca called as the Melaka Gateway, with an aim to replace Singapore as the main trading port of SE Asia. According to projections, 100,000 shipping vessels are likely to dock at the port, without having to stop by the monopoly route held by Singapore over the past few centuries. The Melaka Gateway will provide China a foothold of permanent presence in Malacca Straits and would allow the area to be kept under constant surveillance. This would also provide them opportunity also to monitor all other traffic and possibly enforce unlawful maritime control regimes thereby, effectively shrinking the manoeuvring space for US and Indian Navies.

It has increased its conventional and nuclear submarine patrols in the IOR since 2009. It has exploited the opportunity of deployments in anti-piracy operations off the Somalia coast to maintain its presence in the IOR as well as test and train its ability to deploy its navy in distant waters sending even nuclear submarines into Indian Ocean.

Thus, it is clearly evident that China is highly dependent on the choke point of Malacca Strait apart from others in the Indian Ocean Region for its resources. While on one hand this shows its limitations on oceanic imports, on the other hand its attempts to modernization of the PLAN, establishment of bases in the IOR along with forward presence submarine capabilities, is indicative of China seeking to secure the routes of supply.

Thus, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, located close to these critical maritime choke points is an extremely valuable geopolitical asset for India that provides it with huge geographical and strategic advantage in the Indian Ocean Region. The significance of these islands lies in the fact that the southernmost island of the chain is just 90 km from

Indonesia. This location of these islands allows India to play into China's psyche by creating an Indian version of the Western Pacific's first-island chain. Yet successive Indian governments have been slow to act, even after appreciating the importance of these islands and declaring their intention to develop them. They continue to treat these islands as a distant outpost rather than leveraging their unique location at the very center of one of the most strategic stretches of ocean space.

Over the past decade, in spite of having declared our intention to beef up the infrastructure, bare minimum action was initiated. The 21st century change in the geopolitics of the Indian Ocean Region demands a change in the Indian Maritime Strategy and the need to focus on developing these islands as a strategic asset. On a positive note, it is heartening to see a change in the strategic thinking and re-evaluation of the government policies towards these islands. The present Indian government has awakened to the likelihood of a profound Chinese engagement in the Indian Ocean.

Acknowledging the strategic importance of ANI and appreciating the Chinese Indian Ocean strategy, Prime Minister Modi has taken the initiative and is paying a considerable amount of attention to the overall maritime security of India and development of ANI in particular. However, the government needs to push the bureaucracy to fast forward decision-making for projecting both, soft and hard power into the region and signal China's People's Liberation Army Navy about its willingness to counter any misdemeanour.

Andaman & Nicobar Islands is located over 1200 km east of the Indian mainland. The topography of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands has a typical character with the presence of 572 islands and islets, spread over a length of 720 km in a broken chain which form geologically a part of the land mass of South East Asia including, North East India, Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. Only 37 of these islands are inhabited. This island chain can be classified into two groups of islands with the North Andaman, Middle Andaman, South Andaman and Little Andaman forming the Andaman group, and Great Nicobar, Car Nicobar, Nancowry, Katchal and Chowra forming the Nicobar group. This archipelago of 572 islands covers an area of 8249 square kilometres.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have a coast line of 1962 kms and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Islands is 6 lakh sq. kilometers amounting about 28 per cent of the EEZ of the country. The

EEZ of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is known to provide vast scope for exploitation of the fishery resources in the Islands. The huge advantage thrown up by these islands provides India with tremendous economic potential for tourism, fisheries, forests and to enable India to add about 30 per cent of its additional EEZ which needs to be exploited.

However, the remoteness of ANI makes them susceptible to conventional threats in general and non-conventional threats in particular. Although the present geopolitical and security environment in the region does not indicate any major immediate conventional threat, this could change. Regular incursions by Chinese Naval ships and submarines in these waters along with their attempt to enhance influence in the region remain a potential cause of concern and will only increase. China could exploit the logistic support established by it through its 'String of Pearls' along the length of the Indian Ocean Region to plan mischief in the uninhabited islands of ANI in the not-so-distant future.

The immediate challenges confronting these islands emanate from non-conventional threats such as poaching of marine and forest resources, illegal migration, arms smuggling and natural disasters in particular earthquakes and tsunamis. The increase of illegal human trafficking, drug trade, spread of terrorism, extremism and smuggling requires to be curbed by strengthening the security establishment and boosting local trade. Numerous islands are devoid of human presence which makes them vulnerable to narcotics smuggling, intrusion by foreign vessels, and other incursions. There is an urgent requirement to give India a stronger physical foothold in the region. The Ten Degree Channel is about 80 nautical miles wide requiring a close watch to be kept over the movement of ships and military vessels that pass through these waters. Surveillance in the southern group of islands is a major challenge due to lack of road infrastructure and communication facilities. Moreover, construction activity is restricted to just about six months a year due to heavy rainfall. The pace of development is extremely slow and needs to be handled with a strategic perspective at Delhi.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

India's aspirations of furthering its economic, political and military interests in the Indian Ocean Region/ the Asia-Pacific region, especially in the presence of an assertive China which is progressively becoming more active in the region, can be realised through the Andaman and

Nicobar Islands. It is high time India seizes this opportunity to develop the islands as a hub or a 'spring board' for power projection on priority. The ever increasing Chinese influence in the littorals can be counter balanced by the Indian push towards development of Andaman and Nicobar Islands using the 'Sagar Mala' initiative.

A combination of geographical location straddling the choke point of Malacca Straits at a distance of over 1200 km from the Indian mainland and the 750 km North to South spread of the makes ANI a valuable geo-political asset in the 21st century by playing a crucial role in the maritime competition of the region.

The EEZ of ANI has significant potential for growth and development of fishing and mining of undersea resources so crucial to the economy of the nation.

Location and potential for development of tourism are important strengths of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Close proximity to the busiest international trade routes of other South East Asian countries along with intrinsic natural and rich sources assists in leveraging the 'Act East' policy.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands has the potential of being developed as a container transshipment port, for the international/ national ships passing through the Ten Degree Channel.

These islands could provide multiple military options for India to keep the busiest sea lanes under surveillance and for power projection. Development and strengthening of military infrastructure in Andaman and Nicobar Islands can provide the potential to balance the grave uncertainties surrounding China's maritime intentions and influence in the Indian Ocean. These islands have the potential to balance the Chinese influence through tracking Chinese and other extra regional powers movements and keeping these under surveillance.

The islands provide an ideal setting for progressing jointness in the Indian Armed Forces.

Weaknesses

Isolation from the mainland, dispersed islands, environmental constraints including sensitivities towards Tribal Reserves, National Parks and Wildlife sanctuaries lead to consequent limited availability of land are the major factors inhibiting development of ANI in its entirety.

All developmental activity in ANI including defence infrastructure and tourism has to be sensitive to ecological fragility.

Application of environmental restriction similar to that of the mainland to these unique islands is a major constraint in availability of land and infrastructure development

Another major weakness is that the existing force deployment and infrastructure as also organizational perspectives including jointness are inhibiting the capability building and development of full force potential of the Andaman and Nicobar Command. This is a major organizational weakness.

Non-availability of proper telecommunication and poor air and sea connectivity impacts economic and strategic development activities which ultimately lead to non-availability of a proper industrial base.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands face greater challenges to their internal security through non-conventional threats such as illegal migration from littoral states of the Bay of Bengal, poaching of marine and forest resources, arms and narcotics smuggling through uninhabited islands and natural disasters

Strategic Options and Policy Recommendation

Long Term Strategic Options

The Chinese initiatives outlined above, demands an urgent shift in the strategic thinking of India to Act Eastwards and develop the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in order to secure the SLOCs, exploit the Chinese weakness in Malacca and force projection as and when required. The available time frame of about five years or so, when the Chinese modernization plan is likely to be in the advance stage of fructifying, will not permit the holistic development of the islands – economic and infrastructure development and allocation of additional defence resources. As developing the islands will be a long drawn effort, India needs to leverage its ability to influence the regional countries, in particular with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia among other littorals both politically and militarily to limit the Chinese challenge – basically to buy time to build up the islands to a credible deterrence level.

Broad Policy Recommendations

As India's power and influence grows in the Indian Ocean Region as well as the global level, the government and its national security policymaking have to keep pace with fast changing geopolitical

environment and harness the potential of Andaman and Nicobar Islands to protect its larger interests.

The wide gap between the ambition to develop these islands and the ground reality requires to be bridged through a strong political will, strategic vision, effective leadership and focused attention.

Policy initiatives must include practical and developmental orientation towards environmental and tribal issues for overall strategic development of the islands. Long-term strategy for sustainable development is the need of the hour.

There is an urgent need to enhance connectivity in its entirety – Air Link, Shipping including ports/ ships and Communication.

Develop the long awaited Container transshipment port as a strategic asset, irrespective of economic/ environmental considerations.

Make the islands self-sustaining as far as possible, through development of Tourism, Fisheries, Agriculture, small-scale industries based on local inputs. Tourism, fisheries and exploitation of sea based resources in the EEZ is to be encouraged on priority.

The likelihood of escalation of current non-conventional threats to conventional threat in future should be the underlying theme of enhancing the security of these islands.

Threat assessment and corresponding force allocation should be a joint decision at the level of Chiefs of Staff Committee for the Joint Command and approved by Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). Entire resources in terms of force levels, maintenance, infrastructure and funds for these resources are to be allocated separately to HQ Andaman and Nicobar Command.

The strategic importance of these islands that stand sentinel astride the major SLOCs and choke point of Indian Ocean Region demands that the Andaman and Nicobar Command be given the priority it warrants. The current force levels are inadequate for the task allotted. A lot more is required to be done to unlock the potential of its location. The government needs to provide it with the much needed bare minimum force-levels and infrastructure at a rapid pace, if it wants to leverage the Command as a pivot to secure the sea lanes and counter China's strategic moves in region.

Conclusion

It is true that India has traditionally been grappling with land based threats and has always had a north and west ward looking philosophy.

The concept of ocean based strategy was absent from the Indian strategic thinking. However, now it's 'Act East' policy has begun to mature. In this overstretched strategically important space of the Indian Ocean Region, India is located at the tri-junction of Western, Southern and Southeast Asia. It enjoys a strategic centrality, dominating the Indian Ocean Region and its SLOCs making it the biggest stake holder in the region. Therefore, India has self-interest in the security of this geo-strategic maritime area.

While India cannot stop China from entering into the Indian Ocean, it needs to strengthen its strategic assets. It needs to focus on a holistic development of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands through a combination of strategic investments and increasing military strength in the Andaman and Nicobar Command to counter China. The Chinese forays in to the Indian Ocean should be taken as a wake-up call in terms of Indian preparedness in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. If India fails to use its geographic advantages in the region, it will face an emboldened PLAN. The geostrategic position of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands makes them central to any Indian response to rising Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean Region. Fortifying the Andaman-Nicobar Islands would be the first step toward a more robust Indian Ocean strategy. The significance of developing these islands, therefore, cannot be overemphasized especially in the fast developing maritime dynamics in the region. India must take advantage of its geography, specifically of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

(Based on and includes excerpts from the book *Strategic Vision 2030 – Security and Development of Andaman and Nicobar Islands* Coauthored by Air Marshal P. K. Roy and Commodore Aspi Cawasjee published by Vij Publications as a part of research at USI, India.)

Nature and Implication of Radhakrishnan's Idealism

Sanjay Kumar Shukla*

Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan is fully devoted to the traditions of absolute idealism. He draws sustenance from Upanisads, Vedanta, Tagore and Gandhi on the one hand, and Pluto, Plotinus, Bradley and Whitehead on the other. He has the rare virtue of being well versed in the great traditions of both the east and the west. He has the intellectual calibre to be at ease with the two traditions, and to evolve a philosophy of synthesis. But his fundamental convictions are deeply rooted in Indian traditions. The seminal notions of his own philosophy are generally derived from the ancient Indian philosophy – particularly from the Vedântic tradition, but he has a knack of presenting such ideas into idioms and models of western thought. C.E.M. Joad, in his book *Counter attacks from the East*, describes Radhakrishnan's metaphysical standpoint as “the function, the unique function which Radhakrishnan fulfils today is that of a liaison officer. He seeks to build a bridge between the traditional wisdom of the east and the new knowledge and energy of the west.”¹ He began his intellectual career with a firm determination to expound the justification of ethical life of Hinduism. He has refuted the charge that Hinduism bristles with contradictions at the metaphysical plane and has also shown that the mystical flights of Hinduism are not necessarily negation of worldly life. He has his eyes turned both on *Sreyas and Preyas* – the transcendent beyond and the mundane here and now.² He remarks that “Hinduism is a movement, not a position; a process, not a result; a growing tradition, not a fixed revelation. Its past history encourages us to believe that it will be found

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equal to any emergency that the future may throw up, whether in the field of thought or of history.”³ Its theme is unity amidst plurality and diversity. For him Hinduism has a comprehensive character because it believes in a variety of interpretations for reality and thereby offers a counterpoise to sectarian prejudices and fanatical intolerance.⁴ Radhakrishnan could discover identity of fundamental spiritual and moral principles in Hinduism and other religions of the world.

The philosophy of Radhakrishnan represents the synthesis of Advaita Vedanta and Bradley’s philosophy of absolute idealism. He takes up the monistic character of former that reality is one, and endorses the latter view that everything is a necessary aspect of the one organic whole. His philosophy can be described as a philosophy of ‘monistic idealism.’ The metaphysical idealism is a prominent trait of his philosophy for two reasons:

1. The ultimate reality is spiritual in nature.
2. It believes that there is a spiritual ideal towards which the entire world process is progressing. An idealist, in this sense, is a teleologist who believes in the ultimate meaning and purpose of the universe.

He has made a serious effort to demonstrate that the ultimate nature of the universe is spiritual, and that unless the spiritual sense is awakened, man’s life will remain chaotic – a life of anguish and evil. He finds absolute idealism to be most convincing and he declares “the system which plays the game of philosophy fairly and squarely, with freedom from presuppositions and with religious neutrality, ends in absolute idealism.” The absolute (*Brahman*) is the pure, alone and unmanifest, nothing and all thing, that transcends any definite form of expression and yet is the basis of all expression, the one in whom all is found and yet all is lost. Radhakrishnan also adheres to the conceptual distinction between God (*Isvara*) and the Absolute (*Brahman*). Samkaracarya maintains that God as the supreme personal spirit is lower than the Absolute, the former is called the lower *Brahman* (*Aparabrahman*) as distinguished from the latter, which is called the higher *Brahman* (*Parabrahman*). The lower *Brahman* continues to exist, so long as the world continues to exist.⁵ For Radhakrishnan the naive distinction of ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ to the spiritual realms shows the pathetic attempt of the human mind to incorporate the notions of feudal and despotic society in the domain of transcendent. He maintains that “God is the definitization of the Absolute in reference to the values of the world,” is more plausible statement although that may offend the

theistic position. If ultimate reality is the impersonal Absolute, of whom nothing positive can be predicated, what value can we attach to the concept of a personal God? Radhakrishnan's reply is that the personal God does answer to certain intense needs. "We cannot worship the Absolute whom no one had seen or can see, who dwells in the light that no one can approach unto."⁶ The finite mind can picture the Absolute only in the form of God. The conception of a personal God is the fusion of the highest logical thought with the deepest religious conviction. The supra-personal and the personal representations of the real are the absolute and the relative way of expressing the one reality. "Absolute and God" are not mutually exclusive concepts, rather they are related. The Absolute is the pre-cosmic nature of God, and God is the Absolute from the cosmic point of view."⁷

Radhakrishnan maintains that the main function of a philosophical inquiry is to provide the explanation of the universe. The explaining principle has to be ultimately real because it has to work as the basis for everything real. In conceiving the nature of ultimate reality he leans heavily on the Vedânta. The Advaita Vedânta conceives the ultimate reality as the *Brahman*, which is the logical prius of the universe. The naturalists might assert at this juncture that there is no need of positing any super-natural or spiritual principle for explaining the universe because everything can be easily explained naturally. Radhakrishnan condemns the naturalistic standpoint as "it looks upon the world as a sort of an automatic machine which goes on working in a blind haphazard way. It reduces the temporal world to unconscious forces, makes life, consciousness and value mere by-products. It believes that the world machine needs only to be taken to pieces to be comprehended."⁸ He, therefore, asserts that the naturalistic explanation fails to appreciate the nature of ultimate reality as any principle which tries to explain it is bound to be a spiritual principle. The Absolute is conceived by Radhakrishnan as "pure consciousness, pure freedom and infinite possibility." Whereas the first two characters have been described, more or less, in the Vedantic manner, the third character has been explained in terms of Hegelian idealism. The Absolute is pure consciousness, because consciousness is the most ineffable and the constantly existing phenomenon. We cannot think of any stage of existence without relating it to consciousness. It is an infinite possibility because infinite worlds could arise or manifest from it; the universe is only one possibility of the Absolute. It is pure freedom because its act of actualising a possibility is not determined by anything, it is a free

act. It could have created a world different in every detail from that which is actual. The Absolute is free infinite spirit and its nature is changeless, eternal and completely perfect. It is the whole of perfection while everything else is imperfect. There may be degrees of perfection but the wholly perfect is the Absolute. For Radhakrishnan the Absolute is beyond all its expressions. He says: "Pure being which is the Absolute can only be indicated. It can be alluded to but not described."⁹

II

Radhakrishnan's owes allegiance to Advaitic metaphysics which has subtle differences regarding Absolute and God. Samkarâcârya makes such distinction on the basis of transcendental (*Pârmâmathika Drsti*) and empirical point of view (*Iyâvahârîka Drsti*). Radhakrishnan does not subscribe to the distinction between Absolute and God on the basis of these two points of view of Vedânta. He feels that in order to explain the universe it is necessary to think of a principle that would account for the order and purpose of the universe. Like Whitehead, Radhakrishnan also believes that one cannot account for the dynamic and creative character of the universe if the Primary Being is also not conceived as creative. He feels, like Whitehead, that there has to be a principle, a God – a non-temporal and actual being – by which the indeterminates of creativity can be transmuted into a determinate principle. This shows that the Divine Intelligence – the creative power – has to be conceived as intermediary between the Absolute Being and the cosmic process. This shows that, unlike Samkarâcârya, Radhakrishnan is not prepared to reduce God to unreality by making it a product of *mâyâ* (*mâyopâdhika*) and ignorance (*avidyâ*). The real as infinite possibility is the Absolute, but when we limit the Absolute to its relation with that possibility which has actually been realized in the form of creation, then the Absolute appears as God. God actualizes the possibility of creation through supreme intelligence and wisdom. God loves, creates and rules us. Creation, redemption and judgment are different names for the fact of God.¹⁰ The clarification regarding the relation between God and creation by him is deeply influenced with 'Process Theodicy' of Whitehead. Radhakrishnan, like him, endorses the organic relationship between God and the world as it is literally impossible to detach God from the world. If the universe is truly creative then God must also remain constantly creative. God also grows with the universe by giving it a constant direction towards the goal which it

seeks to attain. There remains an 'unrealized residuum' in God throughout the process of creation, which makes him transcend the universe. Perhaps in the end this unrealized residuum would vanish, but then the purpose of this creation would be complete, God then will recede into the background of Absolute. Hence, the beginning and the end are limiting conceptions, and the great interest of the world centres in the intermediate process from the beginning to the end.¹¹

If the world is the actualisation of one of the infinite possibilities then it is an accident of the Absolute. The accidental nature of the world is philosophically significant in Radhakrishnan's thought as:

1. It succeeds in maintaining the monistic character of the real and also its free nature.
2. It enables Radhakrishnan to emphasize the distinction between the creator and the created.
3. Although the world is an accident but at the same time real also. It is accidental because it is an accidental actualisation of one of the infinite possibilities of the Absolute, it is real because it is the Absolute's accident.

Radhakrishnan describes the world in terms of certain characteristics:

- A. It is an ordered whole that means nature is a system of relationship intimately inter-dependent.
- B. There is a tendency towards a greater interaction or inter-relatedness between the organism and its surrounding environment.
- C. World is expressed in terms of matter, life and mind as grades of experience. They are all expressions of reality, yet they express the reality in their own ways.
- D. The world is dynamic in nature. Nature is always active, never satisfied with the levels it has achieved, it always aspires to other levels. This gives rise to a doctrine similar to that of emergent evolution. Radhakrishnan's famous expression 'unpredictable novelties occur' points out that there must emerge new qualities at every moment of creation. If the world is continuously changing then it can be only divided in phases and not in parts. He says: "We do not have realms or spheres of being, but only modes or phases of activity. The process of nature is one, supple and continues, and not a constructive series of static entities with fixed attributes."¹²

In his essay on ‘*Radhakrishnan’s Metaphysics and Ethics*,’ Charles Moore remarks: “His theory is that which any sound absolute idealism must hold, namely that the Absolute is the only ultimate and complete reality and the empirical world is clearly a secondary reality, relative and dependent, but that the empirical world is not for that reason unreal.”¹³ In fact Radhakrishnan insists that if the philosophy of Samkarâcârya rationally interpreted, cannot be regarded as an outright repudiation of the worldly reality. In his defence of this assertion he is led to examine the concept of *Mâyâ*. He believes that the doctrine of *Mâyâ*, like the negative description of the *Brahman*, has been employed by Indian thinkers with a definite purpose. The purpose is to “denote the distance between time and eternity, between appearance and reality.” *Mâyâ* signifies the “fragility of the universe.”¹⁴ the phenomenal character of the empirical self and the world answering to it. *Mâyâ* does not mean that the empirical world, with the selves in it, is an illusion, for the whole effort of the cosmos is directed to and sustained by the one Supreme Self. The implication of *Mâyâ* doctrine is not only that the nature of the Absolute is indefinable but his relation with the empirical world is equally indefinable. There is another aspect of this doctrine to which Radhakrishnan has often drawn attention. This is the aspect of mystery, which appeals to the poetic and imaginative side of human nature. The Absolute is the “ideal home of infinite possibilities.”¹⁵ It simply suggests the inability of human mind to fathom the mystery. “*Mâyâ* does not imply that the world is an illusion or is non-existent absolutely. The world is a delimitation distinct from the unmeasured and immeasurable. But why is there this delimitation? The question cannot be answered so long as we are at the empirical level.” The theory of *Mâyâ* is only a continuation of the effort to distinguish the highest reality from lower grades of reality, to imprint upon the human mind the difference between the absolute and the conditioned truth. Hence, the aim of conceiving *Mâyâ* is practical – to transfer attention from that which is transitory to that which is the source of all values.

Radhakrishnan has made attempt to respond to two puzzling questions. A. the question with regard to the ‘why’ of creation and B. the question regarding the nature of creator. It is in response to the second question that he has introduced the concept of God in his philosophy and he tries to utilize the Vedântic concept of *Mâyâ*. It is described as the creative power of God. God is Absolute, viewed from the point of the view of the world. It appears to be God from the view point of one possibility that has been actualised. Radhakrishnan, while

responding to the first question that is the 'why' of creation, takes the clue from Upanisadic thought. In the Upanisad creation has been described as the *Lilâ* of the Absolute. *Lilâ* is described as a joyful and sporting game in which certain limitations are imposed upon oneself just for the sake of joy. Radhakrishnan also maintains that creation is *Lilâ*, but he adds that it is real. He has to face here logical difficulty. If creation is a real *Lilâ*, then it follows that creation is necessary to the Absolute, and in that case, the free character of the reality is affected. In reply to that it has to be accepted that it is difficult to appreciate at this point a clear-cut distinction between 'necessity' and 'accident;' but according to Radhakrishnan, such a distinction is unwarranted in the context of reality. Therefore, it can be safely stated that "it is in the nature of the Absolute to grow into the world – the world is the affirmation of the Absolute."¹⁶ In that sense creation is necessary, but it is not necessary for the Absolute to have this very creation, and therefore creation is an accident. Radhakrishnan, suggests that the etymology of the word '*Brahma*' also supports, this view, as it is derived from '*Brh*,' which means 'to grow.' The question as to why the Absolute limits itself..... is irrelevant. For, there is no such thing as the infinite which was previously infinite and then transformed itself in the finite. "We do not have the infinite and the finite, God and the world, but only the infinite as and in the finite, God as and in the world."¹⁷

III

It is in fitness of things to analyse now the nature of the man as we have already discussed about the Absolute, God and the ontic status of world. Radhakrishnan tries to remain faithful to the Indian tradition, and as such, is convinced about the ultimate spirituality of man. But he is also aware of the fact that man is a biological-psychological being determined by his instincts, drives and motives. Truly speaking man is a peculiar combination of egoism and self-transcendence, of selfishness and universal love. Radhakrishnan maintains that the physical or biological aspect of man also has a reality, but that it does not contradict the ultimate spiritual nature of the soul. Radhakrishnan pointed out that there are two aspects of man – one that leads the scientist to describe man in his own scientific way, and the other that transcends the capacity of scientific analysis. It is not proper to characterise these aspects of man in the terminology of 'body' and 'soul,' because that gives the impression that the soul represents only such characters that are clearly

absent in the body. It is better to call these two aspects as the finite and the infinite aspects of man. The finite aspects are by and large aspects of the body, but even the bodily aspects of man give the evidence of the presence of the spirituality in them. Man unlike other aspects of Nature, has the capacity to reflect and to plan his move. This is what Radhakrishnan means by the expression 'self-transcendence.' Man can go beyond himself, can aspire to heights much beyond his ordinary reach. For him the finite aspects of man are those aspects that are determined by empirical or environmental conditions. In a general way, the bodily self can be described as representing this aspect of man. There is a constant influx of stimuli from the environment and the behaviour and the character of the individual can strictly be determined in terms of the responses that the individual makes to these stimuli. But the bodily aspect, although real, is only a stage that has to be transcended. Radhakrishnan remarks that man's awareness of his finitude and temporality means his consciousness of eternity. "Man's inability to achieve perfect contentment in the finite, his unquenchable longing for consummate happiness may be taken as indicative of his supernatural destiny."¹⁸

The true nature of self is revealed by the capacity of self-transcendence. The infinite aspect of man lies in his spirituality. The word 'spiritual' stands for something higher than the 'empirical.' In the empirical domain a distinction is made between the 'subject' and the 'object,' but in the spiritual realm such kind of duality is ultimately transcended or obliterated. Self-consciousness refers to the infinite aspect of man and it gives to an individual a distinct personality. Thus, by calling man a spiritual being Radhakrishnan means that he is a self-conscious person who is able to unite all his experiences and activities in his act of self-consciousness. It is on account of this capacity of unification that he can foresee his future and make plans for spiritual growth. He described this as an aspect of the Divine. The very fact that we are dissatisfied with our present status and there is constant striving or spiritual urge to attain greater heights shows that we bear the Divine spark within ourselves. In fact, all our spiritual activities, aesthetic or moral or religious are expressions of the fact of kinship between man's nature and Divine nature. Radhakrishnan frequently refers to the great intuitive (mystical) experiences of the prophets like Jesus, Buddha, Zoraster and Mohammad, and asserts that these clearly show that we are capable of experiencing the Divine. The very longing of limited and finite creature like man for liberation (*Moksa*) is itself an evidence

of the presence of spirituality within him. Yet another very convincing proof of man's Divine nature is the fact that even the most immoral and wicked person can also be reformed. The history of evolution is the history of gradual unfoldment of spiritual capacities latent in man. Hence, Radhakrishnan feels that the true nature of man consists in spirituality and which is, in a sense, akin to Divine nature.

Freedom is considered to be one of the most important characteristics of the spiritual man. It is generally considered as freedom of choice, but Radhakrishnan's treatment of freedom is more comprehensive than this; it includes this meaning and adds, something more. Freedom implies a particular metaphysical status of man, that is the soul (self) is metaphysically free. It simply means that the nature of self is not determined by any extraneous factor. He can create original works of art, build structures, express his creative genius in art, music and science. Freedom also means that man is free to choose his own course of life and action, it means that the future of man depends to a great extent on man himself. Radhakrishnan believes in the doctrine of Karma. One may raise a doubt here by saying that the law of Karma is the determining factor of a life, and as such soul's tendencies and states are after all determined.

Radhakrishnan dispels this doubt in a simple and straightforward manner:

1. He says that karma and freedom are not incompatible with each other because the karmas are karmas performed by the self. Freedom is self-determination and being determined by one's own karma is nothing but self-determination.
2. He pointed out that there are two aspects of Karma – a retrospective aspect that has a connection with the past and the prospective aspect that has its influence on the future.

Radhakrishnan has made a very pertinent observation in this context: "The cards in the game of life are given to us, we do not select them. They are all traced to our past karmas, but we can call as we please, lead all suit we will, and as we play we gain or lose and that is freedom."¹⁹ He also believes in doctrine of rebirth. He is well aware that it is difficult to understand the mechanism of rebirth fully, but an awareness of the unfulfilled urges and tendencies in the purposive set-up of the universe compels us to think about some possible forms of life after death just only to provide yet another opportunity for the realization of the unrealized urges. There is a logical nexus between the doctrine of Karma and the doctrine of Punarjanma and Liberation

(Moksa) is considered to be the supreme value or ideal of human life in *Purusârtha*. Liberation is freeing oneself from the cycle of repeated birth and death and for this reason doctrine of rebirth has to be admitted. The most general ground for rejecting a belief in rebirth is that there is no evidence of anybody having any memory of the previous birth. But Radhakrishnan remarks that lack of memory about the past birth is not an adequate ground for rejecting the belief in rebirth. No body has any memory of his existence in his mother's womb, but that does not mean that it is not a state of existence.

IV

Man is a finite – infinite being. Even in his finite embodied existence his spirituality asserts itself. This shows that the 'being' of man is a continuous march towards the realization of the higher spiritual state. *Moksa* is conceived as a state free from suffering or a state of bliss – a state in which one is able to realize one's true nature. Radhakrishnan also conceives this state more or less in a similar manner, but his conception of the ultimate human destiny bears the mark of his own metaphysical predilections, and therefore appears refreshingly new and original. For him so long as man is in the embodied state he cannot attain his ultimate destiny. The first aspect of his destiny would be freedom from the embodied existence. But although that may make him free, that will not put an end to creation; and so long as cosmic process does not come to an end, complete unity will not be established. Therefore, the final aspect of his destiny must be the realization of his unity at the end of the cosmic process. "The destiny of the human soul is to realize its oneness with the Supreme."²⁰ This can be also described as self-realization, because it is the fullest expression of the higher nature of the self. The infinite aspect of the self bears the mark of the creator (Divine) and reminds the self perpetually of his real nature. The attainment of this state opens before the self the possibility of a new kind of experience – the experience of the Universal – of the One which expresses itself everywhere. Faint glimpses of such an experience can be found in artistic or aesthetic or ethical sensibility. One of its clearest examples is in the mystical experience of gifted saints and seers. In the realization of unity one feels the presence of one spirit in all minds, lives and bodies, and therefore, the life of the self becomes almost as comprehensive as the universe itself. Radhakrishnan seems to be impressed by ancient Indian concept of *Jivanmukta*, but describes it in his own peculiar way. The liberated individual is the *Jivanmukta*

as he does not have any passion or attachment left for the worldly possession, and as such acts in a selfless and disinterested manner and works simply for the good of others. The Advaitic tradition believes that the '*Jivanmukta*' becomes '*Videhmukta*' as soon as he is free from the fetters of the body which, as a result of the momentum generated by the forces of karma, has continued to exist even after the attainment of liberation by the self. According to Radhakrishnan this is not necessary course of action. He feels that even when an individual has attained liberation, his task is not complete; he has now to play a part in the liberation of others.

It is not necessary for the liberated individual to be fully free from rebirth. He lives and moves in the world for the liberation of others and for that purpose it becomes essential for him to assume different bodily forms. The only thing is that he has become finally free from the bondage of love and passion for life and fear of death. Hence, even when an individual is liberated, he does not become free from the cosmic process till others are liberated. The world process will reach its final goal when every individual will realize Divinity. Therefore, the ultimate human destiny is not individual liberation (*Mukti*) but universal liberation (*Sarvamukti*). There is a very interesting issue regarding liberation that whether individuality of the individual is lost or individuality is retained in that state. For Radhakrishnan realization is realization of one's true nature, and in that sense it cannot be denial of individuality. Moreover, even after attaining liberation, an individual has to stay as an individual in the world and has to work for the liberation of others. This also depicts that the individuality of the individual is not obliterated. This can be further proved on the ground that the individual after liberation realizes Divinity, but the individual does not become the Supreme – the identity of the two is not established in an objective manner. How can man attain the ultimate human destiny? It is the serious question which is well responded by Radhakrishnan. He maintains that one must begin with a faith – a faith in religious experience, because that alone is capable of making man realize his spirituality. It is called an experience because it produces an objective awareness – an apprehension of the real coupled with an enjoyment – a sort of an inner satisfaction. It is called religious because of its peculiar nature – a uniqueness that cannot be reduced to any other forms of experience. Its peculiarity consists in its attempt to discover eternal truths, in its effort to raise the life-spirit to some higher spiritual level. It is a quest for the emancipation of mankind from the compulsions of

finite existence. Radhakrishnan asserts that one must have a faith in the reality and significance of such experiences. We witness that now-a-days it has almost become fashion to dismiss all talks about such experiences as purely imaginative or nonsensical. He remarks that "However much we may quarrel about the implications of this kind of experience, we cannot question the actuality of such experience itself."²¹ Radhakrishnan further pointed out that "The witness to this spiritual life is borne not only by the great religious teachers and leaders of mankind, but by the ordinary man in the street in whose inmost being the well of the spirit is set asleep. In our normal experience events occur which imply the existence of a spiritual world."²² He further remarks, "when we experience the illumination of new knowledge, the ecstasy of poetry, the subordination of self to something greater; family or nation, the self-abandonment of falling in love, we have faint glimpses of mystic moods."²³

Radhakrishnan furnishes the characteristics of religious experience as:

1. It is an experience; that means firstly that it is not something extra-ordinary or supernatural, secondly that every man is capable of it, and thirdly that it involves an awareness of objective kind.
2. It is an integral and undivided consciousness which distinguishes it from ordinary experience. In ordinary experience the duality of the subject and the object is always maintained, but in religious experience such kind of distinction is obliterated. In the fullness of felt life and freedom the distinction of the knower and the known disappears.
3. It is autonomous in character in so far as it is an independent function of the mind. It is not in any way determined by extraneous factors, rather its inspiration are inner and spontaneous.
4. Religious experience is inward and personal, and here Radhakrishnan seems to be deeply impressed by Whitehead's '*Religion in the making.*' It is an experience developed in the human inwardness, it is a life being lived in subjectivity.
5. The peculiarity of this experience is that it somehow shows an attitude of complete indifference towards worldly possession. This experience shows an intense dissatisfaction with 'the finiteness of the finite and the transiency of the transient,' and therefore, constantly aims at the attainment of perfection.

6. Religious experience, Radhakrishnan remarks, is the total reaction of the whole man to the whole reality. It involves the whole of the subject, and the reaction of him in the experience is not towards any particular aspect of the reality, but to the reality as a whole “The privacy of the individual self is broken into and invaded by the universal self which the individual feels his own.”²⁴ Radhakrishnan further remarks that “it is a vision which is the precious possession of the soul coming out in life on every side.”²⁵ Here ‘on every side’ signifies that it is not mere knowing or feeling, rather it is a total reaction of the total man including the intellectual, moral and aesthetic aspects of the complete man.
7. This kind of experience brings peace and equanimity of mind. It is “a positive feeling of calm and confidence, joy and strength in the midst of outward pain and defeat, loss and frustration.”²⁶
8. Religious experience is the most certain and the most ineffable possession of man’s life. But, this certitude and ineffability can neither be demonstrated or proved. Radhakrishnan uses the expressions ‘self-established,’ ‘self-evidencing,’ ‘self-luminous’ etc. to describe the nature of such an experience. Its certitude is not based on rational argumentation, the experience itself is “pure comprehension, entire significance, complete validity. It comes with a constraint that brooks no denial.”²⁷
9. We come to realize the element of mysticism in religious experience. Deep intuition is utter silence. Through silence we ‘confess without confession’ that the glory of spiritual life is inexplicable and beyond the ken of speech and mind. It is the great unfathomable mystery and words are treacherous. Religious experience is treated as mystical because the rational and scientific ways of understanding realize their limitations and this prompts us to go beyond that transcends the rational and scientific understanding. This shows that there is a hidden capacity in man to go beyond himself. If this capacity is sufficiently developed, man can extend his consciousness far beyond his egoistic nature – possibly to universal consciousness or altruism. It is mystical only because it is not completely comprehensible, and yet it is a real aspect of man’s life constituting the essence of all his activities.

V

The deep sense of mystery regarding the Absolute's manifestation in the finite world is reflected in Radhakrishnan's theory of intuition. "The rationality of the world," he says: "is transparent to the intellect, but its mysteriousness can be grasped only by intuition." This brings us near to the perennial issue in epistemology regarding the contrast between intellectual knowledge of reality and immediate awareness of it. By establishing the relationship between intuition and intellect on a more satisfactory basis, Radhakrishnan has tried to remove a serious limitation in orthodox Advaita Vedanta. This has been nicely pointed out by P.T. Raju in these words: "The Vedantins, following Samkara..... came to the conclusion that *Ātman* and *Brahman* were beyond intellect and could only be directly experienced through intuition. But they did not take the trouble to show clearly that this direct experience is a form of knowledge involved in and presupposed by the discursive knowledge of the intellect, and the intellect is not opposed to the higher experience but is absorbed in it and completed by it."²⁸ Radhakrishnan rarely uses the word 'intuition' to designate 'mystical awareness,' rather he prefers the term 'integral experience.' Intuition must not only be accepted as one of the ways of knowledge, but it must also be regarded as a form of thought. But if we want to know things in their uniqueness, in their indefeasible reality, we must transcend discursive thinking. The emphasis is here on 'transcending' rather than 'abandoning' discursive thought.

Man's awareness is, broadly speaking, of three kinds – the perceptual, the logical and the intuitive; or to put it in Indian parlance – *manas* or the sense mind, *Vijñāna* or logical intelligence and *ananda* or spiritual intuition. All the three belong to the human consciousness. Those who exalt intuition at the expense of other modes of knowledge often begin with the mistaken belief that the mind is a conglomeration of separate 'faculties.' But "the human mind does not function in fractions. We need not assume that at the sense level there is no work for intuition or at the level of intuition there is no function for intellect to perform. When intuition is defined as integral insight, the suggestion is that the whole mind is at work in it." The emphasis on the totality of the knowledge process brings Radhakrishnan's theory of intuition very close to the philosophical basis of Gestalt psychology. Like Wertheimer and Kaffka, he insists upon the all-inclusive nature of the act of 'perception' being used in the widest sense. "All dynamic acts of

thinking,” he says: “whether in the game of chess or a mathematical problem, are controlled by an intuitive grasp of the situation as a whole.”²⁹ It therefore becomes necessary “for any coherent philosophy to take into account observed data, rational reflection and intuitive insight. All these should be articulated in a systematic way.” Radhakrishnan sees no conflict between intuition and reason, as he often uses the phrase ‘rational intuition.’ Intuition, if not adequately supported by the intellect, will “lapse into self-satisfied obscurantism.” Intuition must never be used “as an apology for doctrines which could not or would not be justified on intellectual grounds.”³⁰ Radhakrishnan agrees with the views of Vedic saints and seers that in genuine intuition “the mind must first be set free from anxiety and desire,” there must be “adequate inward purity and self-mastery,” and the soul must first be “shaped into harmony with invisible realities.” Intuition demands “continuous creative effort” and is often the “result of a long and arduous process of study and analysis.” It has been described by men of deepest insights as “self-establishing, self-evidencing and self-luminous.”³¹ Far from being of doubtful authenticity, intuition can offer “pure comprehension, entire significance and complete validity.” Hence, Radhakrishnan asserts that intuition is “higher than the discursive process from which it issues and on which it supervenes.”

Radhakrishnan’s epistemological study is nothing but an exploration into the possible sources of knowledge – Sense-experience, Intellectual Cognition and Intuitive Apprehension and their relative merits and demerits. Sense-experience is the source through which we know the sensible qualities or external features of the object. The inadequacy of sense experience is that it cannot provide true knowledge of the reality and other limitation is that it is not always reliable. The senses can deceive us and the examples of erroneous perceptions are illusion and hallucination. Intellectual cognition is knowledge obtained by a process of analysis and synthesis. The data supplied by the senses are analysed by the intellect and the new synthesis is perceived. The knowledge supplied by it is not only indirect but also symbolic. Intellectual cognition is also unable to furnish the knowledge of reality for several reasons:

1. Intellectual deliberation rests on the presupposition of the duality of the subject and the object, and therefore, the non-dual – the Absolute cannot be known through this process.
2. Intellect moves in the realm of relations only and relations presuppose multiplicity. Reality is One, and therefore above multiplicity and relations.

3. Intellect is not primary or original or it works on the data supplied by sense-experience.
4. Intellect or cognition is merely an aspect of our mental life; feeling and willing are other aspects that being equally important. A complete comprehension of reality will be possible only when all these aspects are taken into account and satisfied.

Intuitive apprehension is the direct realization of its object. The duality between knower and known is completely destroyed and here it is knowing by becoming. The object known is seen not as an 'object outside the self, but as a part of the self.' Intuition has certain advantages over sense-impression and intellectual deliberations. Sense experience can explore only external or superficial aspects of the object, whereas intuition can apprehend its essence. Senses are liable to error and sense-experience being fallible in nature, but intuition is infallible and self-evident. Intellectual cognition is also not infallible or not free from doubt. Its main tool is 'analysis' and so it fails to grasp the 'whole' nature of objects, while intuition fathoms the nature of reality. Radhakrishnan maintains that this must not lead us to suppose that intellect and intuition are quite opposed to each other. In fact intuition needs intellect for the expression, elaboration and justification of its result. Intellect, on the other hand, presupposes intuition without which its deliberations cannot start. The function of intellect is 'analysis' but there must be something to be analysed and that something must be a whole. The whole as a whole can be grasped by intuition alone and that gives to intuition its primacy.

Radhakrishnan has conceived intuition, more or less, in Bergson's way. Intuition has the directness, immediacy and unity of instinctive knowledge and consciousness of the intellect. It is direct and immediate because it deals with the objects themselves and not with their signs or symbols. Intuition is self-evident because it does not need the support of anything else for its truth and validity. It gives a very intimate knowledge or insight about the object because it is knowing by becoming. Radhakrishnan has made a very pertinent observation regarding the nature of intuition that "Intuition is only the higher stage of intelligence, intelligence rid of its separative and discursive tendencies. While it liberates us from the prejudices of the understanding, it carries out intellectual conclusions to a deeper synthesis. Instead of being an unnatural and mysterious power, it is a deeper experience, which by supplementing our narrow intellectual visions, amplifies it. Intuition is not an appeal to the subjective whims of the individual, or a

dogmatic faculty of conscience, or the uncritical morbid view of the psychopath. It is the experience which devout souls have in moments of spiritual exaltation or religious devotion.”³²

VI

Radhakrishnan has firm conviction that “any ethical theory must be grounded in metaphysics, in a philosophical conception of the relation between human conduct and ultimate reality. It is just because the ethical ideal is grounded in values it cannot be indifferent to the nature of reality which is the ultimate source of all values.” Are our values merely empirical accidents, creations at best of the human mind, or do they reveal to us an order of being which is more than merely human, a spiritual reality which is the source of significance of what happens in the temporal process?”³³ But if ethics is dependent upon metaphysics, and if Radhakrishnan accepts absolute idealism as the most satisfactory metaphysical theory, is he not driven to deny the value of morality in the ultimate sense? If the impersonal Brahman is the sole reality, can we assign any fundamental significance to question of ethical conduct which, after all, concern only finite beings living in a finite world? Radhakrishnan brushes aside all such sceptical questions by pointing out that the spiritual plane is higher than the moral plane. As life emerges from matter, as mind emerges from life, and as a sense of value emerges from mind, so does God’s consciousness emerge out of a sense of values. Salvation is rising from ethical individualism to spiritual universalism. This means that morality can be regarded as a precondition of spiritual perfection, but cannot be equated with it. He observed that the ethical life is an indispensable condition for the attainment of perfection, and thus for the transcendence of the ethical process itself.³⁴ Just as the empirical world is not negated by the fact that the Absolute transcends the finite, so also the ‘historical process’ which is the basis of ethical conduct is not nullified by the fact that in the highest spiritual experience we rise above the ‘terms of reference’ applicable to that process. In a sense, morality survives even after complete personal salvation. The freed soul “no longer has any object to aim at, since he has achieved all,” and yet he works for the welfare of the world.

Radhakrishnan, like Gandhi, is highly influenced by ‘*Niskâma Karmayoga*’ of Bhagvad Gitâ. He asserts that “detachment of mind and not renunciation of the world is what is demanded of us.” True detachment consists in “the refusal to identify ourselves with the separate

ego,” in the abandonment of selfish interests, unreal objectives.³⁵ Extreme asceticism, manifested in self-mortification, rigorous celibacy, and other stern ideals, is simply a declaration of war against the life-process. Deeply influenced by Gandhi, he regards non-violence which is only an aspect of love as the most comprehensive and universal criterion of ethical life, and like Plato and Spinoza, he asserts that we cannot be good unless we are “in love with goodness.” Forgiveness, sacrifice, tolerance, pacifism and patience are only manifestations of the single principle of love. Unlike Gandhi, however, Radhakrishnan emphasizes that this principle must harmonize with the grace and charm of life. Refinement, happiness, elegance and poise must blend with love and righteousness. Material comforts are not to be derided and the fruits of civilization, including those offered by science and technology are to be greatly welcomed.

Radhakrishnan, like Kant, accepts freedom of will as a postulate of morality. A world of ideas and values cannot be built upon blind impersonal necessity. He formulates and expounds a comprehensive theory of freedom. It is the key to the growth of human creativeness. There are two approaches to the problem of freedom. The individualists and liberals have interpreted freedom as absence of restraint. Hegel maintained spirit to be self-contained freedom and Radhakrishnan adheres to the Hegelian notion of freedom. “The freedom which human beings desire is not the unreal, negative or absence of restraint, but the real positive freedom to use to the full one’s natural endowments of physique and brain.” He too endorses the Kantian-Spencerian concept of freedom that one can enjoy his freedom only to the extent that he does not infringe upon the equal freedom of others.

Radhakrishnan, like Tagore, believes that formidable challenges are damaging the very fabric of modern civilization and spiritual humanistic ethics. He dreams of a future civilization of man with a universal orientation – *sarvâtmabhâva*. He pointed out that racial chauvinism with the degrading cult of dictatorship and the barbaric worship of military power and capital accumulation are the dark consequences of the allegiance to narrow loyalties. In the true Gandhian spirit, Radhakrishnan pledges his faith in the victory of the spirit or *Ātman* over the formidable constellations of force, tyranny and aggression. The Ptolemaic ethnocentric patriotic approach to civilization has to be replaced by a Copernican universalistic approach. Universalism will be the basis of the future ideal civilization. A crusade for imposing the criteria of one’s own civilization is fascistic and doomed to failure.

What is essential is a greater realization of the fundamental moral and spiritual values of the east and the west. A psychic transformation brought about by the spiritual discipline (*tapas and yoga*), broadening integral thinking involving all aspects of mind, will and emotions will bring into being a recreated world. Modern life is besieged with a complicated predicament. The human being is subjected to diverse types of psychological anxieties, discords, neuroses and grave insecurities. Religion, for him, is a potent technic for the rehabilitation of the disturbed life. He would press for the application of the religious spirit of tolerance, love and genuine charity in all walks of life. Religion signifies the quest for truth and apprehension of the unity of existence. Radhakrishnan is an exponent of religious humanism. Humanism in the west appeared as a reaction against scientific naturalism and theological Ecclesiasticism. It exalted social and moral values and pleaded for the solidarity of man, which is praiseworthy. But Radhakrishnan points out two basic inadequacies in western humanism:

1. It sets the moral and natural elements in man's being and disposition in sharp opposition.
2. It lacks spiritual foundation as it has no place for life-transcending and life-transforming righteousness.

Radhakrishnan, on the contrary, believes in relating values to spiritual foundations.³⁶ He, being a spiritual humanist, is repelled by the societal stress in Marxism. Instead of the dialectic of tension and struggle he pleads for a reconciling spiritual harmony.³⁷ A philosophy of spiritual humanism must lead to the acceptance of the theory of a world community. The world to be born in the future must be a cosmopolitan one. He thinks that a spirit of religious humanism alone can provide the foundation for genuine fellowship and co-operation. He maintains that "religious or spiritual humanism seems to be the most powerful political instrument for peace which the world has ever seen. Treaties and diplomatic understandings may restrain passions but they do not remove fear. The world must be imbued with a love of humanity. We want religious heroes who will not wait for the transformation of the whole world but assert with their lives, if necessary, the truth of the conviction— one earth one family."³⁸ The destiny of the world consists in the transformed lives of men and women and their redemption from sins, illusions and ignorance. This demands an education for the purpose of the realization of spiritual freedom.

The political thought of Radhakrishnan may be said to constitute the reinforcement of the school of "individualistic idealism." He is an individualist in his pre-eminent occupation with the renaissance of the

moral and spiritual values of man. He is also an individualist in his quest for the spiritual equality of all human beings and in the assertion of the technics of rational education for the elevation of man towards increasing recognition of the values of liberty, reason, progress and fellowship. Hence, amidst the pervasive gloom of political predicaments, economic dislocations and social imbalances, Radhakrishnan's quest for the religion of the spirit reveals that he is thoroughly rooted in the Indian philosophic tradition of absolute idealism.

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The Political Frame of the *Bhagavadgītā*

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1. Introduction

The context of the dialogue in the *Bhagavadgītā* is in-war discussion when the Great War (*Mahābhārata*) has just begun according to the epic *Mahābhārata*, in which the *Bhagavadgītā* is embedded. It is an *in-war* discussion and not a *pre-war* discussion as many think. In the epic *Mahābhārata*, the war between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas was a *yajña*, i.e. *raṇa-sattra* (*Mahābhārata* 3.242.14), *raṇayajña* (*Mahābhārata* 5.57.12 & 5.154.4) and *śastrayajña* (*Mahābhārata* 5.139.29). In our understanding war is not only a political action but also a collective institutional action. So, the discussion of the *Bhagavadgītā* is framed by this *raṇayajña* context, which is a political frame. As the Great War (*Mahābhārata*) was taken as *raṇayajña* and in the *yajña* mantras have to be recited, the verses of the *Bhagavadgītā* are the analogue of the mantra recitation in *raṇayajña* for the growth of the form (*rūpasamṛddhi*)¹ of the collective political institutional action and political institutional actuality that was going on.

2. The Compositional Style

The *Bhagavadgītā* is a deceptively simple text. The author of the *Bhagavadgītā* utilized, to develop the compositional structure of the *Bhagavadgītā*, a simile given in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣada* 2.2.3-4: “Having taken the bow furnished by the *Upaniṣadas*, the great weapon – and

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mounted in it arrow rendered pointed by constant meditation and having drawn it with the mind fixed on the *Brahman*, hit good looking youth, at that mark – the immortal *Brahman*. The *praṇava* is the bow, the *ātman* is the arrow and the *Brahman* is said to be its mark. It should be hit by one who is self-collected and that which hits becomes, like the arrow, one with the mark, i.e. *Brahman*.” This simile, with some modification, is used by the author of the *Bhagavadgītā* as the compositional structure of the text. The modification is that for the author of the *Bhagavadgītā* the mounted and drawn arrow points to the mark and hits it when it divides equally the bow circle and balances them equally. This means that the two halves of the various bow circles of chapters and verses are evenly balanced. So, one has to read the text of the *Bhagavadgītā* like an archer trying to hit the mark by bow (of the text) and arrow (of consciousness, which is the self). Interpreter has to join the opposite ends of the text of the *Bhagavadgītā* just as the archer joins the opposite ends of bow by mounting the *pratyāñcā* (the bow string) to the loose end. The text of the *Bhagavadgītā* has to be understood as a circle balanced and drawn tight and bisected in the middle by the aiming arrow to hit the meaning (*lakṣa*, *lakṣārtha*). This is how the *Bhagavadgītā* is composed and needs to be read.

The readers of the *Bhagavadgītā* have found themselves in the situation of *Śītā svayamvara* where either they could not lift the bow or found themselves unequal to the task of mounting the bowstring on the loose end of the bow. Needless to say that none of the commentators ever succeeded in mounting the arrow of thought on the bow of the *Bhagavadgītā* to draw it back to aim to hit (*viddhi*) the mark (*lakṣa*). It is needless to speak of ordinary readers, when even the ones of the caliber of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Abhinavagupta could not do so.

Modern Indian scholars like D. D. Kosambi, Ambedkar, S. D. Pendse, G. V. Ketkar, G. S. Khair and P. L. Bhargava, and western scholars like Humboldt, Holtzmann, Hopkins, Richard Garbe and his pupil Rudolph Otto could not even lift the bow of the text of the *Bhagavadgītā*, as it was too heavy for them like the bow of Śīva. They suggested breaking it into parts like original core and latter additions and interpolations so that they can lift the smaller piece of it called the original core or Ur-Gītā. Śaṅkara(?),² Rāmānuja and Abhinavagupta, even though lifted the whole of bow of the text of the *Bhagavadgītā*, could not mount *pratyāñcā* (the bow string) to the loose end and produced only sectarian commentaries. These traditional thinkers were

not interested in interpreting the *Bhagavadgītā* in its own terms. They had their own philosophy and, hence, merely tried to reconcile the text of the *Bhagavadgītā* with their own philosophies, by misconstruing the syntax of verses and semantics of terms.

The topic introduced in the first chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā* is not on the surface. It is informed in the text itself, at least nine times that the message of the *Bhagavadgītā* is a hidden message. The teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā* is described variously as secret (4.3), ‘know-how of administration, secrets of administration’ (9.2), ‘hidden knowledgeable resolve’ (10.38), ‘the most secret song of *adhyātma*’ (11.1), ‘the most secret instruction’ (15.20), ‘knowledgeable resolve more secret than the secret one’ (18.63), ‘the greatest of all secrets’ (18.64), the ‘ultimate secret’ (18.68), and ‘supreme secret’ (18.75). The *Bhagavadgītā* was firmly rooted in the Brāhmaṇical tradition, where the speech of deities is nether direct nor immediate; it is always indirect and mediated.³

3. The Balanced Contrast

So, to understand the topic of the *Bhagavadgītā* we have to understand its first chapter keeping in view its compositional style as mentioned above. The first chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā* contains 47 *ślokas* which form a bow circle with the mounted and drawn arrow passing between the two lines of the 24th verse, which is the middle verse, dividing and balancing the two equal halves of 23 verses each, pointing to the target (*lakṣa*) of the discussion or the *lakṣārtha*, i.e. the meaning of the chapter aims at.

The first half of the chapter presents the individualist outlook of Duryodhana in upbeat mood, but the second half represents the clannish tribal outlook of Arjuna in a mood of despondency. It is because of the second part that the first chapter is traditionally named as *Arjunaviśādayoga* meaning Arjuna’s *yoga* (a balanced relation which is neither *saṃyoga* ‘joining’ nor *viyoga* ‘separation’) with *viśāda* (depression/dejection/despondency).

In the first chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā* verse 2 *Samjaya* informs: “Having seen the army of the Pāṇḍavas drawn up in battle-array, king Duryodhana then approached his teacher and spoke (these) words.” In the next seven verses from 1.3 to 1.9, Duryodhana speaks. It is important to note that in his speech, Duryodhana, the representative of Kaurava clan introduces the members of his army and opposite army either by

name or by definite description identifying an individual warrior. Duryodhana is not only quite modern in his description of persons and use of language but also he is individualist in his social outlook. He is participating in the forceful settlement (*saṃgrāmaṃ*) with modern individualist outlook.

But it is also depicted that in the process of introducing the heroes in the two armies, individually Duryodhana could not see the institution (organization) that army is, or the collectivity that the army is, for it was for him just a power of individuals collected and protected by one individual (*balam bhīṣmābhirakṣitam, balam bhīmābhirakṣitam* in 1.10), which is consistent with his modern individualist outlook.

To emphasize the individualist outlook of Duryodhana in the first half of the chapter, it is further heightened in verses 1.12 to 1.18, where individualism is carried to the extreme of not only separately identifying individual persons, but also individually identifying the conch shells by name, blown by the individual warriors. Vedavyāsa, through these seven verses put in the mouth of Saṃjaya, has intensified the modern individualist outlook of Duryodhana. Apart from the extreme modern individualist outlook, what this passage shows is the upbeat mood of the warriors assembled there, indicating that individualism is in upbeat mood.⁴ But this upbeat mood also indicates the enthusiasm of all the warriors who have assembled in the battleground to fight.

But when Arjuna, representing Pāṇḍavas, who were not a real clan, looked at the army on both sides he saw only relations, mostly tribal relations, of birth and alliance. It is put in the mouth of Saṃjaya in the *Bhagavadgītā* 1.26-27. Later a similar statement is put in the mouth of Arjuna himself in *Bhagavadgītā* 1.33-34. The repetition of list of relations by birth and alliance first through the mouth of Saṃjaya as a third person description of what Arjuna saw and then through his own speech in first person is very significant. The author of the *Bhagavadgītā* through repetition is trying to emphasize this fact regarding what Arjuna saw. This is made more emphatic, by making Arjuna refer to the people assembled to fight as *svajana* (own-people) four times in four different verses: 1.28, 1.31, 1.37, and 1.45. Arjuna merely saw his own kinsmen related by birth or alliance.⁵ So, this fact that Arjuna is tribal and clannish in his social outlook is important in understanding and interpreting the *Bagavadgītā*, as it underlies the confusion of Arjuna and makes him *dharmasaṃmūḍhacetāḥ* ‘confused in mind regarding *dharma*’. Similarly, the long list of warriors by name

or definite description through the mouth of Duryodhana is put deliberately by the author of the *Bhagavadgītā* and it is meant for recognizing the principle operative implicitly in the mind of Duryodhana as it is put in contrast to what Arjuna saw when he looked at the same warriors. The contrast highlights that Duryodhana is not seeing warriors on both sides as related by birth or alliance, but as individuals. This fact is also important for interpretation of the *Bhagavadgītā*. So the contrast is between the modern individualist outlook of Duryodhana and the primitive clannish and tribal outlook of Arjuna.

It is surprising that it is the representative of Kaurava clan, i.e. Duryodhana who is already attuned in his thinking unawares for the advanced kind of social outlook that is opposite to what he really represents. He represents Kaurava clan or the Kuru tribe. In contrast Arjuna's despondency is as much for the relatives as much it is for the death of old social order he is familiar with, i.e. clan and tribe.⁶ The significance of the opening scene of the dialogue in the first chapter is that it dramatically highlights through the words of the two protagonists – Arjuna and Duryodhana – the conflict of social outlook, i.e. the outlook of social order of clans and tribes based on relation through birth or alliance, and the outlook of yearning for a modern individualist social order without depending on relation through birth or alliance.⁷ The manner in which the two kinds of concerns – concern for social order of clans based on relation through birth or alliance, and concern for individualist social order without depending on relation through birth or alliance – are introduced highlight another contrast.

The forty-seven verses of the first chapter are divided equally by the twenty-fourth verse, which is the middle verse. The first twenty-three verses are written with a view to represent the upbeat mood of Duryodhana and Arjuna, with both the protagonists bristling with enthusiasm to fight. And in the context of this upbeat mood the theme of concern for the modern individualist social order without depending on relation through birth or alliance is brought in implicitly. Will it be realized? Can it be realized? There is an enthusiastic hopeful outlook of expectation of realizing a social world in future. But from verse twenty-five onwards the upbeat mood all of a sudden gives way to despondency of down cast Arjuna, who starts lamenting the possible demise of people related to him by birth and alliances, and thereby demise of social order of clans and tribes based on relations of birth and alliance etc. Can the decline be arrested? Can the demise be stopped?

Here there is no hope but despondency. But Kṛṣṇa will find both the expectation of a social order based on modern individualist outlook as unjustified as the despondency at demise of tribes based on clannish and tribal outlook. In chapter 16, Kṛṣṇa will tell us regarding the horrendous consequences of modern individualist outlook, which he identifies as the outlook of those who are born with demoniac-destiny (*āsurī-saṃpad*) and will tell us regarding the inevitability of passing away of that social formation which has come into being in time in chapters 8 through 11 having introduced the general principle in 2.27.

4. The Middle Position

So what is the way out? The middle verse of the chapter of 47 verses, i.e. 24th verse is telling: “O descendant of Bharata, Hrishikesa (Krishna) thus addressed by Guḍākeśa (Arjuna) stationed that excellent chariot between the two armies...” The verse tells as much about placing of the physical chariot in the middle of the two physical armies, as it tells about the placing of the entire carriage of discussion in the middle of the two conflicting visions of the social order: the modern individualistic social order without depending on relation based on birth or alliance presented in upbeat mood and the outlook of the social order of clans and tribes based on relations through birth or alliance presented in the mood of despondency.

The middle position, between the modern individualistic social formation and the old tribal formation, is what is advocated and elaborated in every detail in the entire *Bhagavadgītā*. That middle position is the advocacy of socio-political formation based on institutions and practice of institutions, a theory, which is available neither through modern individualistic outlook nor through old tribal and clannish outlook. This middle position of socio-political institutional formation requires a way of thinking different from both modern thought as well as tribal thought, which is elaborated in the entire *Bhagavadgītā*.

Ratha ‘chariot’ from the very beginning of the Vedic thought was used to refer to dynamic practice of institution, i.e. *yajña*. The later Vedic literature exploits the simile of *yajña* as *ratha* to elaborate various internal arrangements of the *yajña*.⁸

Therefore, when it is stated in the middle verse, i.e. 24th verse of the first chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā*, which consists of total 47 verses, that Kṛṣṇa stationed that excellent chariot between the two armies, it

is an indication that the *Bhagavadgītā* has a lakṣa (goal) of expounding the theory of socio-political institutions, institutional actions, and institutional revision which has its roots in Ṛgveda, in which institution was conceived of as puruṣa (person) for the first time in the entire annals of mankind.

What the *Bhagavadgītā* aims at is the theory of socio-political institutions, which has its roots directly in the Ṛgveda. From the very first recorded word preserved by mankind for the posterity, the entire concern of the Ṛgveda to the last word is to theorize about the institution as a person. Ṛgveda 10.191.4, which is the concluding mantra of the entire theorizing from the beginning to the end, implies that the one common socio-political institution as person be reflected in the buddhi of all people, which is advocated by the *Bhagavadgītā* too as this commonality of presence of institutional person in all people's heart is one of the necessary conditions of the being of manifest institution as person and also man's participation in it by way of performance of institutional action, i.e. action properly vested (*samnyasta*) on the institution as person.

It is interesting to note that in the epic *Mahābhārata*, social organization before Mahābhārata (the Great War) was that of clan and tribe, based on relations through birth and alliance. *Kurus* (*Kauravas*), *Pāñcālas*, and *Vṛṣṇīs* etc. were such clans and tribes. All such clans and tribes were wiped out at the end of the war, except *Vṛṣṇīs* who annihilated themselves completely by internal fight later. Only *Pāṇḍavas* survived annihilation, but they survived as persons organized together as an institution. But they were not organized together as modern individuals held together by the supreme force of one of them; they were organized together guided by Kṛṣṇa as an institutional person and that institutional organization survives even after their departure from the world to be manned by the survivors. What the *Mahābhārata* portrays and shows is that the period was in confusion regarding *dharma* because the tribal formation with its conception of *dharma* based on birth and alliance is going out and the contours of the *dharma*, which is independent of social organization based on birth and alliance, which is emerging from the womb of the future, is not yet clear. It is the Mahābhārata (Great War) that settles the confusion, because the victory was of the party that stood under the guidance of Kṛṣṇa for the social formation based on the sovereignty of *sui generis* institution.

5. The Balanced Errors

Since the erroneous outlooks of Duryodhana and Arjuna, which were respectively the individualist outlook and clannish tribal outlook, were presented in equally balanced contrast in the two equal halves of the first chapter divided by the middle verse, i.e. 24th verse, to give an indication of the error in thinking of the two protagonists in the first chapter, the author, i.e. Vedavyāsa, deliberately puts erroneous statements equally balanced in the mouth of the two protagonists, i.e. Duryodhana and Arjuna. These errors are not inadvertent errors of some copyist, as these are entrenched errors, which cannot be eliminated by revision of some words here and there. In the two consecutive verses 1.10 and 1.11 two errors are put by Vedavyāsa in the mouth of Duryodhana in the first part of the chapter. The compositional style of Vedavyāsa demanded that to indicate the error of Arjuna's thinking the author must put erroneous statements in the mouth of Arjuna in the second half of the chapter in consecutive verses. So, *Vedavyāsa* has deliberately put errors in the mouth of Arjuna in three consecutive verses 1.35-37.

6. The First Two Errors

Duryodhana makes the first two errors. The two verses 1.10 & 11 of the *Bhagavadgītā* put deliberately in the mouth of Duryodhana are the most obviously incongruous and erroneous in the entire text: "This power (or army) of ours protected by Bhīṣma is inadequate, whereas that power (or army) of theirs which is under the protection of Bhīṣma is adequate. And therefore do you all, occupying your respective positions in the several divisions of the army, protect Bhīṣma only."⁹

Bhīṣma was leading an army of eleven *akṣauhiṇī*, while Bhīma was leading an army of seven *akṣauhiṇī*, where an *akṣauhiṇī* consists of 21870 elephants, 21870 chariots, 65610 horses, and 109350 foot-soldiers. Therefore, commentators have obviously noticed the incongruity of Duryodhan's claim that the army of his own led by Bhīṣma is inadequate, whereas the army of Pāṇḍavas, which is under the leadership of Bhīma, is adequate.

Similar reasons are available for noticing the error of Duryodhan's utterance in 1.11. Bhīṣma had the boon from his father that he will die only if he himself wishes. No one can kill him. It was precisely for this reason that he was chosen to lead his army by Duryodhana despite his

old age and yet in 1.11 Duryodhana orders all to protect only Bhīṣma (*bhīṣmam evābhirakṣantu*). This was a greater error than that of 1.10. This greater error of Duryodhana, put deliberately by Vedavyāsa cannot be eliminated. The old age of Bhīṣma was emphasized in the very next verse 1.12 where he is referred to as *kuruvṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ* “the old kuru, the grandfather.”

Both 1.10 and 1.11 are erroneous as spoken by Duryodhana, but as sentences of Vedavyāsa these state the truth. When Duryodhana introduced the members of the army in verses 1.3-9 he identified them in the modern way as individuals. That is to say that Vedavyāsa depicts Duryodhana in the first chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā* as having a modern individualist outlook. But it is also depicted that in the process of introducing the heroes in the two armies individually, he could not see the institution (organization) that army is, for it was for him a power of individuals collected and protected under one individual (*balaṃ bhīṣmābhirakṣitam, balaṃ bhīmābhirakṣitam*) and yet he expected to win in the forceful settlement of social organization (*saṃgrāmaṃ*), when he had no conception of institutional arrangement of social organization. Yet he expected to win in *yuddha* to create a collective power, under the supremacy and protection of one individual, i.e. Duryodhana himself, when he had no conception of institution that army is. So, in spite of the numerical superiority he realized that behind the smaller power protected by Bhīma, there is something extraordinary in the person of Kṛṣṇa, which Duryodhana had witnessed already, when he tried in vain to arrest Kṛṣṇa when Kṛṣṇa went to Kaurava court with peace mission, which of course he can't fathom as he was blind to the institutional personality of Kṛṣṇa, Duryodhana failed because there was no way he could arrest the person that is institution. He had seen the *tejas*, the capacity of the institutional personality of Kṛṣṇa for impelling and moving people, without understanding or accepting what this personality of Kṛṣṇa is. The author Vedavyāsa puts across this truth through the first error of Duryodhana.

Kṛṣṇa himself represents the abstract person of the institution in general in the *Bhagavadgītā*, and this is represented as divinity (*aiśvarya*) of Kṛṣṇa in the language of the *Bhagavadgītā*. In 11.43 when it was stated regarding the *viśvarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa by Arjuna that ‘(for) your equal exists not; whence another, superior to you, even in the three worlds (you are) imageless manifest-being (being of unequalled/unprecedented influence?’¹⁰ He was rephrasing the Patanjali's definition

of *īśvara*, which as per definition, is unrivalled by any superior or equal power just like the sovereign conceived by Jean Bodin in the beginning of modern period in Europe. But the difference is that in Vedic thought in general and the *Bhagavadgītā* in particular what is unrivalled by any superior or equal power is the abstract institution as person in general and not any human person as it was in Jean Bodin. That's why *aiśvarya* is neither sovereignty of human person nor so-called people's sovereignty, rather it is the sovereignty of imageless (abstract) manifest-being (manifest in existing institution as immanent in it but unmanifest otherwise) of the institution which is person in general. Kṛṣṇa's *aiśvarya*, i.e. sovereignty of Kṛṣṇa as invisible dark institutional personality in general, is one of the central themes of the *Mahābhārata*. The narrative develops the flaw in the character of Duryodhana, which is his opposition to Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva, his blindness to Kṛṣṇa's *aiśvarya*, his blindness to sovereignty (= *aiśvarya*) of *sui generis* institutional person in general that Kṛṣṇa is. But Duryodhana had witnessed Kṛṣṇa's *aiśvarya* when he tried to arrest Kṛṣṇa, but he cannot understand this abstract institution as person in Kṛṣṇa and his *aiśvarya* (=sovereignty), which is the source of strength of the army under the protection of Bhīma. Hence, Duryodhana is afraid of the army protected by Bhīma. It is this unknown fear of Duryodhana that is highlighted by his error in 1.10. Behind the explicit error of Duryodhana is his error of non-recognition of Kṛṣṇa's *aiśvarya*, which is making him fearful enough to commit a different but explicit error. The author Vedavyāsa puts across this truth through the first error of Duryodhana in 1.10. Without the presence and recognition of this error and recognition of what is behind the error in 1.10 there is no question of ever understanding the development of the argument of Vedavyāsa in the *Bhagavadgītā* from the first to last verse.

The error of Duryodhana in verse 1.11 highlights a different but related truth of Vedavyāsa. Duryodhana made his army *bhīṣmābhirakṣitam* (protected by Bhīṣma) in the *yuddha* (battle) precisely because, as mentioned before, he cannot be killed by anybody, as he had the boon from his father to die at his own wish. So, for him *yuddha* (battle) is not *saṃgrāmaṃ*, i.e. forceful settlement of institution. That view he cannot have as *grāmaṃ* (settlement) involves setting up of institutions, but of which Duryodhana has no inkling, as he is modern individualist in outlook. For him *yuddha* (battle) is primarily to kill the recalcitrant opponents to establish the superiority of one's own individual

power to subdue and control all to make them accept the superiority of his power. Since, essence of *yuddha* (battle) for Duryodhana is not *saṃgrāmaṃ*, i.e. forceful right settlement; rather it is killing or getting killed, he is haunted by the fear, despite the knowledge of the boon, that may be Bhīṣma will be killed in the battle and hence, he makes the error of ordering everyone in his army to protect only Bhīṣma. This is the truth regarding Duryodhana that Vedavyāsa highlights through this second error of the former in 1.11.

This is a common error that has led many commentators to claim that the *Bhagavadgītā* justifies killing in battle. For example Ambedkar claims that Krishna offers a philosophic defense of war and killing in war in the *Bhagavadgītā*.¹¹ Vedavyāsa was far sighted enough to take care against such misreading of what he advocates. For him war itself is a practice, but a practice at a limit point, where solidarity and reason of institutional practice is about to break or broken. It is an ambiguous point. So, war is a practice, where every other way of practice like the practice of dialogue has failed, to restore institutional practice. So it has its own *dharma* as practice. Its *dharma*, its essence, and its ideation have nothing to do with killing or being killed. It is an accidental extra added in the situation of war, to the ideation of war. Killing and getting killed is only an accidental contingency in *saṃgrāmaṃ* ‘the forceful right settlement.’ Plato also accepts this point in his *Republic* where he makes Socrates refute Polemarchus by claiming that the justice of war is not in hurting the enemy but in setting enemy right with force.¹² This idea is presented in the *Bhagavadgītā* in the figure of Bhīṣma in the first chapter, who cannot be killed as he is portrayed as someone who can die only if he himself wishes. If essence of war is to kill and be killed, then Bhīṣma being the commander of one army is a logical contradiction in war. What this contradiction is meant to highlight is that killing and be killed, dying and causing death is not the *dharma* of war. In the first chapter itself, the presence of Bhīṣma in the war was underlined through the two errors of Duryodhana as mentioned above. His presence in the war is mentioned thrice by Duryodhana in 1.8, 1.10, and 1.11 as if the author is underlining this fact as relevant to understanding the *Bhagavadgītā*. The author also draws attention of the readers to the old age of Bhīṣma by making Saṃjaya refer to Bhīṣma thrice: in 1.12 as *kuruvṛddha pitāmaḥ* (elderly kuru the grandfather), in 1.25 by name Bhīṣma, and in 1.26 as *pitāmahān* (grandfather). Author wants to emphasize Bhīṣma’s presence in war

even more, so that there is no misunderstanding that Bhīṣma's presence in the war is incongruous if Duryodhana and Arjuna's understanding of the essence of war is taken as correct. So, Arjuna also acknowledges Bhīṣma's presence in war twice in 1.34 as *pitāmahāḥ* (grandfather) and in the beginning of chapter 2 in 2.4 by name. When the presence of Bhīṣma, who can die only if he himself wishes, in war is emphasized it is meant to discount the idea that killing is essential to war or that killing is *dharma* of war. Then what is *dharma* of war? The *dharma* of war is not to kill or harm the opponent, but to set him right by force, to use force to restore practice, to use force to prevent him from breaking the practice. *Yuddha* is *saṅgrāmaṃ*, i.e. forceful settlement. Even when Bhīṣma could not be killed, he could still be forced out of the war for settlement of the issue, but not for settling the scores as mentality of many critiques of the *Bhagavadgītā* makes it out to be. Unless one grasps this second error of Duryodhana, how can a reader ever grasp how the argument of *the Bhagavadgītā* is going to be developed by Vedavyāsa.

7. The Fourth Error

The fourth error presented in the first chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā* is put in the mouth of Arjuna by Vyāsa to indicate how wrong Arjuna is in his argument. The fourth error is present in the verse 1.36: "O Janardana, what delight shall be ours after killing the sons of Dhritasashtra? On killing these felons, sin only will take hold of us."¹³

Vāsiṣṭhasmṛti III. 16 says: "One who sets fire, gives poison, attacks with weapon in hand, plunders the property, dispossessed others of their territory as well as of their women, i.e. does these six are evil-doers *ātatāyinaḥ*." With regard to such a heinous criminal, the *Manusmṛti* VIII, 350-351 says: "Whether he be a teacher, an infant, an old man or a much learned brahmin, if he comes as a criminal (*ātatāyi*), one should kill him without any consideration. There is no sin in killing a criminal (*ātatāyi*)." Now, in the light of the story of the *Mahābhārata*, the Kauravas, had committed not one but all the six heinous crimes. The error of Arjuna is that even when he recognizes the *ātatāyinaḥ* and uses the appropriate term to refer to them and yet he says *pāpam evāśrayed asmān hatvaitān ātatāyinaḥ* "on killing these felons, sin only will take hold of us." The action in which there is no sin he is associating sin.

The error of Arjuna in 1.36 is that where it is appropriate (*dharma*) to kill, i.e. *ātatāyinaḥ*, he is not thinking of killing. This error is deliberately put by Vedavyāsa to highlight and to draw attention of readers to the contrasting error of Arjuna that where it is not appropriate (*dharma*) to associate killing, i.e. with *yuddha* or *saṃgrāmaṃ*, there he is all the time thinking of killing and getting killed. Even though essence of *yuddha* is *saṃgrāmaṃ* ‘forceful right settlement’ and killing or getting killed is not its essence (*dharma*), Arjuna is associating killing and getting killed with *yuddha* just like Duryodhana.

The error of Arjuna in 1.36 is also meant to bring out very erroneous nature of his thinking regarding dharma, his violation of some fundamental principle of activity of thinking per se, which is preventing him from thinking correctly about *dharma*.

8. The Third and the Fifth Errors

The third and the fifth errors deliberately put by Vedavyāsa in the mouth of Arjuna are present hidden in the *Bhagavadgītā* 1.35 and 1.37. In 1.35 Arjuna is speaking to Kṛṣṇa: “These, O slayer of Madhu, even if they kill me, I do not wish to kill, even for the sake of dominion over the three worlds; how much less, for the sake of the earth.”¹⁴ In 1.37 also Arjuna is speaking to Kṛṣṇa: “We had then better not slay our own kinsmen, the sons of Dhritarashtra; for, how can we be happy, O Madhava, after slaying our own people?”¹⁵

In these two verses Arjuna addresses Kṛṣṇa as *Madhusūdana* and *Mādhava* respectively. Both the addresses for Kṛṣṇa in the mouth of Arjuna are erroneous as these are two names of *Viṣṇu* according to *Viṣṇusahasranāmastotram*. There is no story in Indian literature in which Kṛṣṇa ever killed the demon Madhu. It was *Viṣṇu* who killed demons Madhu and Kaitabha. *Viṣṇu* in his Hayagrīva *avatāra*, i.e. manifestation in human form with the head of a horse, had performed this feat. *Sāntiparva* of *Mahābhārata* (XII.335.1-69) states that the demons Madhu and Kaitabha stole the Vedas from Brahmā. *Viṣṇu*, in his manifestation as Hayagrīva, killed them, and retrieved the Vedas. In the above verse under consideration Arjuna addressing Kṛṣṇa as *Madhusūdana* is erroneous as Kṛṣṇa’s identity with *Viṣṇu* is not known to Arjuna yet in the *Bhagavadgītā*, which will be revealed to him in 10.21 when Kṛṣṇa will state: “of the ādityas I am *Viṣṇu*.”¹⁶ Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgītā* did not know about Kṛṣṇa’s previous births till 4.4

where he asks Kṛṣṇa: “Your birth is later, and the birth of Vivasvat was earlier; how am I to understand that you told this Yoga in the beginning?”¹⁷ and was told about previous births of Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavadgītā* not before 4.5. So, Arjuna could not have addressed Kṛṣṇa as *Madhusūdana* in the first chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā* on its own terms and yet the author has made Arjuna address Kṛṣṇa in that way in verse 1.35. Similarly, *Mādhava* along with *Madhusūdana* is also the name or epithet of *Viṣṇu* according to *Viṣṇusahasranāmastotram*. According to Śāṅkarācārya’s commentary on it, *Mādhava* means the Consort (*dhava*) of *Mā*, i.e. Mahālakṣmi. But the correct meaning of *Mādhava* is one who is fit to be known through *Madhu-Vidyā*. Hence, once again without knowing the identity of Kṛṣṇa with *Viṣṇu*, Arjuna could not have used *Mādhava* to address Kṛṣṇa.

In these five verses, where errors are present, what gesture does Vedavyāsa make? Through his gesture Vedavyāsa is giving indication of the erroneous nature of the individualistic power based conception of social formation thought by Duryodhana and also giving indication that the thinking of Arjuna based on tribal social formation and its *dharma* is not tenable any more.

In the *Bhagavadgītā* the two errors made by Duryodhana are deliberately put by Vedavyāsa only to indicate the line of thought not taken by Kṛṣṇa. Duryodhana’s thinking is not engaged in the dialogue by Kṛṣṇa except in chapter 16 briefly and has no further role to play than the negative role of prohibition of the individualist thinking. But the errors of Arjuna are more significant, as Arjuna is the interlocutor in the dialogue with Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna’s erroneous thinking has to be removed by Kṛṣṇa for which Kṛṣṇa is indulging in dialogue with Arjuna to make him participate in the war, which has arrived and in the midst of which Kṛṣṇa finds Arjuna armed and prepared, but suddenly and unexpectedly unwilling to fight due to his erroneous thinking.

Verse 1.35 is ambiguous because of the following reasons. As statement by Arjuna it means “These, O Kṛṣṇa, even if they kill me, I do not wish to kill, even for the sake of dominion over the three worlds; how much less, for the sake of the earth.” But as a composition of Vedavyāsa, this shows some lack in Arjuna, which is making him think of only killing in the war even though the *dharma* of war does not have any essential involvement of killing. And he is not thinking of killing where killing is *dharma*, i.e. killing the felons in the next

verse, i.e. 1.36. Vedavyāsa is giving indication of what Arjuna is lacking by making Arjuna address Kṛṣṇa as *Madhusūdana*.

Apart from meaning destroyer of Madhu *Madhusūdana* is literally one who assents to and promises *madhu*, i.e. the Vedic *madhu vidyā*, which Arjuna lacks and which is now required for Arjuna, which Kṛṣṇa will impart to Arjuna. The Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad II.v.1-19, and the Chāndogya Upaniṣad III 1-5 describe *Madhu-vidyā* or ‘Honey-skill (know-how)’ where the imagery of bees, beehive, honey, and the flower from which the honey comes is described to create the enthusiasm of the self. It is this imagery of bee, beehive and honey, which in later literature, specifically in *pañcarātra* literature developed into a beehive conception of institution as person.

9. Madhu-Vidyā or ‘Honey-skill (or Honey Know-how)’

Arjuna is in need of this *Madhu Vidyā* to recover his self, as he at this stage, i.e. in first chapter, is under the sway of his *ahamkāra*, i.e. ego. The significance of *madhu vidyā* is that it is the skill to make the self of the institution in time (*kāla*) to be present in the heart of all, as is indicated in the *pañcarātra* literature. Madhu Vidyā refers to knowledge of abstract internal as well as external public institution, which is like a beehive. So the specific skill that Arjuna lacks due to Ahamkāra, and which lack is indicated by his erroneous address to Kṛṣṇa as *Madhusūdana*, is the skill of keeping the reflection of the institutional person in the heart and buddhi required for performance of institutional action.

Since Viṣṇu as *Mādhava* is graspable through Madhu Vidyā, Arjuna needs Madhu Vidyā. Since Madhu Vidyā is actually the skill in grasping by *buddhi* the institutional person it is indicated by Vedavyāsa, through the error of Arjuna, that to grasp Viṣṇu by buddhi Arjuna has to have Madhu Vidyā, because from the very beginning of the Vedic literature Viṣṇu is recognized as *yajña puruṣa*, i.e. institution as person. In Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa the expression *yajñō vai viṣṇuh*, i.e. identification of *yajña* with *Viṣṇu*, is repeated not less than 50 times e.g. 1.1.2.13, 5.2.3.6, 5.4.5.1 etc. In Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa 4.2, 1.8, 18.14 and in Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 1.3.4 the identification of *yajña* and *Viṣṇu* is repeated. In the *Bhagavadgītā* Arjuna does not know the identity of Kṛṣṇa as Viṣṇu or *yajña puruṣa*, i.e. institution as person in the first chapter to be able to address him as *Mādhava*. The identification of

yajña, i.e. institution, with Kṛṣṇa will be made known to Arjuna when Kṛṣṇa speaking in first person will say in 9.16: “I am *kratu*, I am *yajña*, I am *svadhā*, I am *aucadhā*, I am *mantra*, Myself the butter, I am fire, I the act of offering.”¹⁸

It is the knowledgeable resolve of a collective institutional person, which is imparted to Arjuna later. *Bhagavatgītā* 13.13-16 confirms this.

Bhagavatgītā 13. 13 says: “With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes and heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere, that exists enveloping all.”¹⁹ This verse is crystallizing the institution as person. This is a description of a corporate institutional person, which incorporates many human beings in it like the bees in the beehive. What the verse 13.13 of the *Bhagavadgītā* is describing is a collectivity, which is institution as person.

The verse 13.14 of the *Bhagavadgītā* says: “Shining by the *guṇas* (strands of *prakṛti*) of all the senses, (yet) without the senses; unattached, yet supporting all; devoid of *guṇas* but enjoyer of *guṇas*.”²⁰ This verse reinforces the conception of institution as person. What it is describing is the functions of the institution as person to further crystallize the idea of institution as person. The institution as person does not have any of the senses as human being as person has. How does the institution as person then manifests with functions/workings/actions of senses? It is because the institution as person manifests with functions/actions of senses without having corporeal senses, the institution as person is called the foremost and greatest person, which surpasses all human persons. Institution in this crystallization is just an arrangement of actions of senses spread over space and time divested of the corporeality of senses, which belong to individual human beings who are members of the institution. According to 13.14 of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the institution as person manifests with functions of senses without having corporeal senses. Hence, the institutional person is *asaktam*, because it does not require *indriyārtha sannikarṣa* to exhibit functions of senses. The *indriyārtha sannikarṣa* or *mātrāsparśa* will take place in the individual human being who is member of the institution, but acquiring of *pramā* through *pramāṇa* will be attributed to the institution as person. The institutional person is *sarvabhṛc* ‘supporting all,’ i.e. ‘filling all.’ The institutional person is *nirguṇam* ‘without strands of *prakṛti* (nature)’ and it is because of this that it has no corporeal senses as these are evolutes of strands of *prakṛti* (nature). But the institution as person

even when devoid of strands of prakṛti (nature), it is *guṇabhoktr* ‘enjoyer of guṇas’ in the sense that it enjoys the functions/actions of *guṇas* as it manifests with functions/actions of senses even without having corporeal senses. Here it must be kept in mind that it is the institution as person, which is *jñeyam* ‘fit to be knowledgeably resolved’ which is being explained.

The verses 13.15-16 of the *Bhagavadgītā* say: “Without and within (all) existents, the unmoving as also the moving, from being subtle that is without being knowledgeably actionably resolved; and far away and near is that, And undivided, yet remaining divided as it were in beings; filler of existents, too is that, fit to be knowledgeably resolved; grasping and properly orienting to generate.”²¹ These verses are presenting the institutional person. So the affirmation and promise of the madhu vidyā indicated by Vedavyāsa through the erroneous address of Arjuna for Kṛṣṇa was fulfilled in the *Bhagavadgītā*.

The western tradition has criticized the beehive conception of society as an advocacy of instinctive stratified static society. But Vedavyāsa developed, without stating it explicitly, the beehive conception of institution as person, taking it over from Śruti and *pañcarātra* texts, without any instinctive static stratification like the system of four-fold *varṇa* and without any essential involvement of static *varṇa dharma* rather developed it based on *śāśvata dharma* so that institution as person is ever manifesting with its changing forms in accordance with *śāśvata dharma* as pointed out earlier. The conception person, which is institution as beehive is developed removing the defect, which later western thinkers thought is present in it, but Vedic thinkers developed the conception of person, which is institution as beehive, in such a way that like beehive it is full of madhu, which is *rasa*, with sweet taste, so that the institution is simultaneously *rāsa līlā*, as recognized in *paurāṇik* literature and *Vaiṣṇava* tradition, so that institutional action becomes mere effortless enjoyable play rather than drudgery of a work. Hence, this *rasa* played an important role in the Vedic *nāṭya śāstra*, which depicted the protagonist (*pātra*) playing his or her institutional role performing institutional action exhibiting various *rasa*, as if collected by various bees from various flowers to be presented through actions on the stage. An attempt will be made to develop the conception of person, which is institution as beehive functioning according to the *śāśvata dharma* as expounded in the *Bhagavadgītā* later.²²

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(Notes)

- ¹ As stated in *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* I. 13, Yāska in Nirukta 1.16 and *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* 2.2.6.
- ² Śāṅkarācārya did not write any commentary on the verses of the first chapter and the first ten verses of the second chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā*. His commentary begins with the 11th verse of the second chapter.
- ³ The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* 1.1.1, 1.1.7, 1.1.39, 1.2.21, 1.3.19 and 1.4.23; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 14.6.11.2 (= *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.2.2) states: *parokṣapriyā iva hi devā bhavanti pratyakṣadviṣaḥ* // “The deities indeed love, as it were, the indirect/mediated [names], and hate the direct/immediate [names].” Cf. *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 3.12.2 also.
- ⁴ The “modern” is an analytic category and not a temporal category for the author, and “individualism” is one of the elements of modern outlook. Hence, for him Protagoras was quite ‘modern’ in his outlook and individualist in his ethico-political views, and so is Duryodhana as depicted by *Vedavyāsa* in *Bhagavadgītā* in particular and *Mahābhārata* in general.
- ⁵ The relations of birth and alliance can characterize both family and a tribe (or clan). The difference in family and tribe is that family as a unit exists with its relations of birth and alliance in a larger society in which other kinds of relations like the relation of citizen with citizen and citizens with their representatives, subjects’ relation to sovereign etc. obtain. But if the entire society is based on only relations of birth and alliance then it is a tribe. The claim is that Arjuna recognized only tribal relations and no other relations and, hence, he was not thinking of family but of tribe.
- ⁶ The similar conclusion was reached by Romila Thapar much earlier on historical consideration of Post Mauryan period. She treats the

Mahābhārata War as a major time marker. It marks the end of an epoch. Kshatriya rulerships are about to make way for the monarchical states of the middle Ganga valley. “The intensive sorrow of the battle at Kurukshetra is not merely at the death of kinsmen but also at the dying society . . .” Thapar (1984): p. 141.

⁷ Ajuna was not standing for the emerging practice. It was Kṛṣṇa who was standing for the emerging social practice. If we follow the narrative of *Mahābhārata* the real conflict was between Duryodhana and Kṛṣṇa to shape the emerging practice.

⁸ Cf. *Kāmhaka Saṃhitā* (the Saṃhitā of kaṭha śākhā) XXXIV.17: 47.16; XXIII.6: 82.13; *Kṛṣṇayajurvedīya Taittirīyasamhitā* II.5.6; *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* III.6.9: 73.14; *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa - Tānya Mahābrāhmaṇa* XVI.1.13; *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa* II.37; *Jaimīniya Brāhmaṇa* I.129,130 (of the *Sāmaveda*). Brian K. Smith writes, “Perhaps the most common image for the sacrifice as vehicle is that which compares the ritual to a chariot (ratha). In Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa the sacrifice is a “chariot of the gods” (devaratha), the introductory and concluding rites the two matching sides: “He who makes them equal to one another, just as one can make a journey as desired by driving a chariot with two sides, so safely he reaches the world of heaven” (7.7). Similarly, the *Agnihotra* sacrifice should be performed after sunrise, according to one authority, so that it will be like a chariot with both wheels: “Day and night are the wheels of the year; truly, with them he goes through the year. If he offers before sunrise, it is as if one were swiftly to make a journey with [a chariot with] both wheels” (Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 5.30).” Smith (1985: p.294. He also gives a note on the same page fn.4: “For the sacrifice as chariot, cf. Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa 16.1.13, where the sacrificial fees (*dakṣiṇās*) are likened to “internal fastenings” (*śleṣmas*); Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa 8.5.16, where the chants (*sāmans*) are said to be “reins” (*rasmi*); Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 2.37, comparing the recitations (*śāstras*) to the “inner reins” (*antara rasmi*); and esp. Jaimīniya Brāhmaṇa 1.129-30, where an elaborate metaphor links the parts of the sacrifice to the parts of a chariot.”

⁹ *aparyāptaṃ tad asmākaṃ balaṃ bhīṣmābhirakṣitam / paryāptaṃ tv idam eteṣāṃ balaṃ bhīmābhirakṣitam // ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu yathābhāgam avasthitāḥ / bhīṣmam evābhirakṣantu bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi //*

¹⁰ *na tvatsamo 'sty abhyadhikaḥ kuto 'nyo; lokatraye 'py apratimaprabhāva*

¹¹ Ambedkar (1987): p 361.

¹² Plato, Republic, 334a ff.

¹³ *nihatya dhārtarāṣṭrān naḥ kā pritiḥ syāj janārdana /pāpam evāśrayed asmān hatvaitān ātatāyinaḥ//*

¹⁴ *etān na hantum icchāmi ghnato 'pi madhusūdana / api trailokyarājyasya hetoḥ kiṃ nu mahikṛte //*

- ¹⁵ *tasmān nārḥā vayaṃ hantuṃ dhārtarāṣṭrān sabāndhavān / svajānaṃ hi kathāṃ hatvā sukhīnaḥ syāma mādhava //*
- ¹⁶ *ādityānām ahaṃ viṣṇur*
- ¹⁷ *aparaṃ bhavato janma paraṃ janma vivasvataḥ / katham etad vijānīyāṃ tvam ādau proktavān iti //*
- ¹⁸ *ahaṃ kratuḥ ahaṃ yajñāḥ svadhāham ahaṃ auṣadham /mantra 'ham ahaṃ evājyāṃ ahaṃ agnir ahaṃ hutam //*
- ¹⁹ *sarvataḥpāṇipādaṃ tat sarvatokṣīśiromukham/sarvataḥśrutimal loka sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati //*
- ²⁰ *sarvendriyaguṇābhāsaṃ sarvendriyavivarjitam /asaktaṃ sarvabhṛc caiva nirguṇaṃ guṇabhokṛ ca //*
- ²¹ *bahir antaś ca bhūtānām acaraṃ caram eva ca /sūkṣmatvāt tad avijñeyaṃ dūrasthaṃ cāntike ca tat //avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthītam /bhūtabharṭṛ ca taj jñeyaṃ grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca //*
- ²² The present author presented a paper entitled “Dharma in The Bhagavadgītā” in a National Seminar on The Concept of Value in the Contemporary Perspective, organized by Centre for Advanced Study, Department of Philosophy, University of Allahabad, Allahabad-211002, February 21-22, 2015, wherein he has argued that it is generally believed that *Bhagavadgītā* offers a philosophic defence of *varṇa dharma* but this is an unfounded believe and has shown that *Bhagavadgītā* advocates *śāśvata/sāttvata dharma*, which is distinct and different from *varṇa dharma* and this *śāśvata/sāttvatadharmā* was elaborated extensively in that paper. Also Cf. Agarwala (2016).

Quest for Academic Autonomy and the Making of Public Intellectuals: Some Reflections on Martha Nussbaum's Humanity Project

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Abstract

The institution of public intellectualism in the democratic societies has been a great 'conscience-creator and shaper.' First, Public Intellectualism helps in consolidating the local aspirations and beliefs that guides the society and political society to 'govern' constructively. Secondly, it helps to bring changes in the 'non-accommodative' attitudes and aspirations of people and establishes an 'informed-debate' over the issues of common-concern.

The paper aims to examine Martha Nussbaum's efforts to overcome the crises of humanity as explicated in her two seminal texts – *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) & *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010). Nussbaum asserts that science and technology can lead a

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democratic country to economic advancement; but to make it qualitative and comprehensive living, it is imperative to create a decent world culture which is possible by extensive study of humanities.

The last section of the paper attempts to critically evaluate the functioning of 'public-intellectualism' in India in recent past. The research method used in the paper is qualitative, normative and historical in nature.

Key Words: Public Intellectual, Higher Education, Humanities, Integrated Learning, Tolerance.

I

Since the past few decades, there has been an immense debate over the characteristics of intellectuals and the kind of roles performed by them in both academic and public sphere. Despite the claims of their different and distinctive categories, most of the critics agree that intellectuals strive to bring changes in the society by means of critical discourses or active participation in revolutionary movements. The role of an intellectual, as an agent of change in public sphere, is a product of the discourse of enlightenment. The enlightenment project is an enquiry into the truth about nature, man, and society for the progress of mankind. This belief mobilizes a public intellectual to take up the task of "transformation of consciousness by the dispelling of prejudice and the spread of theoretical truth." (Crick 128). This paper offers an inquiry into the discourse of academic autonomy for the contemporary intellectuals in Martha Nussbaum's humanity project.

In the bio-bibliographical introduction of Nussbaum in Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism, a noted characteristic of her writing has been pointed out which asseverates that she "differs from many contemporary theorists in the accessibility of her writing. She deploys philosophical concepts without jargon, determined to convey to a general readership how theory contributes to making a good society." (Leitch 2304). Most of the theorists are obscure in their writing, and hence, their discourses are limited to the interest-field of a few experts who specialize in that domain and can reciprocate. It becomes difficult for lay persons to understand their conceptual frameworks and writings. Nussbaum, on the other hand, is more lucid in her analysis and is palatable to commoners (here 'commoners' refers to those common people who do not theorize as opposed to the so-called 'intellectuals'). These two dichotomous positions of intellectuals i.e. 'intellectual for intellectual' and 'intellectual for commoner' impel the introducer to

represent Nussbaum as the one who pulls out philosophical thought out of the academic realm and brings it to public domain. In order to communicate to commoners, she renders her intellectual discourse in plain language through mundane and quotidian illustrations and references. Doubtless to say, what propels this classification of intellectuals is the usage of rhetoric that makes a discourse comprehensible (or incomprehensible!) in the public domain. This brings us to another important question pertaining to the role of rhetoric in an intellectual discourse – to what extent can rhetoric be justified? Rhetoric is justified so long as it aims at persuading the target audience and reacts to a specific situation i.e. rhetorical situation which is defined as “the nature of those contexts in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse.” (Bitzer 1). This essay, therefore, seeks to argue that Nussbaum’s project to reinstate the humanity programs from their peripheral status across universities and schools is both persuasive and responsive to a critical situation which is both ‘rhetorical’ and ‘philosophical.’ The latter term is an extension of Bitzer’s ‘rhetoric situation’ by Crick. By raising a question: “whether philosophers, scientists, or artists merely reflect qualities of their situations or whether they act as agents of change,” Crick examines two positions of Richard Rorty who on the one hand suggests ‘leftist academics’ to give away with theory and participate actively in class struggle and on the other hand, advocates pragmatism “that would treat theory as an aid to practice” (134). Adhering to the latter position of Rorty, Crick conceptualizes the notion of “philosophical situation” which takes Bitzer’s idea of ‘rhetorical situation’ to a much wider setting and all the three considerations i.e. exigence, constraints, and audience as espoused by Bitzer are recontextualized in a broader sphere of philosophical situation:

First, an exigence is no longer limited to a particular event in a restricted time and place, such as Roosevelt’s reaction after Pearl Harbour, but expands to include problems that face an entire culture within historical time, such as Dewey’s long-term effort to construct a working ideal of democratic life. Second, constraints are likewise broadened from specific persons, events, objects, and relations to include things like public institutions, governing bodies, religious beliefs, economic relations, historical forces, communal norms, and ethnic identities... the important qualities of a public (audience) are the habits of thought and behaviour it relies upon to maintain community life and confront problems when they arise. (Crick 134)

Crick thus in formulating his theory of philosophical situation offers a comprehensive insight of the possible role of a public intellectual. He asserts that public intellectual addresses the socio-historical problems faced by public and responds to his philosophical situation “by producing a work that conceptualizes and provides direction for solving longstanding and pervasive problems and are then successful in helping change the habits and practices of a public”(138). However, there is an epistemological difference in the way rhetoric is mediated by the intellectuals. Though both rhetoric and philosophical situations follow persuasion model to bring change, the former is practiced at macro level and the latter attempts to incite the micro level persuasion.

Another explanation of intellectuals which Edward Said posits in his *The Representations of an Intellectual* assigns them much larger responsibilities:

The attempt to hold to a universal and single standard as a theme plays an important role in my account of the intellectual. Or rather the interaction between universality and the local, the subjective, the here and now. (xiii)

Said’s idea of universality and its relation with local matters offers a broader definition of the nature of intellectuals for whom seeing beyond the obvious is equally important as responding to any critical situation. They must interrogate the implicit issues like the spirit of nationalism, ideology of corporates and ruling parties, and prejudiced behaviour towards a particular class, race, caste, gender or community that are generally hidden beneath the surface of specific situations. Thus an intellectual, in questioning covert issues, strives to adhere to universal principals which proclaim that “all human beings are entitled to expect decent standards of behaviour concerning freedom and justice, and that deliberate or inadvertent violations of these standards need to be testified and fought against courageously” (Said 12-13). The seminal prerequisites of freedom and justice for living a decent life necessitate any intellectual to participate in a kind of struggle to challenge the hegemonic structures in a society. In order to substantiate this argument, Said turns to Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist, who classifies the two types of intellectuals – ‘traditional’ and ‘organic.’ In the ‘traditional’ category, Gramsci puts teachers, priests and administrators who have a tendency to compromise with their existing environment and “continue to do the same things from generation to generation” (Said 4). The organic intellectuals, on the other hand, actively participate in the society as an agent of change. Such transformations are made possible through

their dynamic engagement in the spheres of both production and distribution of knowledge, which albeit, is facilitated by power and control acquired by them as representatives of specific groups or institutions. Said argues that such intellectuals' enterprises are conditioned by the survival of such groups and institutions in a given period of time. "As the institutions either rise or fall in ascendancy, so too do their organic intellectuals" (67).

This brings to the fore Said's classification of public intellectuals (individual) as professional and amateur. At the core of this attempt lies an urgent need of autonomous intellectual who can work independently without succumbing to the academic, institutional and political pressures that impose restrictions on organic intellectuals. However, Said's account of professional intellectuals defies this very notion of autonomy by representing them as 'uncontroversial,' 'unpolitical' and 'objective' (74). This is possible only in the event of adopting a neutral attitude by public intellectuals when, in reality, they are expected to challenge the accepted norms or conventions for the sake of humankind. Said, in expounding the professional behaviour of intellectuals, describes four kinds of pressures that challenge the 'ingenuity' and 'will' of intellectuals, namely specialization (in one's domain of knowledge), expertise (certified by authority), and inevitable drift towards power and authority in its adherents. These pressures have decisively led intellectuals to a state of insensitivity to pressing issues of our time. As a counter to this professional attitude of intellectuals which fail to overcome the selfish motif of rewards and profits, the notion of 'amateur' intellectual is advanced by Said:

The intellectual today ought to be an amateur, someone who considers that to be a thinking and concerned member of a society one is entitled to raise moral issues at the heart of even the most technical and professionalized activity as it involves one's country, its power, its mode of interacting with its citizens as well as with other societies (82-83).

Said's vision of amateurs evokes a much larger responsibility for intellectuals which is not merely confined to the conventional role assigned to them (i.e. reacting to a particular event or a situation) but goes beyond by making them act in accordance with the moral and ethical demands of our own time. This also engenders a significant debate between the 'method' and the 'end' of the public discourse. As has been stated earlier that the discourse of some intellectuals is too vague to be understood, and hence, it gets relegated to the periphery of

public domain. This might be the case because of their over-emphasis on the method rather than the larger goal of being accessible to the wide range of people. Amateur intellectuals are more interested in the ends rather than the complex methods as their discourses, which essentially incorporate the moral attitude in professional behaviours and for this very reason, aim to reach the masses unambiguously for fruitful rendering of their ideas.

Another role of public intellectual can be perceived in Alcoff's proposition of three models of public intellectuals: permanent critic or Socratic gadfly, popularizing intellectual and public theorist. By permanent critic or Socratic gadfly model, Alcoff means a kind of intellectual for whom the "only way to retain credibility is to be incessantly critical" (525). The other extreme model 'public theorist' includes an intellectual who is capable of doing theory in public domain. Quoting Foucault's example of his concept of discipline as the principle mode of political control and his analysis of power structures in society, Alcoff asserts that "intellectuals should be theorists and critics who are simultaneously engaged in teaching and learning" (533). Between these two extremes, Alcoff puts popularizing model of intellectuals who take theory or knowledge which is produced in academic sphere out and places it before the masses in simple and comprehensible manner as opposed to nuanced and ambiguous academic discourse. In order to substantiate her position, she cites an example of Nussbaum's *Cultivating Humanity* by referring to her book as "more accessible treatise that makes an educational and ethical case for multicultural curricular reform, using contemporary classroom examples combined with considerations drawn from Nussbaum's scholarly area of expertise in ancient Greek philosophy" (529).

Nussbaum's project on humanity can be discerned as an attempt of a public intellectual who not only reacts to a critical situation which she refers to as a time of "the silent crisis" because of the drastic negligence of liberal arts courses and programmes in universities and schools across the globe but also acts as an amateur, in Said's term, by advancing a more profound and decisive role of humanities in inculcating democratic values in humans as the citizens of the world. Needless to say, Nussbaum's erudite scholarship and her diversified interest areas like moral philosophy, law, public policy, international development and literature are key instruments in rendering such an influential critique of present-day attitude towards humanities programmes and reinforcing the capabilities like critical thinking, approaching world problems as a

cosmopolitan citizen and sympathetic imagination of the predicament of 'others' to create a decent environment for living.

II

In a 2004 article "A Manifesto for the Humanities in a Technological Age," authors perceive a significant downfall of humanities programmes and hold universities responsible for their unremitting interests in material gains which have led to the imbalance between professional courses and that of liberal arts. Another article which was published in 2010 in the same magazine offers a more point-blank question: "Can the Humanities Survive the 21st Century?" The anxiety of the author in raising this question is so deepened that what follows is an appalling and eye-opening claim:

What has happened is that the center of gravity at almost all universities has shifted from the humanities that the most pertinent answer to the question "Will the humanities survive in the 21st century?" is not "yes" or "no," but "Who cares?" (Donoghue, 2010)

It is this predicament of humanities in present scenario that Martha Nussbaum is impelled to address as "the silent crisis." In her book "Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs Humanities," she calls for the attention of all (be they academicians, policy makers, students or anyone else who cares for education) to the unwanted precipitation of such crisis as she remarks:

We are in the midst of a crisis of massive proportions and grave global significance. No, I do not mean the global economic crisis... I mean a crisis that goes largely unnoticed, like a cancer, a crisis that is likely to be, in the long-run, far more damaging to the nature of democratic self-government: a worldwide crisis in education (Nussbaum 1-2).

One of the factors responsible for this crisis, as Nussbaum avers, is an arrant negligence of the skills that are prerequisites for the survival of a healthy democracy. Policy makers' sole focus is the pursuit of short-term gains which they can obtain by introducing applied skills perfectly suitable for the making of profit. As a result, humanities and arts which are considered as 'useless frills,' are rapidly replaced by so called applied skills in the curriculum across US and abroad. Concomitantly, such reforms have drastically affected the mindset of parents and children who feel that a degree in liberal arts cannot bring

them enough financial security as promised by professional programmes. Nussbaum envisages this crisis as a potential threat to the future of democratic countries and warns:

If this trend continues, nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's sufferings and achievements. The future of the world's democracy hangs in the balance (Not for Profit 2).

What lies at the center of this threat is Nussbaum's critique of material attitude of nations in their pursuit of economic growth and total dismissal of those qualities that "connect person to world in a rich, subtle, and complicated manner." (Not for Profit 6). The desire for material advancement which is closely tied with the gross national product per capita calls for a crucial role of science and technology in the development of a nation? Nussbaum makes a point here by arguing that though one should not have any objection to either of these two goals that nations aspire in order to develop; other skills which largely emanate from the discipline of humanity and which are equally important should not be given out at any cost in the process of economic growth. The reason why such skills should not be discarded, as stated by Nussbaum lies in the vital role they play in shaping the democratic future of a nation and in creating "a decent world culture capable of constructively addressing the world's most pressing problems" (Not for Profit 7).

The skills or abilities which Nussbaum suggests for the cultivation of humanity include: the ability for critical self-examination and thinking critically about one's own society, culture and tradition; the ability to approach the problems of the world as a cosmopolitan citizen; the ability to empathize with others and understand their predicaments as one's own. Such abilities help an individual transcend the local matters and face the problems as a citizen of the world. In order to develop such abilities in individuals; Nussbaum proposes several changes in the curriculum in both school and university level of education across the globe. However, the changes which she suggests are not fully related to the subject matter but to the method of teaching and learning which needs to be refurbished in order to be evolved as a citizen of the world. Nussbaum, in substantiating her thesis of curricular change, takes the help of classical thinkers and educationists who emphasized on such reforms in past and are relevant to modern democracies as well. By

reflecting upon the works of Plato, Diogenes, Cicero, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Alcott, Mann, Dewey, Tagore and Winnicott; Nussbaum not only offers a critical appraisal of present day education model which demands a significant alteration but also undertakes an exhaustive study of certain colleges and universities of US where proposed reforms in curriculum and pedagogy are already in vogue.

These abilities, as stated above, belong to liberal arts courses and therefore Nussbaum insists universities and policy makers to pay equal attention to them. The first ability which is mentioned as critical self-examination refers to Socratic way of 'examined life':

This means a life that accepts no belief as authoritative simply because it has been handed down by tradition or become familiar through habit, a life that questions all beliefs and accepts only those that survive reason's demand for consistency and for justification. Training this capacity requires developing to reason logically, to test what one reads or says for consistency of reasoning, correctness of fact, and accuracy of judgment (Cultivating Humanity 9-10).

Socratic mode of thinking allows pupils to question everything they perceive and not accept anything which is not logically justified. This emphasizes the role of Philosophy in the intellectual growth of an individual as logic and reasoning are the core components of Philosophy discipline. Socratic inquiry aims to unveil the layers of ignorance for the establishment of truth and justice. However, in a system where students are supposed to regurgitate the text books in order to pass an exam or qualify for a selection process for higher education, Socratic model turns out to be a myth only. Here, obviously, the context is Indian education system which offers no scope of self-reflexivity for learners which is possible through the critical examination of 'self' and 'other.' They are not encouraged to think in an alternative or unconventional way because it cannot lead them to score good grades or percentiles in their exams. Moreover, teachers also are not ready to move beyond their traditional realm of pedagogy as noted by Nussbaum:

Notice that part of the issue is content, and part is pedagogy. Curricular content has shifted away from material that focuses on enlivening imagination and training the critical faculties toward material that is directly relevant to test preparation. Along with the shift in content has come an even more baneful shift in pedagogy; away from teaching that seeks to promote questioning and individual responsibility toward force-feeding for good exam results (Not for Profit 134).

Socratic examination method, on the other hand, requires a deeper level of commitment from teachers by paying close attention on each and every individual; who also, in turn, must ensure an active participation in the class. Thus, it goes without saying that in order to introduce Socratic model of thinking in the present educational system, the entire structure as it exists now needs to be radically reconstructed. Moreover, as Nussbaum notes, Socratic argument is challenged by two powerful opponents: conservatives and postmodernists. While conservative opposition holds a skeptical attitude, suspecting that such an argument may subvert the traditional values; postmodernists reject the whole notion of truth and objectivity which Socratic argument aims for. Such oppositions against Socratic argument apparently decelerate the efforts to bring change in the system. However, having refuted both the claims, Nussbaum insists that Socratic argument is a necessary tool to get away with prejudices and secure justice for every individual.

The ability to approach the pressing problems of our time as a citizen of the world comes second in Nussbaum's vision for the cultivation of humanity. She lists certain problems viz. economic, environmental, religious and political which are faced by almost all the nations of the world and hence cosmopolitan in their scope. She argues that such problems can be addressed only when one is able to surpass one's local loyalties and think in a global context. Therefore, Nussbaum calls for all the schools, colleges, and universities of the world to "cultivate in students the ability to see themselves as members of a heterogeneous nation" (Not for Profit 80). To train people as members of a pluralistic culture, it is required to sensitize them to the history and character of the diversity of individuals, groups, and communities of one's own nation as well as those that exist outside. Such training will have two fold advantages: first, it will nurture an attitude of mutual respect between/among citizens, and second, they will be able to develop a sensitive and empathetic belief towards the other religions, nations, genders, class, and cultures which they are not the part of. Nussbaum proposes several reforms in the curriculum for the inculcation of world citizenship attitude by asking for "the construction of basic required courses of a "multicultural" nature; the infusion of diverse perspectives throughout the curriculum; support for the development of more specialized elective courses in areas connected with human diversity; and, finally, attention to the teaching of foreign languages, a part of the multicultural story that has received too little emphasis." (Cultivating Humanity 70).

The third ability i.e. to empathize with others can be conceived of as an extension of world citizenship attitude. The spirit of mutual respect and capacity to recognize others naturally brings in the feeling of empathy as well. Nussbaum posits that such capability is made possible through the 'narrative imagination' provided by the disciplines like literature and art. One important reason why Nussbaum turns to literature and arts for the cultivation of humanitarian capabilities is that they provide alternative ways of understanding reality. The complex human situations and characters that are difficult to be observed and predicted in real life are easily made perceptible and hence comprehensible in literature through the narrative imagination it offers. What is central here to the argument of Nussbaum is Aristotle's famous claim that literature shows us "not something that has happened but the kind of things that might happen." (Cultivating Humanity 92).

Not only that narrative imagination simplifies the complicated human nature in real world but also helps to develop a more sophisticated and non-parochial approach to 'other' persons. The quintessential example here is, Nussbaum's rendering of a nursery rhyme 'twinkle twinkle little star' which she considers as a beginning of the story telling. It does not generate a feeling of fear or disgust for other entities like a star or any other creature but rather creates a kind of curiosity and desire to know more about 'others.' This feeling of wonder connects children with their inner life against the material world they are part of which in turn develops a spirit of compassion:

Narrative imagination is an essential preparation for moral interaction. Habits of empathy and conjecture conduce to a certain type of citizenship and a certain form of community: one that cultivates a sympathetic responsiveness to another's needs and understands the way circumstances shape those needs, while respecting separateness and privacy (Cultivating Humanity 90).

Thus, arts and literature enact a pivotal role in framing a civic imagination which propels the citizens to act in accordance with democratic values. While tragedies make them vulnerable to the kind of misfortunes they might face in future, they also learn the lessons of sufferings which are essential for their future participation in politics. One who is able to make sense of the sufferings of others will not use them as object of manipulation and instead build up an environment of compassionate coexistence with fellow citizen.

However, in conceiving the multicultural trend in literature which refers to a proper recognition of the diversity of humans and cultures,

Nussbaum observes the emergence of an anti-humanist view – ‘identity politics’ which she alarmingly declares as dangerous for the democratic values of any nation. ‘Identity Politics’ as she avows, is a rapidly growing approach that gives preference to one’s own (local) group be it religious, ethnic or based on class, gender or sexuality over the notion of world citizenship. Nussbaum claims that much teaching of literature in current academy is instigated by this very ideology of identity politics thereby ignoring the mutual human requirements and concerns that provide the basis of compassion and respect. The prime goal of identity politics is to present the citizen group as a “market place of identity-based interest groups” who strives to achieve power positions and perceives difference as a kind of attitude which needs to be affirmed rather than understood as Nussbaum comments:

An especially damaging consequence of identity politics in the literary academy is the belief, which one encounters in both students and scholars, that only a member of a particular oppressed group can write well or, perhaps, even read well about the group’s experience. Neither individuals or groups are perfect in self-knowledge, and a perceptive outsider may sometimes see what a person immersed in an experience fails to see (Cultivating Humanity 111).

This observation of Nussbaum clearly states that such practices only increase the ideological gaps between/among groups leading to more conflicts and battles. Instead, literature and arts should be instruments of reading diverse cultures and their complexities for the fuller understanding of fellow humans who coexist with us. Thus, all the three abilities discussed above are essential for a sound democratic culture. However, Nussbaum notes that nowadays, there is an increased popularity of vocational courses in universities and schools that aim to develop the professional skills of undergraduates and graduates in order to ensure better jobs. The rise of ‘vocationalism’ has significantly reduced the liberal arts courses which is not a good sign for future democracy. that a quality life requires a fine balance of vocational skills and humanitarian abilities.

III

Considering the argumentative analysis in the last two parts of the paper, it seems imperative to get back to the basic research questions this paper tries to problematize. In the modern neoliberal times when the idea of citizenship also imbibes the transformation of human beings

as 'human resource,' it becomes imperative to look back to choose the future prudently. In such times when states are the economic guardians of the interests of the capitalists, one must not forget the prospective implications of the adoption of the belief of 'transformation of the social being into economic being.' Liberal states have, generally and globally, agreed upon the fact to give primacy to economic development and claim that economic development is a pre-requisite to socio-cultural development, and social justice at large as well. This claim needs a close inquiry. How far these claims could prove, particularly in developing nations like India and Brazil, that the economic reform process could substantially prove itself as a panacea to social ills and helped in the eradication of poverty and human miseries. In this context, Martha Nussbaum's extensive explanation in support of cultivating humanities deserves to receive a considerable thought.

Universities in India, in the name of modern education system, have adopted the courses that have a capacity to be run as 'self-financed courses.' These self-financed courses come mostly from those areas of study which guarantee employment. And this reversed the situation in university system in India where one hardly finds the proactive presence of the departments of Humanities, Social Science and Languages, especially in the newly established (including the private UGC-recognized) universities. The modes of research in such universities have also undergone a deleterious transformation. Normative research got a back seat and empiricism is appreciated. Old departments of humanities, social science and languages in the state or central universities are searching for good students. But, unfortunately all this is continuing and remains as an unattended problem. University authorities consider that it's the socio-economic change that took place with the opening up of Indian market that is responsible for it, and they hardly can do anything in this regard.

How to deal with it? Is there any need to revive the sense of relevance of humanities subjects in the post-modern contemporary times? Have these subjects the capacity to contribute to human empowerment in this so-called post-human, post-truth world? All these complex questions necessitate a series of serious debates and discussions. How far the growing insensitivity towards social values is conducive to bring about a healthy community life can be reduced and removed through the meaningful dissemination of such subjects of humanities in university set-up requires an urgent re-look. In what ways can a harmonious human growth be attained? Nussbaum, in her Humanities

Project, deals with such questions and relates it to the role and utility of humanities in preparing good public intellectuals that would work as a catalyst to social justice in any given society.

Ramchandra Guha an influential public intellectual of present-day India claims that the Right in India has no intellectuals worth mentioning, even though it is the Right-wing political party that is in power (1). In this narrative, Guha tries to indicate the inherent relationship between intellectuals and power-structures. As Congress dominated the power-position in India, it also settled the intellectual discourse for a long time. But, to Guha there seems no intellectual in sight from the Right wing. Guha has been an eminent public intellectual of India with a sharp understanding of issues around. It seems that Guha's comments are merely journalistic as they are not well researched revelling only in gross generalizations and simplicisms without showing any attempt on his part to apply objective critical insights to hegemony exerted by either the Right or the Left or the Congress. Guha in his write-up takes another critically untenable position by proposing and concluding, again without logic, that it may be a failure of 'patronizing of intellectuals' by the Right-wing party in power but there is no dearth of Right-wing intellectuals in India. But even a public intellectual like Guha, at times, may make errors of interpretation, or self-consciously misinterpret the public issues. It cannot, however, be gainsaid that public intellectuals, like Guha and many others, have been successful in bringing the 'critical thinking' mode to social explanations. Irrespective of this contribution by such intellectuals, due to their limited readership, Indian situation is quite peculiar in this sense. This brings the public intellectual debate to another plane where one may ask a rather uncomfortable question – Can the personalities, myths, morals and the issues confronting the growing middle class be considered the cornucopia of 'public-intellectualism' in India? Intellectuals have this tendency to appropriate this terrain of personalities and myths, morals, mores and middle-class-realities. All is grist that comes to the mills of public intellectualism in India!

Romila Thapar, in her recent take on public intellectualism denounced the Right in bringing down the level and integrity of 'public-debate' in India in the last twenty years specially. To her, academia has been a responsible institution for such downfall. Indian university system is conducted on the ideological lines and this led to such a downfall of intellectual public debate in India. She alleges the governments in general and the current government in particular is interfering in setting the

course structure for universities in India. This, according to her, took place on ideological lines. Here it seems that Thapar becomes the victim of her own intellectual exposition. It has been the left that dominated the intellectual discourse and academia in general in India after the independence till now. She herself has been the member of the various such committees that directly and indirectly influences the university curricula. One may wonder as to how this interference could be allowed considering the prominent presence of academic leaders and intellectuals like Thapar herself! Governments do play with the education systems. But, it cannot sustain if the intellectual dissemination has been a profound process in academia. Many intellectuals were found political in their intellectual functions and failed the possibility to establish 'public-intellectual' debate in India. Amartya Sen, to a great sense, could reach to appeal this 'public-debate;' otherwise academia could not penetrate his intellectual rigor and become the victim of its own trajectories. Martha Nussbaum's thesis on public intellectual debate deals with the issue from a Western perspective and leaves enough space 'unexplained' in Indian case of public intellectualism. Here, in India, institutions, processes and personalities of past that reflect a relationship between intellectualism and public good have always been timeless and are still followed and debated.

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Configuring Kibithoo as an Entrepot in India-China Border Trade

Jajati K. Pattnaik*

Introduction

Border is the gateway to growth and development in the trajectory of contemporary economic diplomacy. It is a new mode of interaction which entails de-territorialized economic cooperation and free trade architecture thereby making the spatial domain of territory secondary in the global economic relations. Taking a cue from this, both India and China looked ahead to revive their old trade routes in order to restore cross-border ties traversing beyond their political boundaries.

The reopening of Nathula¹ trade route was realised as a catalyst in generating trust and confidence between India and China. Subsequently, the success of Nathula propelled the academia, policy makers and the civil society to rethink the model in the perspective of Arunachal Pradesh as well. So, the question automatically arises here should we apply this cross-border model in building up any entrepot in Arunachal Pradesh? In this context, Kibithoo² which has immense potentiality is configured as an entrepot in India-China border trade based on historical as well as geoeconomic and strategic considerations.

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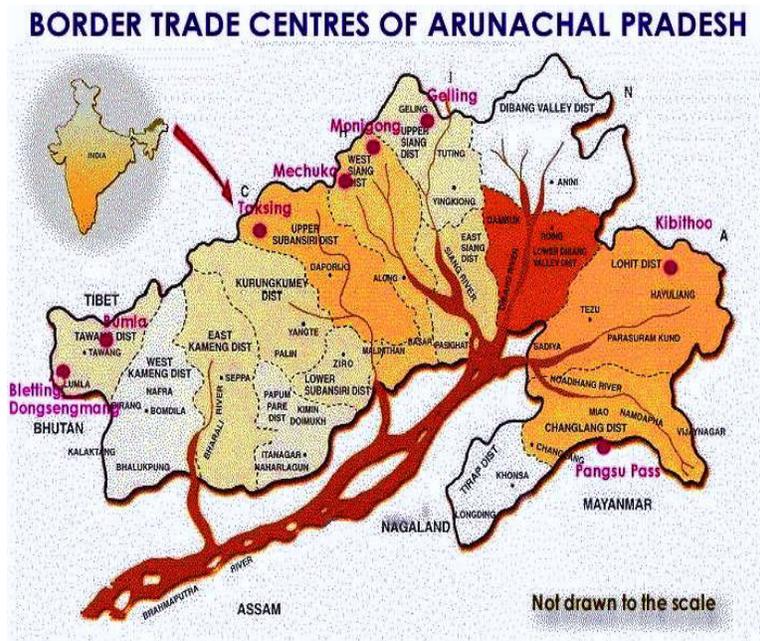
Historical Backdrop

Kibithoo was a natural passage between Tibet and India's North East Frontier Tract³ during the British colonial period. The Mishmi tribes of upper Lohit had regular trade links with the Zayul district of Tibet. The Mishmis carried musk ponds, hides, skins, furs, Mishmi coats, loincloths, barks and roots for dyes and drugs-getheon (an odoriferous root), manjeet (madder) and Mishmi teeta in lieu of cattle, brass-pipes, gongs, wollen goods, copper vessels and beads for ornaments from Tibet. Similarly, Tibetans also paid regular visits to Lohit to procure and barter their goods with the Mishmis, Zakhrings and Meyors (Choudhury 1978). It was quite well known that other tribes such as Monpas, Nyishis, Galos, Adis, Mishmis, Membas and Khembas living in the North Eastern Frontier Tract had also booming trade relations with Tibet.

The 1962 war brought fissures in Sino-Indian relations and as a consequence, the cross-border trade went in total oblivion. However, the changing contours of global economic order in the recent past drove both India and China to accord primacy to free trade and connectivity, thereby making the territorial space secondary in their bilateralism. In this context, the reopening of Kibithoo route was thought necessary in order to establish the old ties and reconnect the lost linkages.⁴ As Shantanu Kri, Chief Editor of a local weekly, The Lohit Mirror observed, 'It is time to open the curtain. The reopening of Kibithoo route shall not only enhance the economic cooperation between the two neighbours but it shall provide an opportunity to both sides to understand the social, political and cultural values of the people more passionately. It might also pave the way to improve mutual trust between the two countries. India and China are the world's most populated nations. Both of them are beset with inherent problems like unemployment, poverty, inequality, illiteracy and poor health care in their respective borderlands. Opening the borders for trade could be an important tool to alleviate poverty in the underdeveloped regions of both the borderlands.'⁵

Thus, lifting the artificial barrier will definitely benefit both the countries economically considering that both the countries have good roads upto the borders. India has the advantage of favourable

geographical condition for trade than its counterpart. The region is also peaceful and does not have any underground outfits to sabotage the trade link. Therefore, India should consider reopening Kibithoo as a vital trade route without prejudging the circumstances.⁶



Map of Border Trade Locations, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
Source: <http://aruntrade.gov.in/html/btcmap.htm>

Geo-Economic Importance

Kibithoo is important from geo-economic perspective being most conveniently placed in the entire Himalayan mountain range. It is situated at an altitude of 4,070 feet above sea level as compared to Nathula Pass which lies at an altitude of 14,400 feet above sea level. Even in Arunachal Pradesh, low elevated mountain range of Kibithoo enjoys geo-economic advantages over Bumla, Taksing, Mechuka, Monigong

and Gelling to be developed as an all weather road corridor to Tibet Autonomous Region, Sichuan and Yunnan of China.⁷ Kibithoo as an entrepot will be as useful as Nathula pass because this route will provide not only access to Tibet but also to Yunnan as well. This route has greater potential than Nathula, thereby reducing distance to Kunming which is at the heart of China's southward bridgehead stratagem.⁸ Thus, India and China should at first develop Kibithoo-Kunming highways and then undertake developing Stilwell Road (Ledo- Nampong – Shindbuiyang-Bhamo – Muse-Ruili and Kunming) and BCIM Highways (Kolkata-Dhaka-Sylhet-Silchar-Moreh-Tamu-Mandalay-Muse-Ruili and Kunming). India should expand multiple trade routes along different Highways in order to tap the Southwestern and Western Chinese markets.⁹

Kibithoo as an entrepot would be more beneficial in terms of land connectivity corridors as compared to the Stilwell road.¹⁰ On the other, if Kibithoo entrepot project is taken up, then it would provide shorter and faster access to the Indian industries to tap the South western and South Eastern Chinese markets, and it would create adequate space for the emergence of industrial clusters i.e. Guwahati- Tezpur- Jorhat-Dibrugarh-Tinsukia Digboi- Margherita in Assam; Dimapur, Kohima and Mokokchung in Nagaland and Itanagar- Ruksin- Pashighat- Roing- Tezu- Hawaii in Arunachal Pradesh. As Lt. General John Mukherjee (Retd.) of the Eastern Command, said: 'Tezu – Hayuliang – Walong – Dichhu pass – Rima is the shortest route to mainland China and offers tremendous potential to both Look and Act East for the entire region provided the Indian Government wishes to do so.'¹¹ Portraying a comparative perspective, he observed that 'the Stilwell Road has only limited potential and that too only with Myanmar – there is also the necessity to resolve the insurgency on both the Indian and Myanmar sides of the border failing which movement would not be feasible. Further, the Government needs to open Bomdila, Asafila/ Longju, Manigong, and Gelling routes for cross-border trade in due course of time. The bottle neck to opening the routes is the bad relations with China, border disputes and permission of both Governments.'¹²

Kibithoo as an Entrepot would provide easy access to National Waterway II¹³ (Sadiya-Pandu-Dhubri) route on the river Brahmaputra and the latter would be highly beneficial in terms of cost efficiency for the movement of cargo and coverage of distance as compared to the road corridors. Sadiya is only 345 kilometers from Kibithoo and the

cargo from Lower as well as Upper Assam can be transhipped through Dhubri-Pandu-Sadiya inland route and then be transported through Tezu- Hayuliang –Walong- Kibithoo land route on its way to Rima, Chengdu and Kunming in China. It is quite pertinent to mention here that India's longest road bridge - Dhola- Sadiya (Bhupen Hazarika Setu)¹⁴ could be a game changer in India's cross-border trade vis-à-vis China as a major transport corridor connecting the eastern region of Arunachal Pradesh with that of Upper Assam.¹⁵ The 'historic' opening of the Dhola-Sadiya bridge has given a ray of hope to the people of Arunachal Pradesh in general and the people of the districts of Lower Dibang Valley and Dibang Valley in particular. This is one of the major developments of the Government of India's initiative of 'Act East Policy.' These districts of Arunachal have already had the taste of investment of corporate houses in hydro-power and related infrastructures. They are hoping for such major investments by other corporate houses soon to bring in development."¹⁶

He also added: "In general, the development has broken the myth that the Government of India is reluctant to develop Arunachal Pradesh considering the nature of its relationship with China. Optimistically, it is a positive sign for both the countries to cement the age-old ties and move ahead. The 1962 hangover can be laid to rest. The onus is on both the countries to open up avenues of trade and opening of cultural centres and exchanges for mutual benefit."¹⁷ Conversely, the commissioning of country's longest rail cum road bridge – Bogibeel¹⁸ would also prove to be a catalyst for cross-border trade reinforcing the pace of inter-state connectivity between Upper Assam and Arunachal Pradesh through the ongoing Trans -Arunachal highways.¹⁹

Strategic Significance

Kibithoo as an entrepot would counter Chinese penetration into the region while reinforcing India's strategic significance along the McMahon line. It is pertinent to mention here that China has already built up several infrastructure projects across the international boundary including opening up a new highway link to Medog - "Tibet's Nyingchi prefecture" which is nearer to India's land border in Arunachal Pradesh (Krishnan 2013).

Thus, India should move forward to construct a 2000 kilometer Frontier highway along the international boundary from Mago Thimbu

(Tawang) to Vijaynagar (Changlang) covering Upper hill areas of East Kameng, Upper Subansiri, West Siang, Upper Siang, Lower Dibang and Anjaw Districts for the development of its frontier territory and build multiple trade corridors prioritizing the most viable- Kibithoo corridor. As the Union minister of State for Home Affairs, Kiren Rijiju, who represents the Arunachal West parliamentary constituency said 'India has all the right to create critical infrastructure in its area.' He added 'We are at freedom to construct highway in our territory. We are not harming neighbours interest. We have to develop our territories, especially those areas which are neglected for too long time. We are going to develop our own region' (Singh 2014). Conversely, Shubir Bhaumik, a prominent foreign policy watcher from Northeast remarked, 'The frontier highway was long overdue and did not happen because of muddle headed defence strategists who felt keeping infrastructure poor in Arunachal Pradesh was a good way to slow down a possible Chinese advance in the event of a war. It should be developed but not only for defence purposes. It should have suitable arteries emanating from it longitudinally to facilitate border trade with Tibet, much as the Nathula pass was reopened to facilitate Sikkim-Tibet border trade. Once the Chinese allow border trade with Arunachal Pradesh on a large-scale, it serves to dilute their strident position about Arunachal Pradesh being southern Tibet and weakens their claims.'²⁰ So, the development of Kibithoo as an entrepot would give chance to both India and China to switch their priorities from security to trade or economic collaborations based on sustainable engagement paradigms. In this context, Nathula model may be emulated in Arunachal Pradesh in order to boost trade and commerce across the political boundaries. As Chinese scholar Kuei-hsiang Hsu remarked: 'China and India began to see signs of healthy progress in border talks in 2003. Both countries smoothed the way for a friendly relationship by agreeing to put aside border disputes and concentrate on economic cooperation first. While there was some tug-of-war over the reopening of Nathula, economic considerations, finally drove both countries to come to terms with each other. China recognized India's sovereignty over Sikkim and India recognized Tibet as a part of Chinese territory in exchange' (Kuei-hsiang 2016).

Conclusions

Notwithstanding its potentialities, the development of Kibithoo as an entrepot in India-China border trade is still in a conceptual stage, although

it has many backers at the civil society level. No such proactive step has yet been initiated by the political machineries due to the Chinese controversial position over the McMahon line. Hence, the need of the hour is to break the India-China jinx over the boundary row and grab the opportunities through cross-border collaborations. And if trade booms up it may draw a different landscape in the bilateral relationship between the two nations. That's why, proactive and sustained dialogues have to be made for economic engagement between India and China going beyond the McMahon line.

India and china are emerging as global economic powers. And if they cooperate with one another, it shall benefit both the countries. China needs India to expand its trade in south Asia and India on the other hand requires goodwill of the Chinese to penetrate into South East Asia. If India opens up the Kibithoo route for trade and China reciprocates in similar manner, it may herald a new relationship between the two nations. As Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Govt. of India stated in the Lok Sabha, 'China has to agree. We can not enforce anyone. There has to be mutual consent, then border haat can be set up. Without cooperation from the other country, no trade can take place in any border haat' (AT 2016).

On the other, in the event of unveiling any concrete measure for such cross-border ventures, the road map should be crafted by roping in all the stakeholders on board for a meaningful action. While mapping their impending outcomes, Kibithoo should not be treated as a mere land bridge or gateway; rather the potentialities of Arunachal Pradesh should be harnessed in order to augment the export basket of our country vis-à-vis China. Otherwise, Arunachal Pradesh would be a dumping ground for the Chinese products which in turn would adversely affect India's long-term economic interest. What is required at this stage is joint Indo-China effort to transform this spatial boundary into geo-economic opportunities for the win-win situation of all the stakeholders or else, it would remain purely a wishful thinking or rhetoric submission.

Notes

- ¹ Nathula (Sikkim) is a trading point in Indo-China border which formally got started on 6 July 2006 (Pattnaik 2016).
- ² Kibithoo/Kibithu is the easternmost administrative circle of India falling under Anjaw District of Arunachal Pradesh in Indo-China border. It is 230 kilometers from Tezu, the District Headquarters of Lohit.

3. The North East Frontier Tract, consisting of three administrative units (Central and Eastern Section, The Lakhimpur Frontier Tract and the western section) was formed through Foreign and Political Department Notification of 1914 by separating hill areas inhabited by various tribes from the then Darrang and Lakhimpur districts of the province of Assam as stipulated under Assam Frontier Tracts Regulations, 1880. The North Eastern Frontier Tract became North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) in 1954. NEFA was renamed as Arunachal Pradesh with a Union territory status on 20 January 1972 and it became a full-fledged state of Indian Union on 20 February 1987 (Luthra 1993; Kri 2010).
4. Interviewed local persons to elicit views on cross-border trade at Tezu, Headquarters of Lohit district on 16 February 2016.
5. Noted the response given by Shantanu Kri against open ended questionnaire on 15 February 2016.
6. Ibid.
7. Observed during my field visits to Nathula (Sikkim), and Kibithoo as well as Upper Hill areas of Arunachal Pradesh several times during December-January (2015-2016).
8. Derived from an electronic mediated response given by Subir Bhaumik against e-mailed questionnaire on 28 February 2016.
9. Ibid.
10. The Stilwell Road covering a distance of 1726 kilometers starts from Ledo in Assam (India) and passes through Nampong in Arunachal Pradesh (India) and Bhamo in Myanmar before reaching Kunming in China. The road covers 61 km in India, 1033 km in Myanmar and 632 km in China. (Data collected during my field visits to Ledo-Nampong sector of Stilwell Road on 29 -30 November 2015).
11. Elicited from an electronic mediated response given by Lt. General John Mukherjee against e-mailed questionnaire on 28 November 2015.
12. Ibid.
13. Brahmaputra River was declared as national waterway-II in 1988 covering a distance of 891 kilometre from Dhubri to Sadiya in Assam. The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) provides terminal services in key locations for loading and unloading of cargo at Dhubri, Jogighopa, Pandu, Silghat, Neamati and Dibrugarh. IWAI is developing Pandu port at Guwahati as a multimodal transport corridor to cater to the interests of whole Northeast (MDONER).

14. India's longest bridge, Dhola-Sadiya, which was built over Lohit, a tributary of the Brahmaputra river in the Tinsukia district of Assam bordering Arunachal Pradesh, was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 26, 2017. The bridge, spanning over 9.15 km, connects Dhola in the south bank and Sadiya in the north bank of the river.
15. Obtained from my field visit to Dhola-Sadiya sector during my field visits on 21 March 2016.
16. Collected an electronic mediated response from Rajiv Miso, a local academic on May 29, 2017.
17. Ibid.
18. India's longest rail cum road bridge, Bogibeel is situated 17 km away from Dibrugarh in upper Assam and spanning over 4.94 km will connect NH - 37 on the south bank of river Brahmaputra with that of NH - 52 on the north bank of Brahmaputra (ET 2015).
19. The ongoing Trans-Arunachal Highway traversing 1811 kilometre would connect Tawang in the western sector of Arunachal Pradesh with Kanubari in its Eastern sector further linking it with NH-52 near Akajan on the right side of Bogibeel Bridge in Assam. The Highway would connect major places like Tawang, Bomdila, Nechipu, Seppa, Sagalee, Yupia, Yazali, Ziro, Daporijo, Along, Pasighat, Roing, Tezu, Mahadevpur, Bordumsa, Namchik, Changlang, Khonsa, Longding and Kanubari in Arunachal Pradesh and would strengthen the intra-state arterial linkage in the state (A Note 2008).
20. Drew from an electronic mediated response from Shubir Bhaumik against e-mailed questionnaire on 18 February 2016.

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