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## What about China?

Immanuel Wallerstein

Very often, when I write about the structural crisis of the modern world-system, and therefore of capitalism as an historical system, I receive objections saying that I have neglected the strength of Chinese economic growth and its ability to serve as an economic replacement for the clearly waning strength of the United States plus western Europe, the so-called North. This is a perfectly reasonable argument, but one that misses the fundamental difficulties of the existing historical system. In addition, it paints a far rosier picture of China's realities than is justified by a closer look. Let me address this question then in two parts – one, the historical development of the world-system as a whole, and two, the empirical situation of China at the present time.

The analysis of what I call the structural crisis of the modern world-system is one that I have made many times, in these commentaries and in my other writings. It is nonetheless worth repeating in condensed form. This is all the more necessary in that even persons who say that they are very sympathetic to the concept of structural crisis nonetheless seem in practice resistant to accept the idea of a demise of capitalism, however strong the case.

There are a number of elements of the argument to put together. One is the assertion that all systems (whatever their scope and without exception) have lives and cannot be eternal. The explanation of this eventual demise of any system is that systems operate with both cyclical rhythms and secular trends. Cyclical rhythms refer to the constant swings away from and back to moving equilibria, a perfectly normal reality. When however various phenomena expand according to their systemic rules and then contract, they do not return after contracting exactly to where they were before the upward cyclical shift. They return instead to a somewhat higher point. This is the result of resistance to the loss of gains achieved in the upward phase.

It follows that their curve over the long run is upward. This is what we mean by a secular trend. If one measures this activity on the ordinate, or y-axis of the graph, one sees that over time they approach an asymptote of 100 percent, which cannot be crossed. It seems that when important factors reach an earlier point of about 80% on the ordinate, they begin to waver erratically. When cyclical curves arrive at this point, they cease utilizing the so-called normal means of resolving the constant strains in the functioning of the system and enter, therefore, into a structural crisis of the system.

A structural crisis is chaotic. This means that instead of the normal standard set of combinations or alliances that were previously used to maintain the stability of the system, they constantly shift these alliances in search of short-term gains. This only makes the situation worse. We notice here a paradox – the certainty of the end of the existing system and the intrinsic uncertainty of what will eventually replace it and create thereby a new system (or new systems) to stabilize realities.

During the longish period of structural crisis, we observe a bifurcation between two alternative modes of resolving the crisis – one by replacing it with a different system that somehow preserves the essential elements of the dying system and one that transforms it radically. Concretely, in our present capitalist system, there are those who seek to found a non-capitalist system that nonetheless maintains capitalism's worst features: hierarchy, exploitation, and polarization. And there are those who wish to establish a system that is relatively democratic and egalitarian, a type of historical system that has never existed before. We are in the midst of this political battle.

Now, let us look at China's role in what is going on. In terms of the present system, China seems to be gaining much advantage. To argue that this means the continuing functioning of capitalism as a system is basically to (re)assert the invalid point that systems are eternal and that China is replacing the United States in the same way as the United States replaced Great Britain as the hegemonic power. Were this true, in another 20-30 years China (or perhaps northeast Asia) would be able to set its rules for the capitalist world-system.

But is this really happening? First of all, China's economic edge, while still greater than that of the North, has been declining significantly. And this decline may well amplify soon, as political resistance to China's attempts to control neighbouring countries and entice (that is, buy) the support of faraway countries grows, which seems to be occurring. Can China then depend on widening internal demand to maintain its global edge? There are two reasons why not. The present authorities worry that a widening middle stratum could jeopardize their political control and seek to limit it.



The second reason, more important, is that much of the internal demand is the result of reckless borrowing by regional banks, which are facing an inability to sustain their investments. If they collapse, even partially, this could end the entire economic edge of China. In addition, there have been, and will continue to be, wild swings in geopolitical alliances. In a sense, the key zones are not in the North, but in areas such as Russia, India, Iran, Turkey, and southeastern Europe, all of them pursuing their own roles by a game of swiftly and repeatedly changing sides. The bottom line is that, though China plays a very big role in the short run, it is not as big a role as China would wish and that some in the rest of the world-system fear. It is not possible for China to stop the disintegration of the capitalist system. It can only try to secure its place in a future world-system.

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# China and the US: Rational Planning and *Lumpen Capitalism*<sup>1</sup>

James Petras

US journalists and commentators, politicians and Sinologists spend considerable time and space speculating on the personality of China's President Xi Jinping and his appointments to the leading bodies of the Chinese government, as if these were the most important aspects of the entire 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China (October 18-24, 2017).<sup>2</sup> Mired down in gossip, idle speculation and petty denigration of its leaders, the Western press has once again failed to take account of the world-historical changes which are currently taking place in China and throughout the world.

World historical changes, as articulated by Chinese President Xi Jinping, are present in the vision, strategy and program of the Congress. These are based on a rigorous survey of China's past, present and future accomplishments. The serious purpose, projections and the presence of China's President stand in stark contrast to the chaos, rabble-rousing demagoguery and slanders characterizing the multi-billion dollar US Presidential campaign and its shameful aftermath. Clarity and coherence of a deep strategic thinker like President Xi Jinping contrasts to the improvised, contradictory and incoherent utterances from the US President and Congress. This is not a matter of mere style but of substantive content. We will proceed in the essay by contrasting the context, content and direction of the two political systems.

## China: Strategic Thinking and Positive Outcomes

China, first and foremost, has established well-defined strategic guidelines that emphasize macro-socio-economic and military priorities over the next five, ten and twenty years. China is committed to reducing pollution in all of its manifestations via the transformation of the economy from heavy industry to a high-tech service economy, moving from quantitative to qualitative indicators.

Secondly, China will increase the relative importance of the domestic market and reduce its dependence on exports. China will increase investments in health,

education, public services, pensions and family allowances. Thirdly, China plans to invest heavily in ten economic priority sectors. These include computerized machinery, robotics, energy saving vehicles, medical devices, aerospace technology, and maritime and rail transport. It targets three billion (US) dollars to upgrade technology in key industries, including electrical vehicles, energy saving technology, numerical control (digitalization) and several other areas. China plans to increase investment in research and development from .95% to 2% of GDP. Moreover, China has already taken steps to launch the 'petro-Yuan', and end US global financial dominance.

China has emerged as the world's leader in advancing global infrastructure networks with its One Belt One Road (Silk Road) across Eurasia. Chinese-built ports, airports and railroads already connect twenty Chinese cities to Central Asia, West Asia, South-East Asia, Africa and Europe. China has established a multi-lateral *Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank* (with over 60 member nations) contributing 100 billion dollars for initial financing.

China has combined its revolution in data collection and analysis with central planning to conquer corruption and improve the efficiency in credit allocation. Beijing's digital economy is now at the center of the global digital economy. According to one expert, "China is the world leader in payments made by mobile devices," (11 times the US). One in three of the world's start-ups, valued at more than \$1 billion, take place in China (*Financial Times*, 28 October 2017: 7). Digital technology has been harnessed to state-owned banks in order to evaluate credit risks and sharply reduce bad debt. This will ensure that financing is creating a new dynamic flexible model combining rational planning with entrepreneurial vigor (ibid).

As a result, the US/EU-controlled World Bank has lost its centrality in global financing. China is already Germany's largest trading partner and is on its way to becoming Russia's leading trade partner and sanctions-busting ally. China has widened and expanded its trade missions throughout the globe, replacing the role of the US in Iran, Venezuela and Russia and wherever Washington has imposed belligerent sanctions.

While China has modernized its military defense programs and increased military spending, almost all of the focus is on 'home defense' and protection of maritime trade routes. China has not engaged in a single war in decades. China's system of central planning allows the government to allocate resources to the productive economy and to its high priority sectors. Under President Xi Jinping, China has created an investigation and judicial system leading to the arrest and prosecution of over a million corrupt officials in the public and private sector. High status is no protection from the government's anti-corruption campaign: Over 150 Central Committee members and billionaire plutocrats have fallen. Equally

important, China's central control over capital flows (outward and inward) allows for the allocation of financial resources to high tech productive sectors while limiting the flight of capital or its diversion into the speculative economy. As a result, China's GNP has been growing between 6.5% - 6.9% a year - four times the rate of the EU and three times the US. As far as demand is concerned, China is the world's biggest market and growing. Income is growing - especially for wage and salaried workers. President Xi Jinping has identified social inequalities as a major area to rectify over the next five years.

### The US: Chaos, Retreat and Reaction

In contrast, the United States President and Congress have not fashioned a strategic vision for the country, least of all one linked to concrete proposals and socio-economic priorities, which might benefit the citizenry. The US has 240,000 active and reserve armed forces stationed in 172 countries. China has less than 5,000 in one country – Djibouti. The US stations 40,000 troops in Japan, 23,000 in South Korea, 36,000 in Germany, 8,000 in the UK and over 1,000 in Turkey. What China has is an equivalent number of highly skilled civilian personnel engaged in productive activity around the world. China's overseas missions and its experts have worked to benefit both global and Chinese economic growth.

The United States' open-ended, multiple military conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Niger, Somalia, Jordan and elsewhere have absorbed and diverted hundreds of billions of dollars away from productive investments in the domestic economy. In only a few cases, military spending has built useful roads and infrastructure, which could be counted a 'dual use', but overwhelmingly US military activities abroad have been brutally destructive, as shown by the deliberate dismemberment of Yugoslavia, Iraq and Libya.

The US lacks the coherence of China's policy making and strategic leadership. While chaos has been inherent in the politics of the US 'free market' financial system, it is especially widespread and dangerous during the Trump regime. Congressional Democrats and Republicans, united and divided, actively confront President Trump on every issue no matter how important or petty. Trump improvises and alters his policies by the hour or, at most, by the day. The US possesses a party system where one party officially rules in the Administration with two militarist big business wings.

US has been spending over 700 billion dollars a year to pursue seven wars and foment 'regime changes' or coups d'état on four continents and eight regions over the past two decades. This has only caused disinvestment in the domestic economy with deterioration of critical infrastructure, loss of markets, widespread socioeconomic decline and a reduction of spending on research and development for goods and services. The top 500 US corporations invest overseas, mainly to take

advantage of low tax region and sources of cheap labor, while shunning American workers and avoiding US taxes. At the same time, these corporations share US technology and markets with the Chinese.

Today, US capitalism is largely directed by and for financial institutions, which absorb and divert capital from productive investments, generating an unbalanced crisis-prone economy. In contrast, China determines the timing and location of investments as well as bank interest rates, targeting priority investments, especially in advanced high-tech sectors. Washington has spent billions on costly and unproductive military-centered infrastructure (military bases, naval ports, air stations etc.) in order to buttress stagnant and corrupt allied regimes. As a result, the US has nothing comparable to China's hundred-billion-dollar 'One Belt-One Road' (Silk Road) infrastructure project linking continents and major regional markets and generating millions of productive jobs.

The US has broken global linkages with dynamic growth centers. Washington resorts to self-defecating, mindless chauvinistic rhetoric to impose trade policy, while China promotes global networks via joint ventures. China incorporates international supply linkages by securing high tech in the West and low cost labor in the East. Big US industrial groups' earnings and rising stock in construction and aerospace are products of their strong ties with China. Caterpillar, United Technologies 3M and US car companies reported double-digit growth on sales to China. In contrast, the Trump regime has allocated (and spent) billions in military procurement to threaten wars against China's peripheral neighbors and interfere with its maritime commerce.

## US Decline and Media Frenzy

The retreat and decline of US economic power has driven the mass media into a frenzy of idiotic ad hominem assaults on China's political leader President Xi Jinping. Among the nose pickers in print, the scribes of the *Financial Times* **take the prize for mindless vitriol. Mercenaries and holy men in Tibet are described as paragons of democracy and 'victims' of a ...flourishing modernizing Chinese state lacking the 'western values' (sic) of floundering Anglo-American warmongers!**

To denigrate China's system of national planning and its consequential efforts to link its high tech economy with improving the standard of living for the population, the FT journalists castigate President Xi Jinping for the following faults:

- 1) For not being as dedicated a Communist as Mao Zedong or Deng Xiaopeng
- 2) For being too 'authoritarian' (or too successful) in his campaign to root out corrupt officials.

- 3) For setting serious long-term goals while confronting and overcoming economic problems by addressing the ‘dangerous’ level of debt.

While China has broadened its cultural horizon, the Anglo-Saxon global elite increases possibility of nuclear warfare. China’s cultural and economic outreach throughout the world is dismissed by the *Financial Times* as **“subversive soft power.”** **Police-state minds and media in the West see China’s outreach as a plot or conspiracy. Any serious writer, thinker or policymaker who has studied and praised China’s success is dismissed as a dupe or agent of the sly President Xi Jinping. Without substance or reflection, the *Financial Times* (27 October 2017) warns its readers and police officials to be vigilant and avoid being seduced by China’s success stories!**

China’s growing leadership in automobile production is evident in its advance towards dominating the market for electric vehicles. Every major US and EU auto company has ignored the warnings of the Western media ideologues and rushed to form joint ventures with China. China has an industrial policy. The US has a war policy. China plans to surpass the US and Germany in artificial intelligence, robotics, semi-conductors and electric vehicles by 2025. And it will ---because those are its carefully pronounced scientific and economic priorities.

Shamelessly and insanely, the US press pursues the expanding stories of raging Hollywood rapists like the powerful movie mogul, Harvey Weinstein, and the hundreds of victims, while ignoring the world historic news of China’s rapid economic advances. The US business elites are busy pushing their President and the US Congress to lower taxes for the billionaire elite, while 100 million US citizens remain without health care and register decreased life expectancy! Washington seems committed to in State-planned regression.

As US bombs fall on Yemen and the American taxpayers finance the giant Israeli concentration camp once known as ‘Palestine’, while China builds systems of roads and rail linking the Himalayas and Central Asia with Europe. While Sherlock Holmes applies the science of observation and deduction, the US media and politicians perfect the art of obfuscation and deception. In China, scientists and innovators play a central role in producing and increasing goods and services for the burgeoning middle and working class. In the US, the economic elite play the central role in exacerbating inequalities, increasing profits by lowering taxes and transforming the American worker into poorly-paid temp-labor – destined to die prematurely of preventable conditions. While Chinese President Xi Jinping works in concert with the nation’s best technocrats to subordinate the military to civilian goals, President Trump and his Administration subordinate their economic decisions to a military-industrial-financial-Israeli complex.

Beijing invests in global networks of scientists, researchers and scholars. The US 'opposition' Democrats and disgruntled Republicans work with the giant corporate media (including the respectable *Financial Times*) to fund and fabricate conspiracies and plots under Trump's Presidential bed.

## Conclusion

China fires and prosecutes corrupt officials while supporting innovators. Its economy grows through investments, joint ventures and a great capacity to learn from experience and powerful data collection. The US squanders its domestic resources in pursuing multiple wars, financial speculation and rampant Wall Street corruption. China investigates and punishes its corrupt business and public officials while corruption seems to be the primary criteria for election or appointment to high office in the US. The US media worships its tax-dodging billionaires and thinks it can mesmerize the public with a dazzling display of bluster, incompetence and arrogance. China directs its planned economy to address domestic priorities. It uses its financial resources to pursue historic global infrastructure programs, which will enhance global partnerships in mutually beneficial projects. It is no wonder that China is seen as moving toward the future with great advances while the US is seen as a chaotic frightening threat to world peace and its publicists as willing accomplices.

China is not without shortcomings in the spheres of political expression and civil rights. Failure to rectify social inequalities and failure to stop the outflow of billions of dollars of illicit wealth, and the unresolved problems with regime corruption will continue to generate class conflicts.

But the important point to note is the direction China has chosen to take and its capacity and commitment to identify and correct the major problems it faces. The US has abdicated its responsibilities. It is unwilling or unable to harness its banks to invest in domestic production to expand the domestic market. It is completely unwilling to identify and purge the manifestly incompetent and to incarcerate the grossly corrupt officials and politicians of both parties and the elites.

Today overwhelming majorities of US citizens despise, distrust and reject the political elite. Over 70% think that the inane factional political divisions are at their greatest level in over 50 years and have paralyzed the government. 80% recognize that the Congress is dysfunctional and 86% believe that Washington is dishonest. Never has an empire of such limitless power crumbled and declined with so few accomplishments. China is a rising economic empire, but it advances through its active engagement in the market of ideas and not through futile wars against successful competitors and adversaries.

As the US declines, its publicists degenerate. The media's ceaseless denigration of China's challenges and its accomplishments is a poor substitute for analysis. The

flawed political and policy making structures in the US and its incompetent free-market political leaders lacking any strategic vision crumble in contrast to China's advances.

### Notes

1. *Lumpen* Capitalism refers to an economic system in which the financial and military sector exploits the state treasury and productive economy for the 1% of the population.
2. The 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress was attended by 2,280 delegates representing 89 million members.



## The Growing Income Inequality

Prabhat Patnaik

**T**homas Piketty and Lucas Chancel have just written a paper as part of their work for the World Inequality Report discussing the movement of income inequality in India. And their conclusion is that the extent of income inequality in India at present is greater than it has ever been at any time in the last one hundred years. Their estimates go back to 1922 when the Income Tax Act became operational in India. The share of the top 1 percent of the population in total income at that date was around 13 percent. It increased to 21 percent by the late 1930s and then fell to about 6 percent by the early 1980s before rising to 22 percent in 2014, the final year of their study.

What is striking about the paper's finding is the almost exact synchrony between the break in inequality trends and the transition from dirigisme to neo-liberalism. In the period between 1951 and 1980, the bottom 50 percent of the population captured 28 percent of the increase in total income while the top 0.1 percent actually witnessed a decline in their income. In fact the income of the bottom 50 percent increased faster over this period than the overall average. Between 1980 and 2014 however the top 0.1 percent captured a higher share of the increase in income (12 percent) than the entire bottom 50 percent (11 percent).

To be sure, data on income inequality can always be questioned. For a start we have no income surveys in the country; all we have are sample surveys relating to consumption expenditure and getting from the distribution of consumption expenditure to the distribution of income is problematical since we do not know how savings, which constitute the difference between the two, are distributed. Secondly, in all sample surveys, the top percentiles are always insufficiently represented, precisely because they are so few in number. Statisticians therefore make all kinds of assumptions about how income is distributed within the top decile to arrive at the share of the top 1 percent or the top 0.1 percent of the population. And these assumptions can always be questioned.

It is not surprising therefore that the Piketty-Chancel estimates too have been questioned by some commentators. But no matter how one views their absolute figures, the trends revealed by them can scarcely be questioned, since more or less the same method of estimation is employed across time. And this trend is entirely in conformity with what other researchers have been saying, and also with what one would theoretically expect. Credit Suisse for instance provides wealth distribution data. According to these data the top 1 percent of households in India currently owns more than half (57 percent) of the total wealth of all households, and wealth inequality in India has been rising extremely rapidly, indeed more rapidly than even in the United States.

Wealth distribution is invariably more unequal than income distribution, because the working class which has no wealth has nonetheless an income. Hence the Piketty-Chancel figures for the share of the top 1 percent in income are by no means out of sync with the Credit Suisse figures about their share in total wealth. (By the same logic however they seriously negate estimates that put the share of wealth of the top 1 percent at only 28 percent, though even these latter estimates recognize the significant increase in wealth inequality since 1991 when neo-liberal reforms began and when the share of wealth of the top 1 percent was just 17 percent according to them).

A measure of inequality that is often adopted is the Gini coefficient which captures the distance between the actual distribution and an ideal distribution characterized by absolute equality. The problem with the Gini coefficient however is that by looking at the distribution as a whole it misses out on questions like the shares of the top percentiles. For instance even when the share of the top 1 percent may be increasing, the Gini coefficient may show a decline in inequality if some redistribution is occurring say from, say, the 4th decile from below to the bottom decile, i.e. from the “poor” to the “very poor.” Piketty and Chancel accordingly do not use the Gini coefficient but look at the shares of the top few percentiles, which is a much more useful measure (especially if we are talking of economic power).

The Piketty-Chancel figures show that 1983-84 was the year of the lowest income-share for the top 1 percent, after which this share started rising. It may be recalled that neo-liberalism first made its appearance around that very time and that the budget presented in 1985 by Vishwanath Pratap Singh, who was then the Finance Minister in the Rajiv Gandhi government, contained significant steps in this direction (against which in fact the Left Parties had organized a Convention in New Delhi at that time). The association between growth in inequality and the pursuit of neo-liberalism is thus strikingly close. And not surprisingly, such a growth in inequality has characterized almost every country in the world in the period of “globalization” which is characterized by the almost universal pursuit of neo-liberal policies under the diktat of international finance capital.

The authors, both in the paper itself and also individually in interviews, give a number of reasons why income inequality has increased in India in this period, reasons having to do with the pursuit of neo-liberalism. The decline in the highest marginal income tax rate from 98 percent to 30 percent, the persisting inequality in landownership, and the lack of access to education and health by the poor, are some of the points raised by the authors.

All these are very important. But there is an additional factor that needs to be mentioned here, namely the attack on petty production, including peasant agriculture, that neo-liberalism has brought in its wake. While an improvement in the conditions of the peasantry does not necessarily benefit the agricultural labourers automatically, a deterioration in their conditions invariably gets “passed on” to the labourers. And what is more, since, in the event of such a deterioration, destitute peasants seek employment in the urban economy, where very few additional jobs are being created, they tend to swell the reserve army of labour which also affects the wages of the urban workers and hence the overall urban income distribution.

In other words, as rural India has on average a lower income than urban India, any widening of the rural-urban difference has the effect, other things being equal, of widening overall income inequality (by the Piketty-Chancel measure). But it also has the additional effect of widening the income inequality within the urban sector itself. It does this via a swelling of the reserve army of labour in the urban economy through the immigration of destitute peasants into it. For both these reasons, the assault on petty production launched by neo-liberalism constitutes an important factor behind the growth of income inequality.

The case of China, where, according to these authors, income inequality was rising rapidly earlier but got reversed in the current century is instructive in this context. To be sure, there are basic differences between the Indian and the Chinese economies; but an important proximate factor behind the reversal of the growing inequality in China was the policy adopted by the Chinese Communist Party under the slogan “Towards a Socialist Countryside”. This policy checked and reversed some of the encroachments on peasant agriculture that the attempt to industrialize through a relentless export drive had entailed.

The introduction of a wealth tax (which, amazingly, India does not have), the increase in income tax rates upon the rich, the provision of quality education and health services to all under the aegis of the State, and of course land redistribution, are undoubtedly some of the steps that must be taken to reverse the growing income inequalities; and these entail a jettisoning of neo-liberalism. But even while recognizing this, we must also recognize, which the authors do not do explicitly, that neo-liberalism is not just a policy of choice that can be given up at will. It corresponds to a stage of capitalism where international finance capital has acquired hegemony;

overcoming neo-liberalism therefore requires a class struggle against this hegemony through a wide mobilization of workers and peasants.

The authors however rightly take on the apologists of neo-liberalism who argue that such a growth in income inequality is essential for achieving the high GDP growth that has actually occurred in countries like India. This is absurd, since the highest rate of income growth that has ever occurred in world capitalism was experienced in the post-war period, during the so-called “Golden Age of Capitalism”, when income inequality actually was declining the world over. This decline in income inequality to be sure was not because of the operation of capitalism but because of the concessions that capitalism had been forced to make in the face of the looming socialist threat; but it shows that the argument that growing income inequality is essential for higher growth is a complete non-sequitur.

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Courtesy: (c) PRABHAT PATNAIK @ People's Democracy

## Afghanistan-China Relations under Xi Jinping: Drivers and Dynamics

Vinay Kaura

*China has been intensifying its diplomatic efforts to strengthen its relationship with Afghanistan in terms of political cooperation and an enhanced role in the reconciliation process between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban. China seeks to extend the 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR), which is President Xi Jinping's grand politico-economic initiative to revive ancient trade routes, to Afghanistan. Since Afghanistan is a geographic hub, its instability could negatively impact the OBOR project. Besides, there are significant security concerns for China's Xinjiang province – a region vulnerable to terrorism and extremism. The article argues that despite China's increased involvement in Afghan affairs, it cannot hope to replace the United States as the leading security provider in the country. While supportive of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, Xi is unlikely to invest much in supporting Western goals or a leader so clearly aligned with the West. As Pakistan is not pursuing a constructive policy towards Afghanistan, China's close association with Pakistan also hinders its efforts aimed at political reconciliation.*

**A**fghanistan has not played a major role in Chinese diplomacy for a considerable period. Till the end of the Cold War, Afghanistan was mostly under the political and strategic influence of the Soviet Union. Once the fundamentalist Taliban regime was removed from power in 2001, Afghanistan came under the influence of the United States. With large numbers of the NATO forces stationed in Afghanistan, the US has since exerted an overriding influence in Afghan affairs.

It was the escalation of security concerns in China's restless province of Xinjiang with the Taliban's rise that initially drew Beijing's attention to Afghanistan. China's primary concern was with the close links between the Taliban and extremists linked to the 'Eastern Turkistan' terrorist organizations. China did not want the chaos and instability in Afghanistan to spread over the border and undermine stability in

Xinjiang. After the installation of the new regime under Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan, the dynamics of Afghan–China relations changed considerably. The two countries began to draw closer. China supported the new regime, delivering aid and investing in the economy of the war-ravaged country. Beijing also endorsed a decision by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to make Afghanistan an observer of the regional body. Through all these channels, the relationship between China and Afghanistan has progressively deepened, and Afghanistan’s importance in China’s eyes has grown.

While explaining the ‘One Belt One Road’ (OBOR) or ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ (BRI) of China, the article provides a significant context for an understanding of China’s Afghanistan policy, analyse the security challenges posed to China by the situation in Afghanistan, evaluate China’s role in political reconciliation in Afghan peace process and their implications on India.

### One Belt One Road Initiative and Afghanistan

The concept of ‘neighbouring diplomacy’ has become a keystone in China’s official diplomatic discourse. The ‘new neighbourhood diplomacy’ refers to a number of initiatives that China under the leadership of Xi Jinping has undertaken to expand its influence and restore China’s image in the region since 2013. While major power relations remain one of the top priorities, China’s neighbourhood has gained a new significance in the country’s diplomacy. The shift was confirmed at the Central Work Conference on China’s Neighbourhood Diplomacy, held by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in October 2013 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China 2013b). The increasing attention paid by China to its neighbourhood is not without reason (Dingli 2013).

According to a Chinese analyst,

The major factors affecting the stability of China’s neighborhood include the rebalancing of United States strategy, the right-wing tendencies in Japanese politics, the situation on the Korean peninsula, the South China Sea issue and the American withdrawal from Afghanistan. Whether Chinese diplomatic strategy towards its neighborhood can be smoothly implemented depends on its effectiveness in responding to these emerging and potential conflicts(Zongze 2014).

China has gradually realized that becoming a power centre in the regional system should be a logical outcome of its rise. Traditionally, China espoused a concept of centre and periphery, perceiving itself as the ‘central state’. There is no denying the fact that positive relations with the neighbouring countries would improve China’s strategic position and help expand its global influence. Although China has always paid attention to its relations with neighbouring countries, until very recently its neighbourhood diplomacy has not been considered as an organic whole in terms

of an overarching foreign policy strategy. Diplomacy towards neighbouring countries tended to be conducted bilaterally, focusing on specific issues.

China's diplomacy may be analyzed through the 'three circles framework' that presumes that foreign policy is focused on three areas – three concentric rings – with China in the centre. The first circle is the immediate neighbourhood. The second circle encompasses the whole Asia-Pacific region, in which China desires to emerge the principal leader. The third circle includes the whole world with China as a global superpower (Szcudlik-Tatar 2015). It has been argued that Xi Jinping is paying more attention to China's neighbourhood as well as the Asia-Pacific, and is displaying more activism at the global level. The Chinese leadership has put forward new guiding principles for China's new neighbourhood diplomacy, summarized as 'amity, security, mutual benefit and inclusiveness'. Xi Jinping has made the revival of the celebrated Silk Road trading route through the 'Silk Road Economic Belt' and '21st Century Maritime Silk Road' a centerpiece of his foreign policy agenda.

In September 2013, he proposed the creation of the Silk Road Economic Belt in a speech titled "Promote People-to-People Friendship and Create a Better Future" at Kazakhstan's Nazarbayev University at Astana (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China 2013a). Silk Road refers to the historical trade routes linking Asia to Europe through a region that spans South Asia, East Asia, Central Asia and the West Asia. Projected as a network of regional infrastructure projects comprising roads, rail links, energy pipelines, and telecommunications ties, the initiative called for the integration of the countries situated on the ancient Silk Road into a cohesive economic area. In October 2013, Xi proposed in Indonesia the creation of the 'Twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road' as a complementary initiative aimed at fostering collaboration in Southeast Asia, Oceania and North Africa through the South China Sea, the South Pacific Ocean and the wider Indian Ocean area.

The major objective of these two highly ambitious projects, often referred to jointly as the 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR) or recently as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is to win over neighbouring and other countries in the region through increased trade incentives and transport connectivity. If successful, the ambitious OBOR/BRI would make China a principal economic and diplomatic force in the Eurasian region. Not surprisingly, Beijing is framing its new neighbourhood diplomacy in strategic terms with frequent reference to the OBOR. The OBOR initiative has elevated the strategic importance of China's neighbouring regions in Beijing's pursuit of power and influence, as these regions are geopolitically vital for the construction of OBOR. However, China's neighbourhood in Central, West and South Asia presents daunting challenges. For one thing, domestic conditions in the central Asian states concerned are not conducive to Chinese investment, given the prevalence of security challenges of various kinds and social and political instability.

At the same time, the OBOR has also been perceived by majority in India as a strategic challenge to the country's dominant position in the subcontinent (Pant and Super 2015).

Afghanistan lies at the crossroads of Central, South and West Asia. Because of its unique geographical location, it has come to occupy an unparalleled geopolitical importance. While Afghanistan is mentioned occasionally in China's official statements on OBOR initiatives, the country is never far from the surface. Chinese Foreign Minister elaborated upon four aspects in tackling the issue of Afghanistan during his official visit to Pakistan in 2015. The fourth and last point mentioned by him was China's support for "Afghanistan's integration in regional cooperation" as Beijing would like "Afghanistan to actively participate in the initiative of constructing 'One Belt One Road' put forward by the Chinese side in line with its own development needs" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2015b).

Signaling China's efforts to consolidate ties with Afghanistan as part of the OBOR initiative, the first cargo train from China reached Afghanistan on September 9, 2016. The train left Nantong in eastern China's Jiangsu province on August 25, to cover a 15 day journey to Hairatan, the Afghan city on border with Uzbekistan. Yao Jing, Chinese ambassador in Afghanistan, stated on the occasion that "Without Afghan connectivity, there is no way to connect China with rest of world" (Najafizada 2016). As China looks to increase its economic footprint in Central and South Asia to promote development and stability in Xinjiang, there is a general consensus over the importance of stability in Afghanistan to the success of China OBOR ambitions. Zhao Huasheng (2016) has rightly argued:

Considered negatively, Afghanistan is a like a lock that can cut off central, south and west Asia from each other. Considered positively, it is the key that can open the door to collaboration between these areas. It can be both of these to the Silk Road Economic Belt. Only when the Afghan lock is opened can the Silk Road Economic Belt realize the interconnections between these regions economically, financially and socially. If it remains closed, any progress in implementing this initiative will be greatly impeded.

Despite the fact that the exact role of Afghanistan in China's OBOR calculations is yet to be spelt out, Beijing has made it clear that China would play a greater role in Afghanistan – not only economically, but also in a security and political domains.

### Security Dynamics

Afghanistan presents a number of security challenges to China. The instability and chaotic conditions in Afghanistan have not only denied the Afghan people much-needed peace, but have also had negative effects on China. Beijing's primary interest in Afghanistan is driven by its concerns about Xinjiang as the province is geographically critical to China's efforts to expand economic ties to Central Asia.



Xinjiang is the sole province of China that shares a border with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), Jammu & Kashmir and Afghanistan, in addition to sharing borders with Russia, Mongolia and Central Asian republics of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. Clearly, ensuring security and stability in Xinjiang is the prerequisite for China's OBOR ambitions.

The internal security and stability of Xinjiang Uighur region is vulnerable to the spillover of Islamist radicalism and extremism from Afghanistan. The Afghan–Xinjiang security nexus can be seen in the close linkage between the Taliban and Al-Qaeda and the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), a Uighur separatist group that China blames for a number of deadly terror attacks in the country over the past decade. China has increasingly been concerned about these extremists from Xinjiang getting militant training in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In recent years, there has been an upsurge in the number of attacks in China attributed to Uighur extremists (Matta 2015), who have begun to attack Chinese security forces in Xinjiang itself, usually with knives rather than explosives. It has also been claimed that the ETIM has sent its members to fight for the Islamic State (ISIS), which has declared jihad against China on the grounds that Beijing is mistreating the Muslim population in Xinjiang (Soliev 2016; Volodzko 2016). In such circumstances, the importance of Afghanistan to China's national security is clear.

Not only China but entire region has been affected by terrorism. Central Asia, whose states together share 2,300 kilometres of borders with Afghanistan and 3,300 kilometres of borders with China, is particularly vulnerable from destabilizing forces operating from Afghanistan. China is fully aware that if extremism in Central Asia is allowed to grow unchecked, Xinjiang cannot remain unaffected too long. China's borders with its three Central Asian neighbours are long and cannot be entirely closed off; they remain particularly susceptible to the spread of extremism. Any instability in Central Asia would directly impinge on China's economic security, particularly the security of its oil and gas pipelines. If Central Asian region were to become unstable, successful execution of OBOR project would not be possible. China's security concerns have led it to engage in the so far unsuccessful effort to negotiate an end to the Afghan war. In exchange, Beijing hopes to enlist the support of Afghanistan and Pakistan to counter the threat of the Uighur extremists.

After the establishment of the Ashraf Ghani administration in 2014, Sino-Afghan security relations have seen a positive trend. Not only have security-related bilateral exchanges increased but China has announced military assistance to Afghanistan. Ghani's first official foreign visit was to Beijing in October 2014 when he assured the Chinese President of Afghanistan's help in fighting terrorists. While reaching a consensus with his Chinese counterpart on combating the ETIM, Ghani asserted that "Afghanistan will not allow any activities that threaten China's security

on Afghan territory.” On its part, China decided to strengthen its support for Afghan reconstruction, pledging assistance of 2 billion yuan from 2014 to 2017 (*China Daily* 2014). In an effort to convince China to use its influence with Pakistan to begin negotiations with the Taliban, the Ghani administration arrested 15 Uyghurs from Kabul and Kunar, and handed them to China in February 2015 (Shalizi 2015).

Beijing has indicated that it wants to increase Chinese involvement in the conflict-ridden Afghanistan. In July 2016, the first batch of Chinese military equipments, ammunition and weapons for the Afghan security forces arrived in Kabul, where Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing handed it over to Afghan National Security Advisor Hanif Atmar. Jing stated that delivery of military equipments “is the beginning of our regular military-to-military exchanges and cooperation”, whereas Atmar viewed this as “a major change in China’s relations towards Afghanistan that China is standing with the Afghan people in the counterterrorism fight” (Arian 2016; Gul 2016).

China and Afghanistan held their first strategic military dialogue led by General Fang Fenghui and General Qadam Shah Shahim in August 5, 2016. Fang said that the international terrorist activities entered a new active phase and the “three evil forces” of terrorism, extremism and separatism posed threats to the regional security (Panyue 2016). A Beijing-mooted quadrilateral counterterrorism alliance comprising Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and China was launched in early August 2016. Known as the Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism (QCCM), the four-nation alliance held its inaugural meeting in the city of Urumqi, Xingjian Uyghur region (*Dawn* 2016). As part of this initiative, mid-level military officials of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and China attended a symposium on counter terrorism in the end of November 2016 at the Special Operations College of the People’s Liberation Army in Beijing (Zhihao 2016). There was a media report of China’s military vehicles patrolling inside Afghanistan, where it shares a border with China. Dismissing the report, the Chinese Defence Ministry spokesman Yang Yujun made it clear that discussions between the Chinese and Afghan officials were going on for “conducting joint law enforcement activities, preventing and combating terrorist activities and organised cross-border crimes along the China-Afghanistan border” (Aneja 2016).

Without going into the claims about Chinese troops in Afghanistan, it is important to note that China is deterred from any security-centric involvement in Afghanistan due to several reasons. Military involvement is likely to make China a target for non-Uyghur terror groups who have largely avoided China as a target, despite offering moral support to Uyghur extremists. Moreover, there are questions about military capability of China to handle a situation like Afghanistan. The People’s Liberation Army’s combat capabilities are much weaker than those of American troops.

## High-Level Diplomatic Engagement

China's ambitious attempts at constructing OBOR have further elevated the strategic importance of Afghanistan in Beijing's overall foreign policy strategy. China has greatly increased its aid to Afghanistan. As China pursues more active policies towards Afghanistan, high-level interactions between the two countries have increased.

As already mentioned, Afghan President Ghani visited China in October 2014. Ghani's choice of China as his first official destination showed that he valued the role China could play in Afghanistan's future. The joint statement issued after his visit to Beijing confirmed that China and Afghanistan were eager to deepen their strategic partnership. In November 2014, Chinese Minister of Public Security and State Councilor Guo Shengkun visited Afghanistan (The State Council, People's Republic of China 2014). In the same month, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Qi Jianguo, visited Afghanistan as President Xi's special envoy. The first security-related Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the two countries during the China visit of Afghan interior minister in May 2015. Again in October 2015, the Afghan Defence Minister, Masoom Stanekzai, visited China to sign another MoU on defense cooperation. Within Afghan official circles, the MoU was seen as helping Afghan side to put pressure on Pakistan to end its support to the Taliban.<sup>1</sup>

In January 2016, Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani visited Beijing. Wang Yi, Chinese Foreign Minister, stated that China would deepen cooperation with Afghanistan aimed at development and security in order "to enrich their strategic cooperative partnership". Both sides also agreed to increase the importance of regional mechanisms related to Afghanistan as well as carry forward the Istanbul Process (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China 2016). In February 2016, General Fang Fenghui, the chief of the Joint Staff of the Central Military Commission of China, led a delegation to Afghanistan. China offered the Afghan army greater military assistance to fight the Taliban. The timing of Fang's trip was interpreted as confirmation of China's support for the Ghani-led Afghan government at a time when its authority has been severely challenged by the Afghan Taliban (*Wall Street Journal* 2016).

In another significant development, Hanif Atmar visited China in April 2016 and met top ministers and army officials including General Fang Fenghui. Fang reiterated China's willingness to work with Afghanistan to explore new modes of cooperation between the two militaries based on the OBOR initiative, while strengthening communication and coordination in the field of defense and security (Ministry of National Defense, The People's Republic of China 2016). Abdullah Abdullah, Chief Executive of Afghanistan, visited China in May 2016. In the joint

statement issued during the visit, Chinese side agreed to provide 500 million yuan of aid in 2016 for projects of Afghanistan International Exhibition Center in Kabul, in addition to other developmental and humanitarian assistance. Afghanistan supported China in fight against the ETIM as well as China's "intention to take concrete measures to ensure the security of Chinese institutions and nationals in Afghanistan."<sup>2</sup> In June 2017, Ghani and Xi met at the sidelines of the SCO summit at Astana, where issues pertaining to stimulating cooperation on security, counter-terrorism efforts, ensuring peace and stability and bolstering economic and regional cooperation figured. Referring to deepening bilateral economic, development and political ties between the two countries, Xi expressed China's readiness to cooperate with Afghanistan on equipping Afghan security forces in the fight against terrorism (Office of the President, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan 2017). Such frequent visits by high-ranking diplomatic, security and defence officials have indicated the increasing importance of Afghanistan in China's diplomatic radar.

### China's Mediator role in Afghan Reconciliation

Citing the principle of non-interference in other countries, China has largely kept out of Afghan internal affairs. However, an array of security and economic interests in Afghanistan explain Beijing's growing role in political negotiation process. While engaging in bilateral cooperation with Afghanistan, Beijing has undertaken a series of measures in support of Afghanistan's political reconciliation and economic transformation. It has launched trilateral talks with the key players in the region – Pakistan, Russia, India and Iran. It has also created institutional mechanisms to discuss the Afghan question.

The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, set up in November 2011 in Istanbul, provides a platform for results-oriented regional cooperation on Afghanistan, in recognition of the fact that a secure and stable Afghanistan is vital to the prosperity of the region. The Heart of Asia is comprised of 14 participating countries, 17 supporting countries, and 12 supporting regional and international organizations.<sup>3</sup> China demonstrated its willingness to be an active stakeholder by hosting the fourth ministerial conference of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process in October 2014 in Beijing, in which Chinese Premier, Li Keqiang, stated that China "will help Afghanistan, not in words but with concrete actions, to enhance capacity-building for independent development" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China 2014). For the settlement of Afghan issue, Keqiang listed five points: Afghanistan must be governed by the Afghan people; promote political reconciliation; speed up economic reconstruction; explore the path of development; and provide stronger external support (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China 2014).

Since the beginning of 2015, China has been stepping up its role as a facilitator or guarantor in peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. China was reported to have received a group of Taliban representatives in November 2014. The meeting coincided with Ghani's inaugural visit to China during which he asked the Chinese to play a mediating role. This attracted much attention, and some analysts speculated that China was facilitating talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban (BBC 2014). Chinese Foreign Minister Wang publicly acknowledged that China "will support the Afghan government in realising reconciliation with various political factions including the Taliban...China is ready to play its constructive role and will provide necessary facilitation at any time if it is required by various parties in Afghanistan" (Golovkina 2015).

In February 2015, China, Afghanistan and Pakistan held talks under the framework of trilateral strategic dialogue, with the first meeting being held in Kabul (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2015a). In May 2015, China hosted low-key peace talks between Afghan officials and Afghan Taliban leaders in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang. The Afghan government was represented by Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai, who was subsequently appointed as the Afghan Defence Minister. The Taliban was represented by three prominent figures from the old Taliban regime. Although Beijing did not officially acknowledge that the talks were held, but a Chinese academic said that Beijing "simply provided them a place to talk, in a bid to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan" as "it is more convenient for them to negotiate on the territory of a third party that can mediate the disputes" (Wong and Mashal 2015).

The Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG), comprising Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and the US, took a much-needed initiative to pacify Afghanistan. Set up on the margins of the Heart of Asia conference in December 2015, the QCG became operational in January 2016 when it met officially for the first time in Islamabad. All four countries highlighted the necessity of direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban "in a peace process that aims to preserve Afghanistan's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity."<sup>4</sup> After this, the QCG held three more meetings on January 18, February 6, and February 23 in Kabul (Joshi 2016). What was important in this initiative was China's willingness to be partner of the US in the peace effort. On previous occasions, China avoided any association with American policies in the region. Although the mechanism of the QCG offered hopes of progress in peace talks, with the US acting as a guarantor for the Afghan government, and China playing the similar role for Pakistani government during the negotiations (Minhas 2016), the initiative fizzled out due to deep hostility between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Taliban's rejection to participate in the talks and several other reasons (Jaffrelot 2016).

As reported by in the media, a delegation led by Abbas Stanakzai, head of the Taliban's political office in Qatar, visited Beijing in July 2016 (*Reuters* 2016). Indirectly confirming the visit, China said that it maintains contact with all parties related to the Afghan peace talks. Chinese Foreign Ministry was reported to have issued a statement saying that since China's support for the "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned" reconciliation process was aimed at bringing in stability in Afghanistan, "China maintains contact with all parties related to the Afghan issue and is willing to continue playing a constructive role" (Tiantian 2016). In February 2017, it was again reported that Stanikazai led a five-member Taliban delegation for talks with the Chinese officials. A Taliban member of the team was reported to have said that "being a major world power, China is a main stakeholder and wants to play its vital role for peace and stability in Afghanistan. That is why it invited the Taliban." A few days after this meeting, China's special envoy for Afghanistan, Deng Xijun, visited Kabul and told Ghani that Beijing has "encouraged the Taliban during our contacts with them to join the peace process" (Khan 2017).

While listing China's three major objectives for its Afghan related initiatives, Pakistani Senate's Committee on Defence Chairman, Mushahid Hussain Sayed, said that due to Beijing-Islamabad strategic partnership, China wants to coordinate its Afghan policy with Pakistan "so that Afghanistan is not a venue or battleground for a new round of proxy war or a new Cold War detrimental to both the allies' interests" (Khan 2017). This reasoning is interesting as it indicates geopolitical angle. It is imperative for India and the US to look at China's strategies in Afghanistan. China is an important stakeholder as well as a regional actor with a strong relationship with Pakistan, whose actions in supporting the Afghan Taliban have complicated the Afghan muddle.

### Chinese Potential

Concerns about Afghanistan's potentially destabilizing influences on Xinjiang, coupled with a gradual drawdown of American forces from Afghanistan, have largely altered Beijing's approach to both the US and Afghanistan. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi articulated this during his visit to Kabul in 2014, when he said that China believes that "the peace and stability of [Afghanistan] has an impact on the security of western China, and more importantly, it affects the tranquility and development of the entire region" (Harooni 2014).

With each passing day, the security stakes in Afghanistan are getting higher. The Taliban and its Pakistan-based leadership show no signs of renouncing their terrorist campaign to regain control of Afghanistan. The Ghani administration has met with little success thus far in pursuing peace talks with the Taliban. As a regional power, China would like to take on more responsibility with a view to maintaining

security and stability in Afghanistan. But China's diplomatic activities and other initiatives concerning Afghanistan does not seem to constitute an attempt to fill the vacuum created by the impending withdrawal of American forces. Despite the gradual increase in China's influence in Afghanistan, Beijing does not seem to be in a position of the US in Afghanistan for the simple reason that it cannot afford to get militarily involved and replace the Western forces; it would not gain much by bringing Afghanistan directly under its exclusive influence; it cannot succeed in exporting its political model to Afghanistan; and the US would continue to exert influence in Afghanistan's political and security affairs.

### Implications for India

It is clear from above analysis that China has been trying to achieve its strategic goals in Afghanistan by ensuring security, economic and diplomatic stronghold in the country. Beijing also wants to consolidate its position in order to confront New Delhi. It is rightly argued that China seeks Pakistan's assistance not only to help create peace in Afghanistan, but also to keep India at bay. Presently, China's counter-terrorism measures exclude India and the US. China has historically treated New Delhi as a geopolitical rival, and India's growing ties with the US are perceived as a threat in Beijing. China has a vested interest in indirectly encouraging Pakistan to continue its state patronage of cross-border terrorism (Shams 2017). However, Beijing finds it advantageous to support Pakistan's policy of fighting anti-state terrorists, particularly those groups that pose a threat to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is the mainstay of the OBOR.

Although the OBOR is far from a ready blueprint with comprehensive details, China is making every effort to make Afghanistan as an important component in it. India is a major player in a number of strategically important connectivity projects in Afghanistan. India's soft power approach has been widely appreciated by the Afghan people. Therefore, more extensive dialogue with principal players such as India is essential for China for the success of the OBOR. Unfortunately, China has not been transparent about its OBOR initiatives, failing so far to take India into confidence.

Making India's stand clear, India's foreign secretary, S Jaishankar, stated that the OBOR "is a national Chinese initiative" and "not an international initiative they discussed with the whole world, or with the countries" which either have some opinions about it or are directly affected by it. If Chinese want India and other important countries to become actively involved in it, "then they need to have larger discussions, and those have not happened" (*Deccan Herald* 2015). In his remarks at the inauguration of the Raisina Dialogue in March 2016, Jaishankar again urged China to avoid unilateral approach in promoting its connectivity projects on account

of their geopolitical implications. He said that “in the absence of agreed security architecture in Asia”, what is required is a “multi-polar Asia” which can be achieved through “open-minded consultations on the future of connectivity” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of India 2016). India’s concerns are also compounded by the fact that China’s OBOR projects would run through Gilgit-Baltistan, which is under Pakistani occupation.

Presently India has to deal with following challenges in Afghanistan:

- India is a peripheral player in Afghan political affairs, focusing on reconstruction and developmental activities. Lacking any traction with Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban, India is on the sidelines of the peace talks currently being held.
- India and China are cooperating through various multilateral formats for political reconciliation in Afghanistan. India-Russia-China Foreign Ministers meetings and the Heart of Asia process are the platforms where New Delhi and Beijing discuss the latest developments and security issues pertaining to Afghanistan. However, there has been considerable cynicism regarding the real impact of these multilateral discussions.
- There is a genuine apprehension in New Delhi regarding the nature and scope of cooperation between India and China in Afghanistan. The major hindrance is China’s all weather friendship with Pakistan, which prevents Beijing to pressurize Islamabad to play a more constructive role in Afghanistan. Beijing’s emphasis on giving a more active role to Pakistan reduces Chinese diplomacy to merely one bargaining for Pakistan’s demands.
- China has not been able to achieve much success in its efforts to mediate between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban on account of the latter’s belief that it can occupy more Afghan territory by using force. If the Taliban is not convinced to come to the negotiating table, the reconciliation process would turn into a way for the Taliban to bide its time while making military advances in Afghanistan.
- Afghanistan’s national unity government cannot be forced beyond a point to make concessions to the Taliban for the sake of political reconciliation. Otherwise, Afghanistan would again become a training ground for a new generation of Islamist radicals. This has direct security implications for countries like India, the US, Iran, Russia and China.

## Conclusion

Since the US announced plans to withdraw American troops from Afghanistan, there has been considerable Chinese interest in Afghanistan. Coinciding with this,



Xi Jinping has come up with the ambitious OBOR initiative, which is aimed at improving China's image as a responsible world power and encouraging connectivity throughout Asia with road and maritime links to Africa, the Middle East, and on toward Europe. It demonstrates China's willingness to exert its influence over Afghanistan.

Beijing seeks to realize this newfound role with multi-pronged strategy. China is helping settle the Afghanistan crisis by acting as mediator for reconciliation talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government, through an "Afghan-led and Afghan-owned" peace process as Beijing believes that it is uniquely positioned to undertake such mediation. China is encouraging Afghanistan to join regional and international organizations led by Beijing. China has also maintained close communication over Afghan problem with Pakistan, India, Iran, Russia, and the US through several trilateral and quadrilateral mechanisms.

However, China's role in Afghanistan is still weak and far from enough to bridge the gap between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban. China mainly relies on Pakistan to facilitate meetings between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Given their close relationship, China cannot be expected to exercise pressure tactics over Pakistan to completely break its intricate ties with the Afghan Taliban, which is the primary reason for Afghanistan's current problems and predicament. All attempts to find a political end to the conflict have failed. Under the circumstances, China is not likely to make any meaningful contribution towards conflict resolution in Afghanistan.

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## Notes

1. Fathullah Qaisari, a member of the defense of committee of Wolesi Jirga, is reported to have said that "If Beijing doesn't do so, then there is no use of signing such deals". See "Kabul, Beijing ink MoU on defense cooperation," *Afghanistan Times*, October 19, 2015, <http://afghanistantimes.af/kabul-beijing-ink-mou-on-defense-cooperation/>
2. "Joint Statement between the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan", 18 May 2016, <http://ceo.gov.af/en/news/joint-statement-between-the-peoples-republic-of-china-and-the-islamic-republic-of-afghanistan>
3. For more information, see <http://hoa.gov.af>
4. "Joint Press Release of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group on Afghan Peace and Reconciliation", Media Note, Office of the U.S. State Department Spokesperson, Washington, January 11, 2016, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251105.htm>

## Appropriating Knowledge as Property: Understanding How China Engages with the New Global IPR Regime

G. Geethika

*Intellectual property rights (IPR), in its modern sense, have been protected in the People's Republic of China since 1979, following the country's ideological transformation towards 'socialist modernisation.' Subsequently, China has acceded to the major international conventions for the protection of IPR. Yet, the underlying political and social scenario in China did not promote a conducive environment to enforce IPR as desired by the international legal system. Since the accession to WTO in 2001, the approach has changed dramatically and China has been actively promoting IPR as a tool for economic growth and development through innovative activity, FDI inflows and technology transfers. Domestically, protection of intellectual property has also been established by amending government legislation, administrative regulations, and decrees in the areas of patent, copyright and trademark. Since 2001, China has been exhibiting an unprecedented uproar in the number of intellectual property applications. Yet, China still manages to dishearten the promoters of the new global IPR regime through increasing instances of piracies, enforcement issues, and other IPR violations. China has been in the "priority watch list" of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) from 2007.*

*This paper attempts to study the transformation in Chinese legislations toward protection to intellectual property in the wake of the TRIPS Agreement and the new global IPR regime. Further, the study intends to shed light on the divergences in the approaches adopted by China and India towards taming the new IPR regime, so as to better absolve India's IPR concerns. The paper shall have two parts: the first part shall review the early approaches to the idea of knowledge as property in China and the subsequent changes in the wake of the new IPR regime; the second part shall assess the disagreements between China and the new IPR regime and the global implications.*

## Introduction

**G**lobal trade concerns in the new knowledge economy have, undoubtedly, compelled developed economies and international businesses to pursue stringent and universal intellectual property rights (IPR) and regulations throughout the world to secure valuable returns for those investments. The new global IPR regime piloted by the Agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has triggered unfathomable and multifarious implications for nations, firms and individuals alike. With the constitution of the TRIPS Agreement, IPR has become a global phenomenon that trenches so deeply on a myriad of issues including economics, culture, health, commerce, creativity, and intellectual freedom, with multifaceted implications for developed and developing countries (Maskus 2002; Reid 2003; May 2010).

Relationship between IPR and economic development is extremely complex and contentious. Developed countries and transnational corporations have been eagerly propagating evidence that exhibit that stronger IPR protection could improve development prospects if they are properly structured. Considerable evidence suggests that international flow of technology, through foreign direct investment, joint ventures and technology transfers, depend on the strength of IPRs, among many other factors. Several studies point out that in the contemporary era of new generic technologies, the strength of IPR could influence choices by multinational firms on where to invest and whether to transfer advanced technologies, easily striking a correlation between IPR protection, innovation and economic development (Maskus 2002; Falvey & Foster 2006; Sweet & Maggio 2015; Kalanje 2017). At another end, developing countries that dispute the rationale of the new global IPR regime have been able to generate much proof to suggest a dialectic ideological disharmony between IPR, development and human rights (Geethika 2016).

The new IPR regime, initiated by the TRIPS Agreement and subsequent developments, has been a grim experience for the developing countries, especially in comprehending the rationale and significance of a universal and uniform outlook on knowledge as property. Both China and India have had unique perceptions on IPR and have had to undergo tremendous challenges to synchronise with the new global IPR regime. The paper attempts to understand the institutional initiatives in the People's Republic of China (PRC) in this regard to learn some valuable lessons for better placing IPR in the Indian panorama. The study aims to access the position attributed to intellectual property in the ideological, political, economic and legal domains of PRC in the wake of its attempt to harmonise with the global liberal economy and the new IPR regime.

The first part of the paper shall dwell into the history of conceptual and legislative perceptions on intellectual property protection in China before being

exposed to the clutches of the WTO system. Subsequently, we will be looking at how China tackles the challenges in establishing compliance with TRIPS and the implications on China's innovation, technology transfer as well as other concerns like access to medicines and traditional knowledge. This observation could help draw comparisons and contrasts between the national legislations of China and India and its consequences.

## History of Intellectual Property Protection in China

Though history reveals traces of intellectual property (IP) protection in China since the invention of printing, IP legislations have been fundamentally a response by various Chinese polities (the pre 1949 Republic of China, Taiwan, the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong) to the regular litany of European and American lawyers, diplomats, and businesses about the lack of respect for IPR in China. Therefore, the genesis of intellectual property protection in China is strongly aligned with its international trade relations, with the first stage spanning from 1800s to early 1900s and the second stage is marked by the Open Door Policy era in the lead-up to WTO membership (Schiappase 2004). A point to be emphasised here is that though these legislations were rather shallow and did little to propagate the concept of IP amongst the Chinese people, the historical perceptions of IP were derived from the philosophies of Confucianism and Taoism (Stoianoff 2012).

## Intellectual Property and Its Protection in Imperial China

The basic assumptions about the nature of intellectual property that arose during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in Europe are fundamentally at odds with the traditional Chinese view of the role of intellectuals in society. Ever since the Han dynasty (206 BCE-221 CE) replaced the Qin Dynasty (255 BCE-206 BCE), law in China has been (at least in theory) subordinate to Confucian ethics, and the sphere of behaviour governed by civil law in the West remained outside of the legal system in China except in-so-far as the latter provided ultimate (and mostly symbolic) support for the relationships and family structures which formed the matrix for Confucian ethics (Alexander 1997).

Confucianism rejected personal reward as a negative expense to others. In fact, Confucian principles and the general absence of formal laws in Imperial China precipitated a neglect of individual rights, especially in intellectual property (Yu 2002). Innovation belonged not to the inventor, but to the community and 'science was a social enterprise.' Taoist principles stressed the harmony and balance in social order. As a result, dynastic and imperial rulers emphasized societal rights over the rights of individuals. The right to reproduce one's own work or to exclude others from doing the same was not an accepted individual right (Alexander

1997). Yet, we can identify certain regulations on intellectual property protection being promulgated by the imperial rulers, primarily intended to appease traders.

Professor William Alford (1995), in his seminal work *To Steal a Book Is an Elegant Offense: Intellectual Property Law in Chinese Civilisation*, elaborates the various legislations in imperial China. Beginning with a rather non-comprehensive edict regulating publication issued by Emperor Wenzong of the Tang dynasty in A.D. 835, the first patent legislation called the ‘Reward Regulations for Promoting Technology Development’ enforced in 1898, the Copyright Law of the Qing Dynasty 1910, the Kuomintang regime’s Temporary Statute on Technology Reward of 1912, the Trademarks regulations passed in 1923, and the Patent Law of 1944, the regulations were the result of concerted efforts by foreign traders to protect their products (Yu 2002; Stoianoff 2012). Yet, political instability side-lined the legal reforms and the legislation remained largely unused. Moreover, the laws presumed a legal structure and consciousness that did not exist in China at that time. Also the lack of domestic education in IPR and strong regional protectionism and high corruption hampered the patent system and kept China more or less free from intellectual property hurdles (Thomas 2004).

At this stage, comparing the ideological aptitude of China and India, reveals some parallels unique to the Asian culture of accentuating community over the individual. Yet, at the political front, India has had to bow to the colonial interests and enforced laws on copyright, trademark and, later, patents (Geethika 2016).

### Intellectual Property Protection in People’s Republic of China

The last 60 years of IP policy in China is distinguished by the stark contrast in ideologies during the Maoist era and the Open Door Policy era. During the first phase of People’s Republic of China, Mao utilised ‘Confucian morality’ as a basis for ‘communist morality,’ reinforced the secondary role of individual rights against the prosperity of the community and did little to change the conception of intellectual property as a collectively owned idea (Yu 2002; Stoianoff 2012). In 1963, property rights in patents were abolished altogether and following the Cultural Revolution in 1966 intellectual property laws were completely ignored (Willard 1996; Gassmann et al. 2012).

The Open Door Policy Era begun by Deng Xiaoping changed the economic trajectory of China towards “socialist modernization” and China embarked on a complete and gradual reorientation of its economy, opening its markets to foreign investment and technology (Palmer 2001). Since 1978 the PRC began to come to terms with the western tradition of acknowledging individual exclusionary ownership rights over property. Under the influence of Western economies, especially the US, in less than three decades China established a comprehensive network of IP



legislations and became signatory to all major international IP conventions, solely aimed at attracting foreign investment (Yu 2002; Stoianoff 2012; Bochańczyk-Kupka 2016).

Several governmental departments have been instituted to attend to IPR matters, including, Trademark Office of State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC), State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO) for patents and integrated circuit layout, National Copyright Administration of China (NCA), Antimonopoly & Anti-unfair competition Enforcement Bureau of SAIC, Administration of Quality Supervision Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) for geographical indications, Ministry of Agriculture, State Forest Administration, Ministry of Commerce, General Administration of Custom and Regional IPR bureaus. This list cannot be considered to be exhaustive, as other agencies, such as State Drug Administration (for fake pharmaceutical products) or the Ministry of Culture (for copyrighted materials and their markets) may also play a role in the enforcement process (US DOC 2005).

The legal framework for protecting intellectual property in the PRC is built on three national laws passed by the National People's Congress: 1982 Trademark Law, the 1984 Patent Law, and the 1990 Copyright Law. The patent law included a first-to-file principle, the establishment of a national patent office with jurisdiction to oversee re-examination of patents, and protection of inventions, utility models and designs (Drahos 2002; Zhang 2013). Though the judicial system did not set up any specialized IP Court, there are intermediate people's courts with exclusive jurisdiction over patent cases (Gassmann et al. 2012).

During this phase of developing the IP legislation conducive to the interests of the international economy, one cannot ignore the role played by the US in moulding the regulations.

### **Influence of the United States of America on China's IPR Policies**

The Open Door Policy era triggered interests of the United States in the affairs of China. The establishment of diplomatic relations with the US was followed by a US-China Bilateral Trade Agreement in 1979 and, among other clauses, it provided for equivalent treatment of copyright, patent, and trademark protection in both countries. Yet, the 1980s saw the development of a Chinese economy that seemed to encourage mass infringement despite increased enforcement efforts. In 1991, China was deemed the "single largest pirate world-wide," according to the United States Trade Representative (USTR) (Thomas 2004). Following persistent negotiations and compulsions by the US, the landmark 1992 Memorandum of Understanding on the Protection of Intellectual Property (1992 MOU) was adopted. The 1992 MOU was the first agreement signed by China that focused on legislation.

To comply with this MOU, China amended the Patent Law in 1992, the Trademark Law in 1993, passed the Unfair Competition Law in 1993 to protect business secrets and established IP courts (Stoianoff 2012). The amended Patent Law covered food, pharmaceuticals and chemical inventions, extended patent protection to 20 years, and limited the use of compulsory licenses. Moreover, it required China to accede to the Berne and Geneva Conventions and enact regulations against unfair competition in accordance with Article 10 of the Paris Convention (Yu 2002).

In spite these initiatives, the foreign patent holders were sceptical that the reforms secured adequate protection for intellectual property. As a consequence, China and the U.S. reached a second agreement in 1995, which specifically dealt with “improving the enforcement structure.” Subsequently, a new Accord was reached in 1996, which reaffirmed China’s commitments to protecting intellectual property (Thomas 2004).

At this point, a comparison of the status accorded to intellectual property protection in China and India shows some interesting differences. It is interesting to note that China’s shift in economic policies since the 1979 excited the western economies, especially the US, and they keenly interfered in compelling China to digress from its ideological stand of ignoring intellectual property as individual asset and to deliberately adopt and accede to multiple intellectual property legislations. Alternately, India during this period has had a free reign on deciding the intensity, integrity and variety of intellectual property protection which can be illustrated by the legendary Indian Patent Act, 1970. So, the reforms and the post-socialism transformation represented a unique historical era of organisational, institutional and systemic change in China.

### **Accession to the WTO and Intellectual Property Protection in China since 2001**

On December 11, 2001, China officially became WTO’s 143<sup>rd</sup> member. Although the WTO was established in 1995, it was only after exhaustive calculations and coercions by the US that the People’s Republic of China decided to accede to WTO. Accession to the WTO compelled China to undertake sweeping changes in its legal framework intended to open up China’s exports with steady access to world markets, without dependence on yearly renewals of the most favoured nation treatment by US and other major trading partners (Agarwal & Sahoo 2003).

China’s accession to the WTO was preceded by lengthy and protracted negotiations on the precise terms of accession and an area of meticulous bargaining was IPR. TRIPS compliance necessitated revisions at three levels: new independent judicial administrative protections, upgraded application procedures, and streamlined enforcement mechanisms. China amended and repealed more than

3000 pieces of laws, administrative regulations and departmental rules, harmonizing them with international standards and treaties. Most importantly, the TRIPS Agreement necessitated the acceptance of the 'Most Favoured Nation' Principle and this accentuates the Open Door Policy of Communist China (Maskus 2002; Yu 2002).

In spite of the aforesaid revisions, China's trading partners continue to insist action in the following areas also to establish better compliance with the TRIPS Agreement: removing discrimination to uphold the national treatment principle; restricting compulsory licenses; introducing rental rights and clarifying/enhancing performer rights and broadcast rights; establishing protection for well-known marks, clarifying provisions on prior use and ineligible signs; introducing exclusive legislative protection for geographical indications other than the clauses in Trademark Act, 2001 and Unfair Competition Law; clarifying basic exemptions and coverage of plant and animal varieties; enhance sanctions, particularly preliminary injunctions and seizures, as well as levels of damages; and ensuring the availability of judicial review (Zhang 2013).

Since accession to the WTO, China has achieved unprecedented growth in foreign trade, emerging as one of the largest contenders in the global market. IP legislations have also ascended China to unfathomable realms, enviable to western liberal industrial countries. According to WIPO, the country had topped the world in invention patent applications for three consecutive years by 2013. It had also retained its world ranking in terms of trademark applications for 12 straight years (USTR 2013). In the later years also China continued to be among the top five countries with an average of 29,000 patent applications, while India has never gone beyond 2,500. The US, China and South Korea are the major hotspots of patent activity (IP India 2016; WIPO 2015).

Despite these remarkable results, after more than a decade of participation in the WTO, the overall picture presented by China's WTO membership has remained complex. Since China's accession to the WTO, the United States has brought twenty WTO cases against China, more than twice as many WTO cases as any other WTO member has brought against China. Notwithstanding the multilateral reforms and large-scale crackdowns, significant problems still exist with the enforcement of intellectual property laws in China, especially at the grassroots level and in rural areas. This scenario has been accentuated by the Chinese government's interventionist policies and practices and the large role of state-owned enterprises in China's economy (Palmer 2001; USTR 2013; USTR 2017).

It is this imagery of contradiction that captures our interest to explore as to how People's Republic of China could so easily set aside its Confucius ideology and align with the US to accede to the TRIPS Agreement; how China could so quickly rise to be the most successful benefactor of the patent system with the largest patent

applications per year; and how, in spite of these triumphs, be the country with an almost 'unprotected' IP mechanism; and how China continues to muster the courage to challenge the world leaders in innovations and still trade with them. In spite of having had a history of intellectual property protection mechanism since the British colonial era, India has had a bumpy ride in IP protection since its accession to the WTO and not only have we been unable to ideologically align with the idea of individual rights in knowledge, but also have we been faltering in devising ways to tame the new IPR regime in favour of our health, traditional knowledge and innovation. An examination of the anomalies of the Chinese IP system, as pointed out by its global trade and investment partners, could shed light on our queries.

### Critical Analysis of the IP System in China

The Constitution of PRC acknowledges the importance of ideas and inventions: "[t]he state promotes the development of the natural and social sciences, disseminates scientific and technical knowledge, and commends and rewards achievements in scientific research as well as technological discoveries and inventions." Yet, the regime has been criticized as creating legal institutions but not a "legal system;" as interpreting "rule of law" as "rule by law;" and as perpetuating an increasingly alienated legal culture by passing laws that are essentially unenforceable (Yu 2002). The result of this circumstance has been an IP environment that 'fails' to meet the standards of the international community, primarily in curbing infringement and strengthening enforcement.

### Infringement

The most visible aspect of IPR infringement in China is unauthorized copying of recorded entertainment and software and selling products bearing counterfeit trademarks. Other sectors hardest hit by piracy and counterfeit products are pharmaceuticals, electronics, software, cosmetics, car parts, cigarettes, motor cycles, film and batteries (Maskus 2002; USTR 2017).

The contenders of the Chinese IP system call out various reasons for uncurbed infringement. First, trademark infringement and illegal copying remain profitable and face little opposition, especially in rural and inland regions. Second, enterprises engaged in infringement often are important employers and sources of revenue for local governments. Third, low salaries for public officials may reduce their effectiveness as enforcement agents, while administrative programs may be underfunded. Fourth, legal and technical expertise for administrative and judicial operations is limited despite the existence of special training programs in IPR. The infringers meticulously exploit procedural loopholes, challenge legitimate patents and trademarks, develop ingenious ways of reverse engineering, and callously

penetrate legitimate distribution networks and build undetectably near perfect parallel networks (Maskus 2002; New 2017; USTR 2017).

At another end, one could argue that the tendencies of infringement in China were a result of certain factors like, (a) the Confucian beliefs ingrained in the Chinese culture that calls to people to leave materials and information in the public domain, (b) the country's socialist economic system cemented in Marxist-Maoist principles that foster state ownership of property, (c) the leader's scepticism toward Western institutions bred by China's bitter experiences of repeated attacks by Western imperialist powers since the Opium war, (d) the xenophobic and nationalist sentiments of the populace reinforced by instances like the Tianjin Massacre of 1870, the Boxer Uprising in 1900, and the May Fourth Movement in 1919, (e) the Communist government's censorship and information control policy which forced the people to resort to black market or pirated goods, and (f) the significantly different Chinese legal culture and judicial system which can be traced back to the Western Zhou period (1122-771 B.C.) and derided by the West to be inefficient, arbitrary and cumbersome (Yu 2002; USTR 2017).

## Enforcement

Succumbing to the tremendous international coercion to comply with the WTO standards, China established multiple mechanisms to tackle enforcement issues like specialized IP panels in its civil court system, the National Office for Rectification and Standardisation of Market Economic Order etc. (OECD 2005). Yet, China continues to be in the black list of IP stakeholders due to its poor enforcement mechanism (Stoianoff 2012). The first major dispute on violation of IPR was filed in April 1992. Since 2006, the Office of the USTR placed China on its "priority watch list" for IPR violations, along with eleven other nations. By 2016, the US had more than 20 cases against the China (USTR 2017).

Several aspects at various levels of China's enforcement system – criminal, civil and administrative – contribute to its antagonistic IPR enforcement record. At one end, the major drawback in the system has been pointed out to be China's chronic underutilization of deterrent criminal remedies because the prevalent practice is to file a complaint at the local administrative office instead of adopting the judicial track. Accentuating the crisis is the dilemma that the jurisdiction at the administrative level is diffused throughout a number of government agencies and offices, with each typically responsible for the protection afforded by one statute or one specific area of IP-related law (Gassmann et.al. 2012). Other drawbacks are issues like long delays in enforcement actions and court rulings, corruption and local protectionism, limited resources and training available to enforcement officials, and lack of public education regarding the economic and social impact of counterfeiting and piracy (Lehman 2006).

But, at another realm, it is interesting to find certain other factors. One of the classic reasons for the discontent of the US and foreign investors is the Chinese rule that do not bar patents already filed in another country. This allows domestic companies to swoop in and claim the patent right before the original inventor. The Chinese government maintains control over patent holders, irrespective of private property principles. Compulsory licenses allow the State to appropriate inventions believed to be a benefit to the public (USTR 2013; USTR 2017). Grounds for patent invalidation are broad. Any person who believes a patent should not have been granted can raise issues substantially similar to the issues raised during patent examination. Furthermore, traditional intellectual and cultural dissonance and communist ideas contribute to systemic incongruence. The Chinese did not view technological innovation as a necessary part of cultural development. Widespread respect for IPR in china will require a shift in the cultural climate to value individual innovation (Gabriel 2008).

Also, it is intriguing to find that that still remains several gaps in China's enforcement provisions and the enforcement standards articulated by TRIPS, particularly- procedures for remedying acts of infringement, written decisions and evidence, injunctive relief, and damages. China hesitates to include many of the elements required in TRIPS, does not expressly extent Berne Convention protection to computer software, is silent on trade secrets, and the Patent Law probably will not provide for the protection of layout-designs of integrated circuits as required by TRIPS (Dessler 1995). These anomalies have continued to distinguish China from other developing countries for its mettle to play one to one with the world leaders in intellectual property, including the US, and yet claim China's share of technology, innovation as well as trade.

## Conclusion

Commentators have long identified multiple factors for the lax attitude to IPR in China. In spite of drastic political and ideological transformations, the cultural tradition of the country disregarded the need for any legal protection for intangible property rights in innovations. However, changes in both domestic and foreign market principles have pushed the Chinese government toward patent reform, particularly in consonance with the TRIPS Agreement and the WTO. In most respects, China has been successful in appeasing the international community with its new regulations and institutions for IPR protection. However, countries like the US have been persistently exposing glitches in key areas, such as criminal enforcement, online infringement, protection of trade secrets, enforcement relating to trade secrets misappropriation, measures for copyright protection on the Internet, and measures conditioning government procurement.

Scholars often argue that the cause for China's inability to curtail widespread flouting of its IP laws and failure to ensure adequate protections for intellectual property, may be the historical and cultural roots that are profoundly different from Western countries, which militate against the establishment of an effective intellectual property rights system in China (Lehman 2006). Some scholars claim that a rights consciousness is sorely lacking in China. Further, without adequate education with regard to IPR, there is little awareness that infringement is a crime. Most notably, the United States Trade Representative (USTR) reports of 2013 and 2016 clearly blame the Chinese officials of being "acting without fear of any legal challenge" and compelling foreign enterprises to transfer technology as a precondition for investment approvals (USTR 2013; USTR 2017).

At another realm, it is worth the attention of the developing countries to observe that China appears to have framed a strategic motive in agreeing to the western conceptualisation of knowledge as property and in pursuing their approach to innovation and technology transfer. It is illustrated by the following deliberations. In 2006 the Action Plan for IPR Protection was created, followed by the National Intellectual Property Strategy in June 2008. Together, they aim at propelling China to be one of the world's most innovative countries by 2020. Five core angles were identified to realise the objectives, namely, improve the IP regime; promote the creation and utilisation of IP; enhance the protection of IPRs; prevent abuse of IPRs; and foster a pro-IPR culture (Gabriel 2008).

Ideological and political differences may have caused China and India to cross paths and chose separate trajectories of growth. But, beyond all political differences, India shares much with China. Both inherit a predominantly community-oriented culture common to Asian countries, legacies of civilisation and knowledge, historic trade triumphs, and most recently, an undeterred urge to be an economic and technological superpower. So, it is imperative and intelligent to learn from the other on how to contest and comply with the new global economic order to achieve one's goal. Understanding how China engages with the new IPR regime should help India to mend its system so as to achieve international compliance without compromising public welfare.

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# Trends in the Gulf Migration and Threats to the Economy and Society of Kerala

Jadeeda. K

**M**igration from Kerala to the Arab Gulf<sup>1</sup> countries has been one of the most significant phases in the socio-economic transformation of the state of Kerala. The state has been at the forefront of sending labourers to the Gulf countries mainly after the oil boom in the 1970s. It resulted in the flow of huge remittances that have been the backbone of the state's economy since then. The Malayali migration to various Gulf countries occurred mostly in the last quarter of the 20th century due to the economic boom coupled with the discovery of oil.

Many factors had contributed to the job seekers to move from Kerala for the Gulf. The economy of the state has certain specific indicators like; low and declining work participation rate, high rate of unemployment, high density of population, stagnant agriculture, low per capita domestic product and backward industrial sector, etc. compared to other Indian states, to migrate to the oil-rich Gulf. The structural changes that occurred in the oil-producing countries in this region due to a quadrupling of the price of oil in the early 1970s provided new opportunities for better employment. This paper addresses the actual and potential threat of return migration from the Gulf by analysing the recent trends in Malayali migration to the gulf.

As in the past years, the Gulf countries remained the prime destination of Kerala emigrants. However, the proportion of Kerala emigrants in the Gulf countries in 2014 was slightly less than the level in 2011. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) attracted 38.7 per cent of the emigrants from Kerala, the highest among all countries. However, in 2014, its relative share declined from 38.7 per cent in 2011 to 37.5 in 2014. A notable change between 2011 and 2014 was the decline in the proportion of emigration for all Gulf countries. The proportion of Kerala emigrants in the Gulf countries declined from 89.4 per cent in 2011 to 86.4 per cent in 2014. The country that contributed most to this declining pattern was Saudi Arabia (Kerala Migration

Survey (KMS) 2014). KMS 2011 indicated that many of the major centres of emigration in Kerala already experienced a decline in the number of emigrants or emigrants per household. For example, Malappuram district which had sent out the largest number of emigrants for a district in 2011 as well as in earlier years had fewer emigrants per household in 2011 than in 2008.

Various surveys conducted by the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) on Kerala Migration reveal that remittances constitute a significant source of development and the state receives large amounts of money from abroad as workers' remittances mainly from Arab Gulf countries. A significant portion of the state GDP (nearly 35 per cent) depended on remittances, especially from the Gulf countries. Definitely a good share of these remittances comes to the migrant family and region and is used for their bread and butter, and the rest is used for routine expenses and commercial purposes. However, the recent trends show that there are an alarming number and growth of return migrants from the Gulf to Kerala. Though it is a natural process, its impact on the society and economy of Kerala is significant. Various local, regional and international developments in the fields of social, economic and political have contributed to this phenomenon.

### Reasons of Return Migration from the Gulf

Nair and Rajan (2006) found that health-related reasons, expiry of contracts, lower level of job satisfaction and sometimes the difficult working and living conditions at the destination are some of the major factors contributed to the phenomenon of return migration. But that study was conducted more than ten years back. Now the intensity and context of return migration have changed tremendously.

The global economic crisis of 2008 created a massive decline in the economic development of West Asia, and therefore, employment opportunities got reduced. It also decreased the demand for foreign workers in the region, especially in the Gulf countries. As a result of the economic crisis, a large number of expatriate workers in the fields of construction, trade, manufacturing, agriculture and domestic services in various Gulf countries lost their jobs and were forced to return to their mother countries. Since the Indian expatriates, especially the Keralites, constitute a large segment of them, the crisis adversely affected the dreams of this large workforce. As the by-products of economic crisis, labour problems such as expiry of the contract, the decline in salary and employment opportunities, low savings from migration and compulsory repatriation, are identified as causes for their return.

The KMS, conducted by CDS, has been analysing Keralites' migration patterns for two decades and has published six reports on it. The number of Kerala migrants who returned from abroad (REM) is 12.5 lakh in 2014, up from 11.5 in 2011, 11.6 in 2008, 8.9 lakh in 2003 and 7.4 lakh in 1998. The economic crisis in the Arab Gulf,

as well as the Nitaqat law in Saudi Arabia, affected the people of Kerala than any other states because of their large concentration in the Gulf region (Zachariah and Rajan 2016: 66- 68).

The post-Arab Spring developments in the West Asian region such as economic slowdown due to the global recession, the decline of oil price, political instability in Iraq, Yemen and Syria and the threat of IS together pose a great challenge to the expatriate community living in the Gulf countries. As a result of this series of unending crises, many Gulf countries introduced and implemented various measures and reforms to restrict the number and freedom of expatriates. Consequently, thousands of them, including Keralites, were forced to leave their job and return home. Since there is uncertainty about the economic and political situation in the West Asian region, the people depending on the countries in the troubled region are more vulnerable.

Now the returned emigrants have become demographically, politically and economically significant component of Kerala's population. Actually, the flow of return emigrants to the state started in the 1980s consequent upon the completion of some major projects, increasing competition from migrants from other Asian countries, fall in wages, and restrictive policies towards migrant workers by the governments of Gulf countries. By 1986 almost 40,000 migrants had returned. By 1998, the number increased to 7.4 lakhs. Return of emigrants from the Gulf countries assumed large dimensions in Kerala in the early 1990s (Kerala State Planning Board 2015).

Today, most of the Gulf countries are concerned about the regional political unrest, youth bulge and unemployment among them, and most significantly the symptoms of the beginning of the end of the oil era. These have compelled most of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to 'rebalance' their demographic imbalance, particularly due to outnumbered expatriates. Since 2013, Saudi Arabia alone has expelled 900,000 illegal migrant workers. Oman has plans to reduce the proportion of expatriates to 33 per cent of the countries' population, and Kuwait has a plan to dismiss 55 per cent of the current expatriate population to one million expatriates in the next ten years (Al Lawati 2015:23). Millions of Indians have been working in many West Asian countries, especially in the GCC. The Arab Gulf countries have been depending on foreign labourers for their development projects, especially since the oil boom in the 1970s. As a result of this trend, today, it is one of the factors behind youth unemployment and population pressure in the Arab Gulf countries. Though there are many reasons to this expected but shocking reverse migration of Keralites from the Gulf, two factors need special attention—the role of Nitaqat and economic slowdown, as major reasons behind the recent inflow of returnees.

## Impacts of Saudization and Nitaqat

The number of expatriates in Saudi Arabia has almost doubled from 5.3 million in 2000 to 10.2 million in 2015 (Kemp 2016). Another interesting thing is that the kingdom employs the second largest number of Non-Resident Keralites (NRK) after the United Arab Emirates, is one of the main sources of remittances to Kerala. The recent Nitaqat (Saudization) programme, aimed at regulating the expat labour market by reserving 10 per cent jobs for locals, had evoked fears that job opportunities for expats in Saudi Arabia were waning. It has been created fears in several parts of the country as the reverse migration of Indian labourers working in Gulf countries intensify, which may result in a decline in remittances and Non-Resident Indians (NRI) deposits in India.

Most of the oil-producing countries in the Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia, have been following their own model of economic development, especially with the presence and support of expatriates. Now the Saudi economic model is under threat due to the decline in oil prices. It has pushed the kingdom's budget deep into the red and the economy close to recession. It forced the authority to intensify efforts to Saudisation of the workforce for adjusting to lower oil prices and also to create more private sector employment. This move was in the wake of slower economic growth, a youthful population, struggle to create more public sector jobs, and the urgent need to create more employment for its own people. The same socio-economic pressure to reduce the number of migrants is likely to play out in other Gulf countries. According to UN calculations, there are 10.1 million migrants in Saudi Arabia, 8.1 million in the UAE, 2.9 million in Kuwait, 1.8 million in Oman, 1.7 million in Qatar and 700,000 in Bahrain. Most importantly, they constitute more than half of the native population in many of these countries (Kemp 2016).

The term Saudization denotes the policy introduced by the government of Saudi Arabia to employ their own nationals in various services. Actually, the policy was initiated in the mid-90s; it gathered momentum only in late 2000s, particularly during and after the advent of the Arab Spring. It was Article 26 of the Saudi Labor law (2006) supplemented by several resolutions and circulars form the basis of the Saudization policy initiative. It is nothing but an idea to replace the large chunk of expatriate workers with Saudis citizens. The distribution and composition of larger expatriate groups in Saudi Arabia show that the Indian community, which accounts for about 1.42 million, forms the largest expatriate group in Saudi Arabia. The term "Nitaqat" (in Arabic) means 'ranges' or 'categories'. It requires that 10% of the workforce in all firms be Saudi nationals. Enterprises are classified into Premium, Green, Yellow and Red based on the level of compliance" (Tom and Sreedev 2013: 2-3).

A Major share of the Gulf migrants from Kerala working in Saudi Arabia constitutes 5.74 lakh in the kingdom which accounts for about 28% of the total Keralites in the Middle East. Importantly the lion share of them is from the Malabar region, particularly from Malappuram. It is reported that about 2.5 lakh small and medium enterprises are likely to fall in the red zone as a result of the new law introduced by the Saudi government (P 2015: and Basheer 2013). A lion share of the Indian expatriates in Saudi Arabia works as helpers in basic engineering and services. The Malayalis constitute the majority of those working in small grocery stores, restaurants and boofiyas<sup>2</sup> in the kingdom would be the worst affected. Its impact can be seen in all service sectors of Kerala that depend on the money repatriated from the Gulf. It has affected financially, a large number of families who depends on the money sent by their relatives employed in the Nitaqat red zone in Saudi Arabia. Most of these affected families belong to the Malabar region (Tom and Sreedev 2013: 3). New labour policies in the Gulf countries, especially policies like Nitaqat and such policies of giving a larger share of jobs for natives, abandonment of large scale construction, made the return of unskilled labours to their home country. The state-wise distribution of these return migrants in India from abroad shows, Keralites constitute nearly 50 per cent (Jabir 2014). Anyhow the recent Nitaqat (Saudization) programme, aimed at regulating the foreign labour force by reserving 10 per cent jobs for locals, has been threatening employment opportunities for expats in Saudi Arabia, including Malayalis.

### Global Economic Recession and Decline in Oil Price: The Kerala Experience

In 2008, the Indian workers constituted around 6 million in the GCC countries, and 60 per cent of them worked in the construction field. Hundreds of thousands of workers in the Gulf have returned to India due to the delay in execution of projects, international economic recession. Since the largest group of foreigners in UAE is from India, comprising about 40% of the population of the UAE and the former continues to be a prime destination of most of the Indian expatriates, the largest number of returnees to India during the recession period was mainly from there (46.4 %) and Keralites (Shamnad 2011: 1-2 and Prakash 2013: 52).

Though India has experienced some positive changes due to the decline in the international crude oil price since July 2014, there are some negative aspects too. Whenever the oil revenues decline, countries that export crude oil (mainly the gulf countries) will try to tighten their belts by downsizing their foreign labour force in which Indians dominate and emphasising local production. Thanks largely to over five million Indian expatriates there, India became the largest recipient of remittances in the world which topped \$70 billion in 2013. If there is a decline in this huge

amount of remittances, that can have a serious impact on remittance-dependent States like Kerala (Sachdev 2014).

As nearly 90% of emigration from Kerala is directed towards the Gulf region, and much of the economy of this region depends on the price of oil, future emigration from Kerala and remittances to Kerala could be affected very significantly in the coming years due to the fall in the price of international crude oil. Unlike the global crisis of 2008–09 which was a relatively short-term problem, this new development could have a long-term effect on the economy of the Gulf region and the economies which depend on the remittances from this region. The situation could be different in this case as the lower oil price regime could last over a much longer period this time and have lasting, long-term impacts on migration, wages and labour markets (Zachariah and Rajan 2016: 71). As Abhishek Waghmare quotes K.C. Zachariah,

With the fall in global oil prices, profits of Gulf companies have declined. This has had an immediate impact on money sent by people from Gulf to India, and particularly Kerala. Declining oil prices reduced the amount of remittance money in the short term in 2015-16. As this economic slowdown is a sustained one, the number of workers emigrating outside Kerala is going to decrease gradually. Money sent by professionals like engineers and doctors will increase while that sent by workers—who currently dominate remittances—will decline”, said Zachariah (Waghmare 2016).

“Sixty per cent of India’s remittances come from Gulf countries, which suffered the most due to a decline in crude oil prices (Saha 2016). It has declined for the first time in six years, falling 2.2 per cent. “More than half of India’s remittance income comes from the GCC. Remittances to India from the GCC amounted to \$35.9 billion in 2015-16 down from the \$36.7 billion seen in the previous year. If oil prices remain weak for an extended period, economic activity in GCC will come down sharply as the fiscal stress mounts”(Raghavan 2016).

The slowdown could come down heavily on expatriate workers, experts say, because the knock-on effects of the economy in bad shape could include widespread salary cuts, stoppage of increments and, worst of all, potential mass lay-offs. Already, oil refiners, banks and shipping firms, among others, are slashing thousands of jobs (and Rahul 2016)

The analysis of Pulapre Balakrishnan is quite important in this critical juncture.

The dramatic decline in the price of oil and the impact this has had on growth in the Arabian Gulf region recently has the implication that this external stimulus to the Kerala economy may gradually peter out, and the State’s political managers would have to devise an alternative strategy for growth (Balakrishnan 2016).

Thus the consequences of a decline in the gulf economy can seriously affect the

state. Because when remittance contributes only 3.7 per cent of India's GDP, its share in Kerala GDP is above 30 per cent. It shows the adverse impact will be more on the Kerala economy, which relies upon the gulf money for their development and prosperity than any other community in the state.

### Impacts and Issues of Return Migration

According to the surveys conducted by CDS on Kerala migration, the number of emigrants from Kerala to gulf has increased steadily and significantly over the years, from 13.6 lakhs in 1998 to 24.0 lakhs in 2014. Many return migrants resist accepting low paid jobs in the domestic market. As a result, many return migrants started their own business enterprises which have created jobs for unemployed youth in the domestic labour market. Return migrants also migrate to other states in India, searching for new business opportunities (Azeez and Mustiary 2009:59).

One of the important tragic situations of the returned migrants is the financial crisis they face. Though they were more or less successful in earning a sufficient amount of money, the majority of them were a big failure in savings and investments for the future. Because they focused much on consuming luxury items and most of their investments were in non-income generating items. As a result of this unplanned economy, their current financial condition became inadequate to meet their expenditure.

Considering the changes in the immigration policies of countries especially the policies like nitaqat introduced by governments of Saudi Arabia and other similar measures introduced by other Gulf countries, the return and reintegration of migrant workers got considerable attention from various ministries of centre and state. The central government of India had introduced several programmes to promote the welfare of returned migrants. For example, the Financial Services Division of the Ministry of Indian Overseas Affairs provides a range of options to migrants, including returned migrants, wanting to make investments in the country. In Kerala, the government has initiated several measures to integrate the returned migrants, beginning with creating a database of returnees and offering loans at subsidized rates to set up business ventures (Sasikumar and Rakkee 2015: 33-34).

According to K.C. Joseph, the former Minister for Rural Development and Non-Resident Keralite Affairs (NORKA) who left the portfolio recently, "It has not reached a state of massive exodus, but sooner or later, we will have to face a problem here." Addressing a meet the press programme at the Press Club in Kannur, he said, "the rehabilitation of the people returning from Gulf countries would be a major challenge in the coming days". He added the Kerala government's "decision to set up a Commission for Non-Resident Keralites with quasi-judicial powers was taken in view of this upcoming challenge. He also said banks should take the initiative to



provide financial assistance to the Gulf returnees for their rehabilitation”. At the same time, he criticized the reluctant policy of banks to provide them loans through the NRI remittance constitutes a huge amount.

As Jabir (2014) found that though the governments could introduce and implement various programs for the returnees, there exist a lot of challenges in their reintegration and rehabilitation process. One of the major challenges is the current weak economic position of the state coincidentally as a result of the decline in the remittance from gulf too. He observes the nature of problems and challenges in the reintegration process may be personal or situational. Though personal problems like lack of adjustment with family and home society is not a big problem, the problems of replacement migration and subsequent economic and employment challenges pose a great barrier to the Government and other related departments. He adds, the indebtedness and unfavourable financial condition of the returnees, the high level of unemployment in the state, lack of alternative systems, lack of information about return programs and its non-utilization and the huge number of labour migration from other states to Kerala creates the phenomenon more complex to solve (Jabir 2014: 121). *The Times of India* (2014) reported that while the Kerala migrant success story continues, Kerala is also grappling with a complex array of social and economic problems faced by Gulf returnees. Due to the lack of entrepreneurial opportunities in the state, many returned migrants are forced to remain unproductive and face uncertainty for the rest of their lives.

While delivering the keynote address at a national seminar on ‘Kerala’s Development Oxymora’ organised by Mahatma Gandhi University on March 2016 at Kottayam, C.P. Chandrasekhar, a renowned economist said, remittances were more than one-third of the State’s net domestic product. It is 1.5 times the Government’s annual expenditure, he said. If the reduction in the flow of remittance can affect the state economy in such a way, the northern part of the state and people will suffer more. Because they constitute the lion share of Kerala migrants in the gulf country and they dominate with the maximum number of returnees. Another serious issue is that majority of the migrants from this region in the Gulf countries belong to unskilled labourers, and a sizable number of them have already returned home without much savings in hand at home, and more are about to return.

## Conclusion

Since Keralites constitute a significant share of the Indian Diaspora in GCC, their families are very much concerned about the on-going difficult and long-lasting political and economic transition there in the post Arab Spring years. Economic slowdown due to global recession and decline of oil price, geopolitical challenges by the influence of Islamic State, tensions like Saudi led invasion on Yemen, domestic

population pressure due to high unemployment rate parallel to the localisation policies of many Gulf countries has affected the existence of most of the expatriates there in the form of forced return to home country. For Kerala, the return migration from GCC due to political instability and economic slowdown is hardly a new phenomenon. The state has experienced such problems during the first Gulf war in the early 1990s and later during the economic recession in 2008- 2009. But this time it is quite serious in terms of the causes and consequences.

Plausibly, whenever the region is in trouble, due to political or economic reasons, it tends to affect the social and economic security of Kerala. Now that the Gulf boom has apparently come to an end, it is likely to set in new levels of crisis in Kerala. Earlier, even as the Gulf wars ended, there was still hope of an employment boom, and the Keralites were able to capitalize it. But now the crises in the Gulf region are multilevel, and there is little hope that this would be easily sorted out. Yet, most of the Gulf returnees are keeping their fingers crossed.

## Notes

1. The study uses the term 'Arab Gulf' to denote Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. They are the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Hence, the study uses the Arab Gulf, Gulf and GCC interchangeably.
2. An Arabic word for cafeteria.

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# Liberating the Scientific Method: The Case of Hakim Ajmal Khan

Saad Ahmad

## Introduction: Whose Scientific method?

Are we living in the last age of reason? Are we going through the end of 'our' literary traditions? Are we at a threshold where organised literati are eating our knowledge?<sup>1</sup> For some, these are essential questions in a world where modern imaginary has blurred imaginaries of those considered as traditional, non-modern, Eastern, Oriental, Far-East or third worldists. Our imaginations, experiences and ideas of development are dictated by the very modern ways of looking at things. Political and institutional networks of what people call modern have maintained an invisible territory. The rules it observes are animalistic. As for animals, the jungle despite all rumours of wildness has a subjective relation with the invisible territory. For them, the territory is a matter of palpability and feeling. Both palpability and feeling fell into the category of perception, a broader faculty to shape, train and subdue the territorial seeding. It can raise questions on all form of the feeding set into the faculties of perception. This makes our study to break the territoriality of the disciplines and images explained by modern imaginary. Here, we are talking about 'givenness' of knowledge which refers social sciences and humanities following the borderline laid down by natural sciences. In theory, it is an acceptable work of the Western literati but in practice, the territorialisation of the knowledge yields behaviours such as of animals. The lion is the king of the jungle, the efficient controller of the territories. Leaders of other smaller territories may prefer a language king speaks, but considering themselves as sub-animal other subjects communicate in a language which pleases the lord, the king. Whosoever speaks language other than of the king, he/she must face the wrath of the king (Said 1978; Wokoek 2009).

For thousands of years, Hindustan preserved "an amass of gold," "silk road," "brain and wisdom," "systematic political structure," "sound social base," "organised

economics,” and “an exploratory spirit to reveal secrets of nature which heals the body as well as the soul.” This description is related to the narrator of Hindustan/ Indian traditional culture. Unlike the Western look at us (as feminine and oriental entity), Indian culture is a compound of multi-layered masculinities.<sup>2</sup> All those who attacked, invaded, penetrated and dwelt in Hindustan, subsequently added their most masculine contribution to traditional culture. Indian culture absorbed all of them and disowned them who tried to destroy it. This makes us to see the physical persuasion of *firangis*, Westerners and White race as more aggressive than brown Arabs, Persians and Mangols.<sup>3</sup> In this regard, it is a paradox that we do not feel the mental binding with racist interpretation of the sciences; natural; physical; and life.<sup>4</sup> Instead, we try to disrobe our multi-layered masculine clad in pursuit of the purity of the culture. We are putting our masculinities off, one by one. This way of searching purity seems a foreign invent. It could unravel different tyrannies of the self by taking us closer to the totalitarian way of governing the natural, social and political spheres. On the contrast, we feel what we are told to feel. We persuade the history. A historical persuasion asks not to let the historical people go because they are invaders, attackers, destroyers and rulers. This view has been linked with an episteme, a subject of the European project of “othering.” As a result, one finds a sudden encounter with the very Arab, Persian or Mughal as an enemy of so-called insurgent culture, sometime considered as *devta* (god) who protected locals from internal tyranny’ (Zakariya 2006; Naqvi 2016; Lelyveld 1993: 189-192; Ludden 1993: 251).

The stark difference between tradition and modernity is a modern construct too. Most of the contemporary traditions are modern. It is the convenience of the modern objectivism and its analytical tools which justified a set of ideas as traditional. In this sense, the traditional is invented, a thesis by Eric Hobsbawm. A substantial part of contemporary religio-cultural consciousness is the product of ‘invented tradition.’ One becomes worried by observing the instrumentalisation of the history which supervened upon another level of the instrumentalisation often to restore a deeper, inner and ancient expression of the history. Our recent history has now become an epistemic problem of the modern world. And our old history is the problem of our ontological self. Hence, the existence, both are subject to an understanding developed in a very limited cultural experience and biased research tradition. This aspect will lead to explore Orientalist research tradition where Asian Studies; Middle Eastern Studies; Arab Studies; Islamic Studies; Semitic linguistics and Sanskrit Studies are considered a product of last three centuries. During this period, Western research tradition could not venture beyond its political inspiration; study of “Our recent history” of Arabs, Persians and Mongols/Mughals were subject to the so-called academic exploration. All its object was to magnify the warring race whose people follow ‘a demonised prophet’ known for his mysterious, rhythmic

composition called the Koran (the Quran). While in “our ancient history” they promulgated it as “a colossal stake of mythological history.” Through a sophisticated philological enquiry, they approached linguistic worlds found in the East. Significant among them was Sanskrit, a pre-history of European language for Europeans (Wokoeck 2009).

Nevertheless, with the cultural exposure, Western research tradition of studying the Orient got liberalised. It included a rational, though tried to be just, study of the East; in effect of related interests, cultural exposure hindered the missionary activities.

Culture, religion and greater interest of the West mutually agreed to open the front for civilising the barbarians (all those who belong to the faith of Islam along with pitiable faith of Jews and pathetic condition of the Arab Christians living in greater geographical allocation) and disciplining the indisciplined Hindustanis (all those who belong to the idol-worshipping along with “objectionable” faith of Islam<sup>5</sup> and living in a greater geographical allocation). For historians, it is colonialism. Not because of their righteous Enlightenment to civilise the un-civil world; secularise the heathens, pagans, people who exist by magical creeds, *hashasheen* (assassins), idol-worshippers and demon-inflected anti-Christ creatures but to teach them how to live in the world humanely. It also required tutelage; to teach them how to be social in a society and political in the culture. The ‘colonial imagination’ generated such an omnivorous and glutton science whose primary diet was physical and mental labour. For disciplining the undisciplined and civilising the uncivilised colonial rule was interested in projects such as cantonmentisation in territories, meant establishing cantonment in cities, a permanent military residence. For example, among British cantonments in South Asia, the largest were Rawalpindi, Meerut and Ramgarh. The cantonmentisation is not a logistical reality only but its metaphorical leverage with methodological imagination. It informs us about imaginative aspiration as well as strategic vision of the colonial intent.

By this illustration, it is suggested to look at scientific tradition of the West, an indispensable part of the contemporary world experience. Firstly, from Galileo Galilei (d.1642) to the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, one observes a regressive attachment of the scientific method with, seemingly, a progressive methodological course of the modernity. Galilei’s interpretation of Copernican revolution angered the religious structures which was formed on scripturally invented celestial model. Going deeper from Johannes Kepler (d.1630), Tycho Bahre (d.1601) to Nicolaus Copernicus (d.1543), a reader of the history of sciences reaches at a point known for its re-ordering knowledges and intellectual activities. This point is called the Renaissance period.

A student of renaissance period encounters another dynamic background where the very epistemic problem of the “modern” floats along the Muslims. At this point, clearing ourselves with the astronomical model as it is divided into heliocentric and geocentric. Former understands as the earth and planets move around the sun. While latter assumes that Earth is the centre of their motion. Copernican thesis evaluated the former on the opposite pattern of the Ptolemy (d.170 B. C). Revolution heralded by Copernicus interpreted and defended by Kepler and Galilei. This revolution produced scientists such as Einstein, Newton and other philosophers whose name flow with the flow of the tongue.

Rightly caught by modernity, it clouded the rational realm by anti-religious sensationalism. Thus, the narrative of the modernity is simply about an anti-religious sensationalism. It often reveals the ills and psychic character of the internal religiousness of the religion. It presents the rational journey, as for it, explicitly started from Copernicus is essentially a product of conflict between reason and religion. Reason advocated a heliocentric model of astronomy while religion (Christian) supported the geocentric model. The rational journey coming to Einstein and importantly to Darwin becomes the ideological stake of the modernity, hence, the entire scientific method.

Secondly, Copernican and Galilean revolutions were fundamentally religious. Being aware with the text (Biblical) and its different authorial background, they proposed a sincere re-interpretation of the text which was opposed by a physical establishment of the religion as the sole interpreter of its authority, the Church. In result, the Copernican revolution was perceived as it sets the entire astronomy upside down. It changed the definition of the world and its perception. It also changed rather destroyed the religious authority to define the world according to its interpretative static structures like the staticness of the earth in the geocentric model. A few have argued that Copernicus could not have come with the proof for his support to heliocentrism if Galilei’s creative use of telescope could had not provided a proof for the case of heliocentrism, so that for Copernicus.

Thirdly, it was the Catholic Christian scripturalism of the Church which demanded a literal interpretation of the text against the re-interpretative impetus such as of Copernicus as advocate of literal interpretation wanted the man/human being to be a pinnacle of the cosmos. Again, Catholic Church limited itself to its developed interpretational categories where literal interpretation falls at the lowest. Others are allegorical/symbolic, moral and eschatological. It hugely relied on multiple interpretations of the scripture because of its stand that literal Bible is not true. On the contrary, a scripturally true Bible is a Protestant/modern idea (Crowe 2001; Gingerich 2004; Shea and Artigas 2003; Westman 2011; O’Neill 2016). Coming again to the epistemic problem of modernity especially through Latin

translations of the pre-Copernican scientific traditions which drops you at the door of science flourished and developed in Islamic East.

Galileo's Assayer (1623) established the base of scientific method, meant since nature is mathematical, it must be read mathematically. This view de-essentialised the scholastic philosophy as well as Christian theology. Copernican aspirations invited re-reading impetus of the texts of Islamic scientists. Despite their yet developed reliance on the geocentrism, scientists in the Islamic world were also engaged to understand astronomy in a heliocentric sense. Scientists working on heliocentric understanding in the medieval period of Islamic world hardly faced any threat from textualists/scripturalists.

At this point, one may see works of Sufi scientist Qutubuddin Shirazi (d.1311) who emphasised possibility of the heliocentrism. Persian Shi'i Alim Nasiruddin al-Tusi (d.1274) and Arab scientist Ibn Shatir (d.1375) as the precursor of the Copernican system. Ibn Shatir's *al-Nihayah al-Suwaalfe Tashih al-Usool* (Last Quest in Correction of the Principle) is compared with *De revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres) of Copernicus as both agreed upon the methodological quest to solve their astronomical problem. Being a *Muwaqqit* (timekeeper) in a Damascene Umayyad Mosque, he invented a sundial which was kept on the minaret of the same mosque. As for Galilei, the Copernican argument was central to the perception of science and its relation to religion. For Ibn Shatir, the contribution of al-Tusi especially his *Muzdawwajah al-Tusi* (Tusi Couple) and *al-Tazkirahfe Ilm al-Haya'ah* (A Dairy in the Science of Astronomy) were essential that he could hold an exhaustive enquiry in the field of astronomy. Though, Ibn Shatir's astronomical debate moved around geocentrism.

We encounter another slew of scientists mostly worked with al-Tusi in his *Marsad Maragah* (Ilkhanid Maragah Observatory), such as Damascene scientist Al-U'rudi (d.1266), Persian Shafai scientist Al-Katibi (d. 1276), Abu Said Sizji (D. 1020), from Sijistan, Iran and an Arab Ibn Haytham also known as Hazem (d. 1040) whose *Kitab al Manazir* (The Book of Optics) have introduced such ideas which on the one hand expanded the heliocentric debates while on the other, reciprocated the celebrated scientific method.

From Ibn Haytham to al-Tusi each of them included other not mentioned here, influenced Western scientific and philosophical authorities. Few of them are Roger Bacon, Leonardo Da Vinci and Rene Descartes. Ahmad S Dallal, an scholar of cultural traditions of the Islamic world argued that mathematical development as in non-Arab context and pre-Islamic Arab development of empirical astronomical study was combined with the Islamic astronomical development (2010). He also has mentioned David King's observation that timing for *Salah* (prayer) remarkably contributed to the development of an Islamic astronomy. The first volume of the King's *In*



*Synchrony with the Heavens* (2004) has an addition to “Call of the Muezzin”. While Rajep recommends (2001) going through contemporaries to Copernicus such as Brijandi (d.1526) and Khafri (d.1525) who were engaged in synthesising philosophy, metaphysics and astronomy which, for a few, leads to the Galilean conclusion (Sabra 1994; Harrison 2001; Pederson 1992; King 2005; Sardar 1998; Rajep 2001; Freely 2011; Weinert 2009; Iqbal 2007; Guessoum 2008).

The case of astronomy in Islamic world has produced a less ideological and more progressive approach. It generated comparative nuances in the scientific method developed in two different geographies and cultures. To make a closer look at the scientific method in the medieval period of Islam and to unpack the defunctive claim that what is scientific in the Islamic world is the gift of the Greek philosophy - a gift of Europe. Another aspect of the scientific development and use of scientific method may be seen through the works and scientific approaches of al-Tusi. Historians of science in the Islamic period celebrate al-Tusi's Marsad (observatory) as an intellectual space known for inter-cultural engagement and exchange of ideas, for example, his preference to Fu Mengchi, a Chinese scientist in his observatory based in Persia and contribution of Zhmaludding, a Persian scientist in China was the intellectual monitor at the observatory later spent most of his productive time in Beijing. Thus, all the astronomical development in Maragah was because of Ilkhanate Sultanate under the patronage of hitherto known ugliest face in Islamic history, Hulagu Khan (d.1265).

A Scientific method developed in Islamic period preferred to live with other cultures and identities. In fact, unlike our modern conception of identities, scientists in medieval Islamic period were familiar with Indian scientists broadly known as Kerala School of Mathematics. In this regard, George Geverghese pointed out to the possibilities for an intellectual relationship with Indian and Arab scientists specifically with the Kerala School which including Aryabhata (d. 476), a mathematician from modern day Patna and other mathematicians such as Brahmagupta (d.598), Nilkanta Saumya Ji (d.1545) were exchanging ideas with each other. Arab scientists were aware with the Surya Siddhanta of Aryabhata, a heliocentric treatise was translated during Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur (753-775) (Dalen 2002; Ansari 2002; Rajep 2008; Razavi 1996; Ahmad 1991:577; Iqbal 2007: 36; Joseph 2011: 418-435; Rajep 2007).

To shorten the debate, we must mention another two works by Arab scientists. These were most-read pieces until eighteenth-century Europe. These are Abu Bakar Ibn Tufayl known as Abu Bacer or Abu Bekar (d. 1185) and Ibn Nafis was known as Ibn Al-Nafis (d.1288). Ibn Tufayl grown up reading Avicenna philosophy and breathing the Sufi tradition produced the first novel called *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* (Alive Son of Awakening). It splashed the scientific method, relation of the reason with

nature, faculties of feeling, human consciousness, and most importantly the human will to knowledge. The novel is also known as *Philosophus Autodidactus*, the Latin translation. It tells the story of a wild shipwreck child who is reared by a gazelle. On an island, not in contact with any human being, he lives with the gazelle. When Gazelle dies, he, out of curiosity, learns that gazelle has died. His use of reason instructs him to inquire into the physical body of the gazelle, taking him to the ultimate truth. Thus, the novel is an exemplary specimen of the scientific method. It utilises sensory faculties, intelligence and vision. Nevertheless, it has an inner narrative that for continuing the life, one chooses religion and worldly goods. This novel is the second most majestic critique of al-Ghazali (d.1111) since he rejected Avicenna's ideas in his *TahafatulFalasefah* (incoherence of the Philosophy).

Opposing Ibn Tufayl's approach to scientific method, Ibn Nafis produces his celebrated *al-Risalah al-Kamiliyyahfe al-Seerah al-Nabaviyyah* (The Complete Treatise on the Biography of Prophet Muhammad) also known as Fadil ibn Natiq. Being an Avicennan too, Ibn Nafis's narrative explains religion as the universal truth. In the various course of the novel spread over four chapters, he explores that how a feral child learns the existence of knowledge, the existence of God, the religion as the only guide which teaches him the truth of eschatology even the signs of Doomsday are interpreted in a subtle way. This learning is earned by human feeling, consciousness and human knowledge. The very scientific method used by Ibn Tufayl is countered by Ibn Nafis's scientific method. The Latins and later Europeans called the work as *TheologusAutodidactus* (Ibn Tufayl 2012; Ibn al-Nafis 1987; Attar 2007). However, a reader of the history of sciences cannot avoid influences of these two pieces on generations of modern scientific thought.

These two novels are one of the major foundations for the development of Western Enlightenment, therefore, the Scientific method. From Western philosophers of natural rights, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes to Karl Marx, Issac Newton David Hume, Berkley, Leibniz and others have expressed their inspirations from these two novels.

Not speaking the language of the clash (civilisation; identity; understanding, knowledge), a student of Western and Eastern philosophy sees departure point where interpretation in contemporary world and its link with the past is the reflective framework of the present. Catholic emphasis on 'interpretativeness' as the only solution to the problem of science freezes the worldview of the religion. It is static because (in its worldview) the world itself is static. On the contrary, scripturally Islamic emphasis on the 're-interpretativeness' from reading the book of nature to identifying the One God unfreezes views of the religion because the world is dynamic. At this point, one may raise the question that what makes the modern rationality to adopt a nihilistic and anti-society attitude? The Western scientific method is exactly

what the republic of letters had agreed upon. In this sense, three major flavours of Enlightenments such as British, German and French and relatively less intellectual and more practical Enlightenment as American emerge. All of them relied upon a homogenous scientific method. The distinctive element between Eastern and Western scientific method are culture-orientedness and specific geography. These two elements engendered the race as the conscious offshoot and, hence, have discerned the present context of the West.

### Who Speaks for the Scientific Method?

The small theoretical comparison presented above is not the work one is bound to discover Hakim Ajmal Khan on the scientific line. Neither has it been intended to recommend the contrapuntal fantasy one needs to understand by political motives of the Western knowledge. Though, because of its alleged greed for power, it cannot be separated from Eastern scientific development. Science is science. It develops on its own. It welcomes every scientific mind. Whether in the East or West science continued as science. It is in the air; people followed it with the direction of its flows. The significant contribution of the Western scientific approach is often quoted as it turned the journey of knowledge into a breath-taking speed. It has turned the inner microcosm of *therational self* into a mega-project of *the scientific man*. Today, everybody is scientific, not only those who have developed it, but peoples from the East are getting its benefit in a myriad of ways. The resistance to modern science is the resistance to developing the spirit of the science itself.

In recent context of the scientific method and its theoretical underpinning initially by the positivist applaud, disappearance of the society is realised. That is the concern of social scientists too. The very scientific approach to understanding the external natural world seemed unable to reflect on the social problems. Anti-positivists along with the tradition of German philosophy tried to employ an understanding of the society. They started questioning naturalism of the Western sciences. To structure independent idea of the social, the idea of *verstehen* (interpretation), an endeavour to understand the society from the social perspective was introduced. This method sought to adopt tools different in nature. It rejected 'judgementality', 'analysability' and 'generalisability' by advocating the sincere adoption of a method closer to the subjective understanding. It can elaborate norms, methods and values from the perspective of society. Thus, the world sees the current of negativism or post-positivism which has challenged entire structure of the established scientific method. All sort of development in the name of the science of nature started to subdue it by the science of the society. It broke the limits of the territory and opened the gate on post-modern narratives (Feyerabend 1993; Kuhn 2012; Chernilo 2007).

These developments have not yet discussed the process for the establishment of the modern narratives. Logically, it falls into the midway of the journey from the scientific (natural) to the post-scientific (social). Hakim Ajmal Khan lived the midway. He stood quite far from the cultural perspective of the West but from its political perspective, geographically, he was quite close, so far him and his acolytes within the extra-territory. Not aware with G W H Hegel, Karl Marx, Max Weber and Muller whose conceptualisations of India, its religion, culture, economy and society were strengthening the cultural territory of the Western scientific method, Ajmal Khan was engaged to understand the territories of the scientific method too. Simultaneously, he was propelled with the extraterritoriality of the Eastern culture as it asserted even his existence. Assuming, Greek, Arab, Persian, Mongol and Hindu as the essential part of extraterritoriality, he believed, a certain practice of the culture is linked with all of them. Even European scientific development shares much of the contribution of people within the extraterritoriality.

The worldview Ajmal Khan was the result of his extra-territorial imagination. From the ancient Hindu knowledges known for its traditional healing practices expanding from modern day India to deep into the China and at top over the rock of Afghanistan, Islamic knowledges is known for asserting a variety of enlightenments. The assertion insists to liberate from clutches of the fake authorities and interpreter of the society, the flourishing opportunity of Greek (Unani) knowledges. Thus, various intellectual course in histories were imaginative territories of Ajmal Khan. Recently developed professional skills as in Europe, for him, were part of empirical giving of theories flourished in the extra-territory; the East.

One finds enough grounds to resist all contemporary narratives, excluding a few, whether in Western academia or in local Indian expression who consider Ajmal Khan as cultural messiah in the term Western interpretation and perception of the culture invents its way. Contemporary Indian perception of Ajmal Khan is purely a part of Indian institutionalism. Through roaring emotiveness of the Indian nationalist experiences, its institutionalisation becomes the sole agency to update the views of nationalist figures in ways of modern ritual; worshipping nationalism.

At this point, we try to trace a non-institutional perception of Ajmal Khan discussing his views on essentialism of the modern and his approach to dissection of the modern worldview favouring the entire extraterritorial heritage. This leads to paying attention to the modern scientific discovery of “quackery”, as dire reductionism of the Western reasoning. In this period, Westerners preferred to apply reason as a remedy to the temporary problem of the body often claimed that it heals the soul as well, is superstitious practice, and eventually needs a rational systemisation to “examine” the body. In the process, Ajmal Khan observed two parallel developments, first, providing a national-official knowledge and second, on

its basis, institutionalisation of the knowledge. Being a witness of the expanding modernity, he observed that the officialisation of knowledge is explicitly indulging into the classification of the knowledge, for example, rational vs. irrational, traditional vs. modern, religion vs. Enlightenment (with the cultural superiority of the West) and secular, scientific method vs. unscientific/Illogical method. Unable to differentiate between cultures, modern ideas started classifying people on communal grounds; Hindus (assuming sons of the soil) and Muslims (assuming subjective dwellings of Arab as an encampment on essentially a Hindu soil). This was the intrinsic problem of the European culture which through all sorts of interpretations clears the space for itself. The void space is occupied by unbearable lights of the Western reason asked to adopt its rejectionist culture. In the case of India, neither people nor minds were targets of the cultural lights of the reason instead imperial sovereignty and legitimacy were the symptomatic impositions superseded ransoming the resources from colonised territories (Gottschalk 2013:7; Cohn 1996:1).

In the name of civilising Eastern culture, tradition and thought, a reader of the history can see the systematic destruction of using reason. It propelled a mechanised obedience by the cultural replacement. This aspect narrates historical context of colonial greed of Western culture (British rule in India) and opened the gate of revolt against them.

Having a deep-rooted tradition of pluralism, Ajmal Khan's reflection dissects modernity from its self-referral presentation and worldwide perception. This led him to advocate the empiricism of science, on the one hand. Through a systematic intellectual exertion, he tried to convince people that scientific development sees no discontinuity. Thus, scientific method for Ajmal Khan was a continuation of progressive spirit he draws from his imagined extra-territories. Contrary to this perception, Ajmal Khan found colonialism; Western missionary and Western culture allinstrumentalise scientific practices in pursuance of the power, on the other. In this way, knowledge bows before the mighty power of the culture. He responded to the epistemic decree of the West by rejecting its claim that certain culture cannot be the lord of other cultures and traditions. We see this through the screening of nationalism in various forms, a perpetual process of state-centric memorialisation in our contemporary world (Habib and Raina 1989).

### **Recovering “the Self” is the Recovery of the Sciences**

Ajmal Khan's contemplation on the possibility of a pluralist scientific method and Western expansion of knowledge as the singular happening opens scope to understand that what made Eastern specifically Indian literati to exit from the spectacular scientific progress? Who will tell us about our extraterritorial developments?

## Ruling the Body, Ruining the Body

The arguments mentioned above are not a reprisal against everything of the modern. Neither is it a defence of Ajmal Khan. Instead, it is an exploration into the twentieth-century scientific mind for example, Hakim Ajmal Khan. We may differ in our stand that how to read Ajmal Khan and minds like him. Arguments related to the construction of sciences perceive Ajmal Khan not only as an essential character of the traditional world but views of the modernity in traditional texture cannot be separated. For that matter, a traditional objection on the Western clinical practices, objective examination of the body and subjecting it to a long process of physical torture in the form of terrifying machines and entry of the needles into senses through various neurological experiments can be viewed as a painful rule of the modernity over the body. This is a symptom of the torture Western modernity enjoys. Dialectically, it takes us to the very conception of modern religion such as Christian Protestantism where pain and torture is the first step in the path of obedience to the God. The pain of the body, its travel through modern machines and the subsequent feeling will allow fear to enter the body and heart. The mechanised speak of the body suggests looking at the faculties of thinking numbed by modern paraphernalia for desired surgical treatment of the instructed, invented or objected target. This is the rule of modernity over the body. The contour of bodily fear is surrounded by waves, shocks, operations, changing examinations, disturbing diagnoses. Bodies subdued by visual judgement become the medical product of modernity. After being normalised, the body turns into a symbolic victory of modern culture.

All traditional forms of knowledge particularly in the field of remedy and treatment regret on modernity's torturous method and its application on body. They resist commodification of the body as well, modernity's biggest stake. For them, modern method of inspection rules its physicality while normalising related procedures ruins the body too. Ajmal Khan's interrogation to the system of knowledges, indigenous or European is an updated and constructive essay addresses not only problems but provides a solution, can be seen through his works in Urdu, Persian and Arabic.

## Notes

1. Arguments presented in this paper share much of the insights of Professor A K Ramakrishnan (JNU) which came up during his episodic deliverance in seminars, conferences and talks at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia Islamia, University and elsewhere.
2. The sheer reference of the masculinity means the non-Western understanding as who holds the responsibility of certain civilisation even in case of war and after the war he contributes to the realm of tradition. This does not mean, femininity has no contribution

- to the development of the civilisation or civilisational responsibility.
3. It includes all non-white colours. West refers brown to define all non-white as racially inferior cultural setup.
  4. As the Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of Charles Darwin preached Social scientists to contextualise all social phenomena in accordance with the biological process if one seeks progress. It led Social scientists and humanists to start understanding things in terms of natural sciences. For further, see, Kagan, Jerome (2009), *The Three Cultures: Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and the Humanities in the 21st Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 51.
  5. It refers the image of Islam in Western Europe till the end of the eighteenth century considered Islam an Arab manifestation of paganism. Most established philosophers, scientists and religious champions considered Prophet Muhammad as an imposter or psycho or mentally retarded or disturbed. Only in the nineteenth century, people, thinkers and philosophers tried to rethink theological relevance of Islam and prophetic knowledge of Muhammad; Quran. This led to provide a secular character to the religion of modern Western Christianity too.

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## **The Largest Stateless Nation at Crossroad: Geopolitical Transition of West Asia and the Illusion of a 'Greater Kurdistan'**

Lirar Pulikkalakath and Chitra Saini

**C**omprising one of the largest stateless nations in the world, the Kurdish people inhabit in a contiguous mountainous region divided among Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria in West Asia. Many historical developments, economic interests, and geopolitical transition have dashed their aspiration to have a separate homeland – “Kurdistan”. The recent civil war in Syria and political instability in the post-Saddam Iraq brought international attention to the Kurdish issue and the possibility of the creation of ‘Kurdistan’ once again. The massive attack on the city of Kobane by the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group and its liberation by Kurdish militia in 2014 added fuel to the fire. The foreign interference in this issue further engraves the civil crisis in Syria. Contextualizing this regional scenario, the article would focus on the Kurds in West Asia in general and Syria in specific to explore the fundamental issues of the concept of being ‘stateless’ and the minority identity in a troubled and transforming region. The inaugural report published by the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (2014) titled “The World’s Stateless”, states that statelessness is a global phenomenon. It can have a harmful impact on state and society across the world. “Statelessness is a man-made phenomenon and bringing it to an end is – at least in theory – entirely feasible. Yet, resolving situations of statelessness around the globe does present a formidable task”. This article analyses the plight of stateless people in West Asia with special focus given to the Kurdish issue by examining the geopolitical transition of the region, especially since the Arab Spring.

### **Stateless Communities and Minorities of West Asia**

Until the state of Israel formed in 1948, the Jewish people were known as the largest stateless nation. At that time, there were about twelve million Jews across the world. Immediately after the Jewish Diaspora achieved their ultimate dream of

a separate homeland, a new group of people became stateless and refugees- the Palestinians. Along with them, the region has produced millions of displaced persons over the years. The Syrian refugees are just the latest episode in the series. Apart from the refugees, West Asia is home to many religious, ethnic, linguistic and political minority groups. Yazidis, Druze, etc. are only some examples from the long list. Among these cultural and stateless minorities, Kurds are the largest number to tell the story of a distinct, ethnic and national minority group in the world, concentrated in West Asia. As Christine M. Helms observes,

Dismantling of the Ottoman Empire left a political void Great Britain, France, and Italy filled as mandate powers. Their respective spheres of influence crystallized as the modern map of the Middle East which literally gave birth to two unwanted pariahs- stateless nations and nationless states- whose unrequited parentage has yet to be legitimized. The delineation of “borders” and “states” and the introduction of European “nationalism,” products of the nondynastic secular state, were completely alien in the region. “National” groups, such as the Berbers and Kurds, were divided among states. Other “nation-states” were so pluralistic that intense debate ensued over their survivability (Helms 1990).

Although there is no accurate statistics is available, they constitute between 25 and 35 million across the globe. They also make up the fourth-largest ethnic group in West Asia. But, they do not have a permanent nation-state of their own (BBC 2017). They are considered as minority linguistically and ethnically in every country in which they reside. A lion share (around fifteen million) of them is in southeastern Turkey (accounting more than 20 per cent of the country’s population). More than seven million live in northwestern Iran (around 10% of Iranian Population). Another six million or more are in northern Iraq (nearly 20% of the population of Iraq). They constitute two to three million in northeastern Syria (about 10% of the country’s population). They are culturally and linguistically distinct from their Arab, Turkish and Iranian neighbours. They practice a wide variety of belief and traditions. It ranges from Sunni Islam to the Yazidi faith (Rand 2017). In addition, perhaps more than a million Kurds live across Europe and surrounding areas. They are considered to be the fourth-largest ethnic group in West Asia, following Arabs, Turks, and Persians. They have been seeking to have either self-government or a region with autonomous status and even tried to form an independent Kurdistan over the years. Though some of their ambition fulfilled in some countries, their dream to create an independent state is yet to be attained.

The Arab spring induced political instability and the emergence and establishment of new terrorist organizations like the Islamic State (IS) brought international attention to the Kurdish issues again. While Syria acts as a major theatre of both these developments, Kurdish political and militant groups have been

fighting to protect their areas from IS while revolting to depose Assad regime. In fact, Kurds in Syria is a classic case to understand and analyze the ramifications of the geopolitical transitions Of West Asia.

### Regional Turmoil and the Kurds in Syria

Comparing to the other three countries where Kurds constitute a sizable number, their strength in Syria stands between two to three million only. Majority of them, live in the North-Eastern region, also known as Rojava. They constitute the largest ethnic minority in the country. Rojava is comprised of three sub-regions: Afrin in the West, Jazira in the East and Kobane in the centre. There are a number of political parties working for the cause of Kurds in the country. The Democratic Union Party (PYD), founded in 2003, is the largest political group in the Kurdish region of Syria and affiliated to the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) in Turkey. The People's Protection Units (YPG) and the Women's Protection Units (YPJ) are its two military wings. The Kurdish National Council (KNC), an alliance of 15 Kurdish political parties, is the second-largest party in Syria working for Kurdish people. It was founded in 2011 under the sponsorship of Massoud Barzani, former President of Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). The two organizations are united under the Kurdish Supreme Committee (DBK), a self-proclaimed governing body of Rojava, which was established in December 2012 in northern Syria (Jayamaha 2014; Flood 2014 & Atassi 2014).

As per the current situation of West Asia, Kurds gained much fame after their victory over IS in the battle of Kobane in Syria. Syria, with its 10% of its population as Kurds has been historically home of Arab nationalism. This left minority Kurds marginalized and underrepresented culturally. The political and social discrimination strengthened their efforts for cross-border identity and nationalism. The demand for greater Kurdistan and fight for equality and political representation strengthened in Syria like other Kurdish inhabitant states. The Qamishli riots (in Hassaka governorate) in 2004 resembled the early days of the Syrian uprising, or one can say Arab uprising. After this, the Syrian government declared Kurds as a major risk to national security. But at the initial stage of the uprising, Assad Government gave concession through giving full Syrian citizenship to hundreds of thousands of Syrian Kurds in April 2011. Kurds had been part of state diplomacy to counter neighbours' (especially Turkey and Iraq) efforts to rule the land. The Ba'ath government-supported PKK even helped in establishing PKK with training centres in Damascus. But Kurdish people inside Syrian territory were discriminated on the political, social, cultural and linguist ground. The demands for separate state and self-governance were violently shut by the ruling government till the January 2015 Kobane victory over IS.

Therefore the dilemma over whether to support the Syrian government or not to divide the internal politics of unified Kurdistan supporters. The PUK leaders Mam Jalal (Kurdish abbreviation for ‘uncle’) or Talabani did not agree to fight at that time against the government since they were also Syrian and they were fighting for the equal rights within Syrian territory. While Masoud Barzani or Kak Masoud (brother in Kurdish), the President of Kurdish region in Northern Iraq was on the side of the Syrian opposition in alliance with Turkey. Kak Masoud, along with KNC, hoped umbrella group of opposition in Syria, Syrian National Council would help in coordinating the transition in Syria. KNC hoped to fight along with PYD which was working under the umbrella of TEV-DEM (Movement for a Democratic Society, a coalition mainly with Kurdish parties). TEV- DEV and KNC had differences over the foreign intervention with the Syrian opposition for regime change. It offered a different track “third line” which centred on self – defence and non – violent solution to the problem. Despite that, they agreed on working together under DBK for rapid and stable transition in Rojava. This agreement came with a heavy blow to KNC from Syrian opposition by refusing to include the demands of ‘Kurdish people in Syria’ in the 2012 Cairo meeting. However, it benefitted the PYD and YPJ. The emerging trends tested the Kurdish unity as it led to the ultimate withdrawal of KNC from the agreement and then from the local administration (International Crisis Group 2014; Sary 2016).

The inability of the local government to provide economic and political security on its own makes the dream for separate Kurdish state or an autonomous Kurdish state a distant one. It is mostly dependent on Damascus for strengthening civil-military relations to avoid internal destabilization. The accusations of authoritarian nature of PYD and its left-leaning ideology are not in favour of united Kurdish front. It had replaced previous ‘interim administrative project’ with ‘democratic self-administration project’ which is largely based on its ideology. The new charter “Federal Democratic Rojava Social Contract” had included the Western Democratic values in itself with radical leftist roots. TEV – DEM brought a system for decentralization of power by executive, legislative and judicial councils and selection of candidates from the bottom of the society. This came into effect immediately after the recapturing of Tell- Abyad (Gire Spi) from IS in June 2015. However, the general election has not been held, given to security reasons, but there are all possibilities of their getting international support if something in this direction happens (Sary 2016).

Separation of the Kurdish provinces is still not acceptable to the ruling regime as the Syrian envoy to UN Bashar al Jafari rejected the Kurdish model of decentralization while responding to the declaration of the establishment of “Northern Syria” provinces under unified Kurdish government in 2016. The Syrian

government is planning to use the Rojava for future bargaining for control over the land without letting it be free from dependency over Damascus. The present situation might be beneficial for local Kurdish authority for some time as the central government is again using its Kurdish population to check IS and Turkey's influence in Syrian territory. But there are all possibilities of the government's effort to gain full control over the land once the crisis comes under control.

### Will there be a "Greater Kurdistan"?

The inclusion of Kurds inhabited land into the Turko- Iranian world or present-day Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey were done by Seljuq dynasty. The present border division made Kurds adapted to "border culture" while the new states are completely possessive for their territory and population. So the pressure for homogeneous culture and language gave rise to Kurdish nationalism. In state nationalism, state actors define the priorities in the sense of national security and territorial integrity. While in the case of minority nationalism, the measurements are beyond state-centric approaches. These measurements are framed according to UNDP's human security principles.

The term "Kurdistan" first appeared in the fourteenth century, but like many regions before the rise of nationalism, its boundaries shifted through time. Today, the area claimed as Kurdistan spans 500,000 square kilometers - roughly the size of Spain - and stretches from the center of Turkey to the southern Caucasus and then southward along the Iran-Iraq border. Kurdistan literally means "land of the Kurds," but the area is not homogenous and contains Arabs, Turks, Persians, Assyrians, and Armenians, among others (Rubin 2003: 295)

Historically, there was not see an independent state called Kurdistan. The only exception in this regard was the Republic of Mahabad, a short-lived (less than a year) self-governing state established in 1946 in present-day Iran. In fact, it was the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916 that set the stage for the division of territories inhabited by Kurds according to Western interests. Since then, there have been bitter experiences of betrayal by western powers and suppression of their interests by individual states where they live. It is essential to understand that there was no significant international and regional agreement or discussions which deal with their right to self-determination after World War II.

When the IS captured parts of Iraq and Syria and political instability prevailed in these countries, there was an observation that Kurds would be the biggest winners in the regional turmoil. They started dreaming of an independent homeland with international recognition after their successful military campaigns against IS with the support of Western powers (though they had once divided and betrayed them). Unfortunately, history repeated as they suffered a major setback when they failed

to have a diplomatic backing and long-term military alliance with West, especially with the US. In fact, some of the Kurdish leaders miscalculated about long-term support from the US. They also tried to create an image as a dependable partner of the US to check ambitions of Iran, an acclaimed enemy of the US, in the strategically important region. It shows that the status and future of Kurds in Syria is more or less depending on whether Russia and the US, will mediate for a peaceful settlement that would allow self-rule in the Rojava. However, it is equally important to know the attitude of Assad on the extent of relaxation of Syrian sovereignty over Rojava.

In fact, Kurds have to face a lot of other obstacles; internal and external, to attain their dream of having an independent state. Though considered as the world's largest stateless nation, a diverse group of people are part of them who share many things in common while having some differences. To call them as "the Kurds" is a problematic one as there is no such thing. They can be identified based on the country they belong to like Turkish and Iranian Kurds. Many religious and ideological affiliation can be seen among them as Jewish Kurds and Shiite Kurds, etc. They can also be classified linguistically (Kurmanji, Gorani, etc.). Besides these differences, there are over 100 Kurdish tribes throughout West Asia in areas they inhabit. These facts show that the Kurdish nationalism has a diverse range of manifestations (Shapiro 2016).

Kurds in the region have been unable to achieve their goal of a separate homeland, thanks to the geostrategic location of "Greater Kurdistan". Without the blessing of at least the four states, a Greater Kurdistan would only be a distant dream of around thirty million people. The areas they inhabit are affluent either with oil fields or with transnational oil pipelines. Their region is also blessed with water bodies to support its population along with a strong agricultural industry. In fact, these fortunes are rare in the arid West Asian region. Interests and attitude of the individual states, bilateral relations between them and interests of the US and Russia have a great role in the attitude of Syrian authorities towards them. Altogether Kurds compel to resort to exploiting opportunities like regional rivalries and political transition to achieve their goals.

## Conclusion

Kurds in West Asia are struggling differently in their respective countries. In Turkey, they are seriously engaged in the process of democratic representation, while their Iranian counterparts are standing up for representation in the government. Iraqi Kurds are engaged in fighting against the threat of IS and also struggling to retain their autonomous status, while the Syrian Kurds in Rojava are trying to build up democratic cantons. It is important to note that political overconfidence and miscalculations from the part of Kurdish leaders and their territorial greed resulted

in a setback to their status in some countries. They were keen to watch developments in the Syrian and Iraqi border and were in the hope that the unending civil war could lead to the disintegration of these countries. So they tried to strengthen their forces with the help of the US and other foreign countries. It seems that they have (especially their leaders) to change their strategy and should have unity regarding priorities: whether an autonomous status in the respective countries or representation in the government or even for independent statehood. If they fail to have a consensus in these regards, the region may witness a Kurdish spring by a frustrated thirty million people against the historic blunder, diplomatic failure and political mismanagement of their leaders. To conclude, the geopolitical transition in the troubled West Asian region has a significant role in defining and designing the status of Kurds in Syria.

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## Anthropology of Exception: Urban Perspectives on Indian Neoliberalism

Mathew A Varghese

*Exception and Neoliberalism are important motifs of the contemporary urban processes in the Indian state in general and Kerala in particular. In what follows I hope to touch upon some of these aspects. Anthropology of Exception through an urban frame serves to situate the neoliberal predicament in its contemporaneity. A host of foundational figures of widely differing political positions have explicated the idea. My ideas are directly and indirectly drawn from a community of scholars, and several insightful texts.*

**T**he idea of exception, in recent decades, has been of immense use as a diagnostic tool, and a factor of critique. It has provided great insights into a spectrum of systems ranging from absolute dictatorships to the contemporary neoliberal condition. A host of foundational figures of widely differing political positions have explicated the idea. The list includes Giorgio Agamben (2005, 1998), Carl Schmitt (1985, 2004), Hannah Arendt (1998), and Michel Foucault (1979, 1988, 2006, 2009), and several others. The idea of exception has been examined in different contexts and geographies by critics and scholars cutting across disciplines.

For Carl Schmitt the primary trope for analysis was dictatorship. Dictatorship which encompasses the stage of siege is essentially a ‘state of exception’. In so far as it presents itself as a suspension of law it defines a concrete form of exception in itself. For Schmitt, a “dictatorship” is a situation where a particular constitutional order has either been abrogated or has fallen into what he referred to as a “state of exception.” As examples of the first kind of situation, Schmitt often turned to the National Assembly that had constructed the constitutional framework of Weimar Republic. Here a previously existing constitutional order had been dismissed as illegitimate, yet a new constitutional order was to be established. A sovereign

dictatorship of this type is theoretically a mere transition, lasting only until the new order has been established.

Exceptional cases involved situations where emergencies threatened the state itself. For Schmitt, the maintenance of basic order preceded constitutional norms and legal formalities. There is no constitution or law if there is chaos. The important question regarding exceptional cases was the matter of who decides when an emergency situation exists. Schmitt regarded this decision-making power as the prerogative of the sovereign. He never subscribed to, and was skeptical of, a positive evaluation of liberalism and democracy based on individual rights and liberty. He emphasized the role of elites, the irrational, and the power of myth with regard to the political.

Georgio Agamben used exception as a fundamental principle of sovereign rule. It is predicated on the division between citizens in a juridical order and outsiders. Agamben's work *State of Exception* provides a backdrop for the contemporary framing of the idea (I found this very useful when working on my research problem). For Agamben, when law employs exception as a means of encompassing life, the condition is that of "the suspension of law". The state of exception then becomes "the preliminary condition for any definition of the relation that *binds* and, at the same time, *abandons* the living being to law". The state of exception is a liminal zone between politics and law. The commonsense assumption would be that conditions opposite to 'the normal' invoke exception. The fact is otherwise. Contemporary states institute permanent states of emergency. An important fall-out is that the traditional constitutional distinctions within agencies like the legislature or the executive disappear. Instead, a 'legal mythologeme analogous to the state of nature' becomes the rule. The state of exception, in this way, makes democracies indistinct from absolutisms. Exception may not emanate from the juridical order as Schmitt suggests. Rather, it has its genesis in a state of anomie. Agamben's philosophical enquiries problematise the states of exception in their contemporary globalised condition invoked through security imperatives in contexts like *war on terror*. The idea of the camp -- from the Nazi concentration camp to Guantanamo -- exemplifies the-space-of-exception as territory located outside of the juridical order. But is not really external to that order: it is a "hybrid of law and fact in which the two terms have become indistinguishable." The camps constitute a space of exception in which not only is law completely suspended, but fact and law are completely confused. This is what makes everything in the camps truly possible.

Agamben inquires into the now near ubiquitous state of emergency (or of exception, siege, necessity, or martial law). The inquiry reaches back through medieval to Roman juridical conceptions of sovereign authority. The models from the past enable him to identify the state of exception as a modern institution; with

roots in the French revolution, ascendancy during the First World War, and dominance by the mid-20th century; as the 'paradigmatic form of government'. However, Agamben moves far beyond the paradoxical assertion that the state of exception is today the rule. He elaborates a theory of law to account for the existence of a realm of human activity not subject to law. The legal production of the state of exception appears in this story as an ongoing imperative to colonize 'life itself'. The inquiry concerns the origins and liminal space of law – how law copes with the irreducibly non-legal: 'life itself'. The state of exception is the recognition of law's outside but it simultaneously prompts sovereign attempts to encompass that very outside within the law.

Both Schmitt and Agamben emphasise a condition of liminality; one with respect to the space in between succeeding orders and the other with respect to legal anomie. Both are critical of the liberal (democratic as well as post War human rights) orders and focus on how things really happen. Considering the need to ground the idea within the historic specificities as well as elaborate the neoliberal interplay, I must examine anthropological elaborations of Agamben. Aihwa Ong (2002, 2006) conceptualizes exception broadly in *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. Ong carries the idea of exception to the areas of the formulation and implementation of policy. She views it as an extraordinary departure in policy that can be deployed to include as well as to exclude. The Politics of Exception in the era of neoliberal forms of globalization manifests a disquieting interplay of exclusion and inclusion. It is to this feature that I relate in my research.

The ethical and philosophical moorings of Agamben find a natural home in the human rights regimes of what is broadly classified as the West. The possibilities of elaboration from this point are plenty. The areas of application are diverse. A list would include ethnographic cases from China's Special Market Zones; pro-capitalist Islam and women's rights in Malaysia; Singapore's repositioning as a hub of scientific expertise; and flexible forms of emerging labor and knowledge regimes. All these offer anthropological channels to locate exception within the contemporary *global* context, reflected onto non-European or non-Western milieus. In such *loci* the idea of exception provides important insights into the contemporary context of sovereignty, especially when people are not limited by subjectivity to the nation state. When the mutual implications of subjects and sovereignty are pried apart, new spaces of contention emerge. The process also exposes embedded processes of contemporary urban spatiality.

Moving on to the neoliberal predicament, I place it in a comparative frame covering India and the present global context:

Jurgen Habermas (1996) has theorized the liberal political context in the western world (*Facts and Norms*). He sees it as being animated by categories of

formal law tailored to preserve the rights of autonomous individuals. Of course, this turns problematic when one looks at the colonial order that, paradoxically, energized liberal states at home. This eventually had to accommodate the needs of the large bureaucracies essential to the welfare state and social democracies. The claims of liberal individualism were undermined in the process. The rights of individuals as individuals could be either suppressed or subordinated to the needs of the welfare state. The social-welfare paradigm “materialized” rights in a way that depleted the categories of freedom and equality as understood in the liberal paradigm. The reference is to the bourgeois liberal constitutional order marked by the rise of bourgeois public sphere. It can be seen that eventually, the public sphere, too, gets liquidated.

Von Hayek and Milton Friedman have considered the neoliberal order extensively. They have also examined its claims of personal freedom. They differ in their outright commitment to free market principles in a post-War post-Bretton Woods global order. Their adherence to market principles goes to the extent of displacing the sovereign interventionist options like Keynesianism in welfare and social democratic orders. The scientific rigour in arguments of personal freedom does not translate to political commitment to individual or the lack of state. A coercive state with new controls and security concerns like the contemporary United States or the cosmopolitan institutional structure and policies of the EU promote a specific model of capitalism best understood as ‘embedded neoliberalism’. As Friedrich von Hayek suggested, the process inaugurates a ‘long march’ of neoliberal ideas through corporations, media and numerous institutions that constitute civil society. The people are transformed to neoliberal embodiments.

The system has immense flexibility. This translates into embedded processes everywhere. In Dubai, for instance, the state is indistinguishable from a private enterprise run by a family that works as an equity management team, as Mike Davis (2007) observes. Neoliberal order in Britain captures the analysis of Monbiot as Captive State. Janine Wedel (2001) elaborates on the oligarchic and flex organizational structures in Eastern Europe and Russia while Bruce Kapferer (2005) finds a contemporary sovereign paradigm through oligarchies. Client states and Dictatorial orders have come up in parts of Africa where sovereign orders remained weak. A debt financed war machine and security structure emanates from United States and turns hegemonic. Aihwa Ong dwells upon the immense flexibility of the neoliberal order as portrayed by the zoning practices in communist-corporate China. Elsewhere under tenets of structural adjustments, supervised by the IMF and the World Bank, novel disciplinary regimes have sought monetarist tracks, replacing the remnants of the interventionist or Keynesian state. They assert that it is not enough to change budgets, what is needed are reforms which translate to extensive privatization.

Social and cultural expression of this has followed certain patterns after the seventies. In Europe, the imagined disappearance of ethnicities has not happened. On the contrary, all kinds of identity assertions have surfaced. There are several nuanced processes also with respect to migrations and new mobilities related to the flows of capital. Ethnicities and new religious assertions create novel spatialities which sometimes claim radical rectifications of whatever has gone wrong -- The Art of Living<sup>1</sup> and Pentecostal interventions within urban spaces are excellent cases. People divide into newer social formations or individual collectivities around hyperreal situations of violence and security. The recent anti-corruption movements in Urban India illustrate some of these aspects. There are hybrid flexible life forms at the upper level and secessionist lives and identity based assertions at another level.

When India was coming out of the colonial phase, welfare and social democratic systems flourished in the West. Post independence, a dirigiste economic system ensued, wherein the state was highly interventionist and the public sector was more pronounced than in most of the newly independent states. A combination of mixed economy and multiparty polity went together with a free press and freedom of expression. The anti-colonial movement had generated an interventionist order maintained by an elaborate planning apparatus.

A developmentalist state of this kind was fraught with internal contradictions from inception. The natural consequence was social instability. A systematic corporate takeover of the state has been typical of the general Indian context. There were several factors that complemented the transformation like the metamorphosis of feudal structures that had survived and been embellished through colonial times, and the corporate legacy of the metropolitan nerve centers in the North. The welfarist pretensions of the nation state got systematically weakened, even though the state as such was seldom in retreat. It is said anecdotally that in rural northern India, Nehru continues to be the Prime Minister. The anecdote relates to conditions of literacy and distance from the state. Taken out of context, it is as if after Nehru nothing seems to have happened by way of the state!

By the economic liberalisation of the 1990s, the state had in effect loosened its remaining checks and balances on private interests and corporate capital. The corporate class had taken the form of transnational entities that had grown out of all proportions. Transnationally located Indian Billionaires were on the way back to wield invisible influence on the everyday running of state (*Vedanta* through massive futuristic coal investments, *Reliance* in the petroleum industry and price regulations, with ripple effect on the quality of life). All this had the benevolent and supportive patronage of the state apparatus (ministry, military, paramilitary, *cobras* etc)<sup>2</sup>. The neoliberalising Indian state had already been captive to the corporate structures that

had grown in strength during the latter half of the 1900s (Tatas, Birlas, Reliance). But since the nineties the corporate forms have been getting ever more entrenched and breaking out of residual restraints. Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that propose that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework marked by strong private property rights, free market, and free trade. The role of the state is no more sovereign or interventionist. The state creates and preserves the facilitating institutional framework. Deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from areas of social provision through systematic 'post-reform liberalization' as this is known, have shaped the developmentalist order with liberal pretensions in most of India. In this flexible order the last remaining controls of the license raj have disappeared. Neoliberalism marks the unprecedented hegemony of transnationally mobile private capital.

There has been a pressing need for technologies of information creation and capacities to accumulate, store, transfer, analyze, and transact through massive databases guiding decisions in the global marketplace. This explains the interest in, and pursuit of information technologies in almost all the newly urbanising regions within India. These technologies have compressed the swelling volumes of market transactions in both time and space. The top down time-space compressions realized by technologies become embedded processes in everyday life. This has also spawned a contemporary urban rhetoric that unravels, and optimizes the neoliberalisation of people in places through several forms of exceptions to *how life has been*. The neoliberal techniques find embellishment, and get staged on urban terrains with unanticipated borrowings, appropriations, and alliances that cut across erstwhile sovereign boundaries of the postcolonial developmental state. Boundaries though do remain, and are invested with new meanings.

Unlike in the west where the assumptions of modernity like freedom and equality cannot be delinked from the city or the urban, in India these had been linked to the nation-state. There had been far less attention to urban processes or historical urban trajectories, post independence. The contemporary focus on urban spaces is very much a function of composite processes, the effect of which may be called neoliberal. The liberalizing of economy after the nineties has altered the relationship between the state and subjects in crucial ways. This is best reflected in the ways the urban has re-emerged and the ways urban situations get managed. Urban spaces reveal uneven landscapes with cross cutting commonalities with respect to global engagements and mediation of capital. The post independent developmental state had enshrined rights within the constitution and projected welfarist steps that pertained more to directions and guidelines.

Divergences from such normative contexts evolved in Kerala out of the centuries' long activism where people challenged caste inequalities, and imperial,

colonial, as well as feudal controls, and socio-economic inequalities. The sovereign subjecthood, as we will see, is a product of *avakasham* (roughly translated as rights) for proper state response in order to ensure welfare. People, in the modern state of Kerala, unlike most of India have been enmeshed in a wide range of inter-locking institutions like labor unions, trade associations, political parties, youth groups, and neighborhood associations. The whole effect of this could be called a political public sphere (*which was neither bourgeois nor individualist*). If a liberal democratic post colonial state demanded subjecthood to developmentalist processes in exchange of constitutional guarantees, in Kerala a welfarist state got invested with responsibilities based of *avakashams* (rights), that stretched exceptionalities to the dominant order to their maximum in the pre-economic reform period.

The idea of welfare has been more of a persistent hope. This is different from welfare as a historically constituted, operating idea in the welfare states in Europe. Rather, this is a welfarist zone of exception to post independent developmentalist order within the powerful Indian state. The political public sphere ensured a relatively equitable distribution of wealth as well as services and resources. In contemporary times, the urban methodologies possibly inaugurate a break in the sense of structuring, by modeling a fragmented domain of competing sovereignties. An assemblage of forms of power and patronage comes into play through state, private capital and transnational entities that work through urban bodies, Non Governmental Organs, new religions, and new forms of associations like resident groups; and get shaped into regimes of life that arguably institute global capitalist processes through exceptions.

This works radically different from Aihwa Ong's argument about neoliberal exceptionality when one considers the majority of places in India where citizenship/subjecthood does not easily translate into any form of right or recognition. In such places the proclaimed zones of exception like Special Economic Zones do not constitute themselves as exceptional. Neoliberal effects, rather, are extensions of unprotected, insecure, and class divided, everyday lives. The Export Processing Zones (EPZs) that eventually metamorphosed into Special Economic Zones are paradigmatic of the processes that translate into neoliberalism as exception. The prototypes of such spaces came up between the 1970s and the 1990s. These were centrally planned, public undertakings and they offered investors purpose-built factory units, office and administration facilities, upgraded transportation links, subsidized electricity, water and telecommunications as well as long-term exemptions from taxes on imports, exports and profits. By 2000 under the supervision of the Bharatiya Janatha Party's right wing government 'Special Economic Zones' (SEZs) were created. In most parts of India such zones or new urban processes would be conceived as unexceptional spaces. Such spaces are symptomatic of the conditions of informality and precariousness under which most economic activity takes place.



Over ninety percent of livelihoods already fall under the 'informal' category (Breman 1994; White 2003). The people who are mediated by such processes are seldom subject to any radically new ways of capitalist ordering or bio-political interventions. Instead, the relationships of caste, kinship and gender around which labourers in the zone's construction and service industries are organized, and their informal conditions of work, mesh what is inside with what is outside. There are such labourers around the 'exceptional' zones in Gurgaon near Delhi or Vishakapattanam in Andhra Pradesh who neither have security nor decent, formal wages.

Thus in the contract labour around Special Economic Zones in Andhra, one of the adult men acts as the group's maistry (foreman) and he takes responsibility for finding work. He chases up local leads and is in regular contact over mobile telephone with the village's other batches, which together act as an employment information service, sharing tips on new contracts across the region. The technologies of communication, novel milieus of labour and the existing agrarian rural order assemble much in the way David Ludden (1999) or Jonathan Parry (1999) would elaborate with respect to rural agrarian underpinnings of urban and industrial labour.

Anthropologists have studied informal economies through processes of retrenchment of the public sector (Joshi 2003; Parry et al. 1999). Economic zones like the ones in Gurgaon are sophisticated versions of the already prevalent insecure informal orders, deprived of rights. In places like Gurgaon or Andhra Pradesh (where a spate of Information Technology zoning took effect), it is the few who remain under the umbrella of the public sector who are exceptional. Precariousness in conditions of life is the norm. The summary evictions to promote the master plan of Delhi illustrate this. Even otherwise, anthropologists have made the point that dualisms like formal/informal, rural/urban, agricultural/industrial are empirically invalid in India. According to Holmstrom (1999) the lines between the worlds of rural-agricultural-informal labour and urban-industrial-formal labour are 'optical illusions'.

Neoliberalism is marked by the 'appropriation and co-option' of 'indigenous forms of production, markets, and sociability' into structures of power and the reproduction of capital. In contemporary urban spaces as well as around (and inside) Special Economic Zones, forms of cooperation, social networks and cultural practices allow people on low income to survive without the state (*at an experiential level*). People get incorporated into the broader project of market development as 'microenterprise' and 'social capital'. As Partha Chatterjee (2004) puts it, while the norms of liberal political philosophy and the idea that all humans are bearers of rights are enshrined in the formal, legal and political facts of citizenship in India, this is not how things actually work in practice. 'Most of the inhabitants of India are

*only tenuously and even then ambiguously and contextually, rights bearing citizens in the sense imagined in the constitution.*' Neoliberal processes as they unfurl in paradigmatic spaces of exception like Special Economic Zones in Andhra Pradesh, near Bangalore or Delhi, may exemplify in their everyday operation, the continuities and interconnections of these spaces with the wider economy.

The processes in these locations may not seem exceptional to what is otherwise. However, in Kerala because of historically and politically unique reasons these may work precisely as forms of exception, even when the anthropology may not work the way Ong would have it.

The uniqueness of what is popularly known as the 'Kerala model' is constituted by high achievements in the 'physical quality of life' coupled with a very low per capita income. Historical assemblages of heterarchic urban orders within global networks with multiple centres of control, benevolent princely states initiating and implementing distinctive policies within a colonial order, lack of monumental empires, and popular, radical, progressive struggles that structured a politicized public sphere and welfarist state structure – are all exceptions to the dominant pan-Indic paradigm. The modern state was carved out of a mosaic of different social and political processes like the characteristic colonial caste orderings, the reformist tendencies or the large scale land reforms mediated by left wing movements. The expectations associated with an imagined state or generated out of the all encompassing political public sphere, all unravel as novel equations with neoliberal urban processes/reforms. Ideas like globalization and neoliberalism may not work as a singular hegemonic process, but as 'situated assemblages' of logics, actors, histories, projects, and practices. It is important to take into account absolute-sounding frames, like the 'state of Kerala', because human practices in the way spaces are lived in and conceptualised are structured by the specific ontology of the idea of the state in its distinctness.

Production in its primary forms, unlike the rest of India has been dominated by trade oriented goods and what later became known as cash crops like spices, rubber, tea, coffee, cashew and coconut. Most of these are exported outside the state and to other countries. During the nineteenth and the twentieth century, industries like coir and coir matting, cashew nuts and paper products developed in Travancore. In Malabar, the manufacturing of roofing tiles and handloom products developed. There was a large growth of chemical industry during the twentieth century even before independence, taking advantage of the proximity to the Cochin port, and the availability of waterways to transport bulk raw materials. Again what is distinctive about the industrial sector was the effective unionization and secure labour environment won through political deliberations. During the pre-Nineties period, when emphasis was given to secondary forms of production that drew its sustenance

from the skewed power structures in most of India, Kerala always had a smaller share of central investment.

Unlike the precariousness that characterized everyday labour life elsewhere, here the labour life was more or less secure after the state formation. The post colonial state, the dirigiste order, had followed an import substitution based economic development till the 1990s. This did not necessarily help to continue with the historical advantages of export, and mercantile urban orders. The heterarchic orders, which had already weakened towards the nineteenth century, retarded in the nation state system. This was a major radical reversal of historically constituted global engagements, after initial restraints during colonial times.

Processes, the composite economic effect of which may be called tertiary, began to dominate much of modern life. This comprises mostly of service sectors like health and education. Here a disproportionate number of institutions have been within the so-called 'private sector'. This is something unique within India, where, in most of the other states there is a bipolar order comprised mostly of meagre state run institutions for basic welfare (even though the proportion of higher level institutes like research centres could be more) and expensive private provision out of reach for most. In Kerala the private sector until recently has been varied and complex. One kind is the very powerful and widespread system of educational institutions controlled by the various Christian organisations. Then there are schools and hospitals set up by the princes of Travancore and Kochi, and Western Mission initiated institutes. There have also been caste and community reform movements that went in the same line as exemplified by the Nair Service Society (NSS), or Sree Narayana Trust (of the SNDP Yogam<sup>3</sup>). Here the private sector had not been about corporate feudal persistence and amalgamation with state sovereignties. Conditions have changed in recent times when urban reforms are ushering in a new wave of global engagements.

Like in the case of speculative mediation of capital in real estate, the tertiary processes are also manifesting forms of exceptionalities to historical norms. These approximate and replicate the conditions of Special Economic Zones and the contiguous urban spaces in unique ways. At present the only secondary sector in which large numbers of people are engaged in is construction. But this is precisely a by product of the forms of neoliberal assertions in land and property that work through exceptions. As a result of the new urban processes in which construction has been embedded, there are mass migrations from other states in India where people have already been co-opted by the violent corporate state. Kerala is an option preferable to the urban capitalist spaces that have made labour infinitely flexible, and effectively co-opted the trade unions.

My work in newly urbanising zones within the state of Kerala comes out of the immediate situations of rapid scale urban processes, decentralizations, public-private partnerships, questions over designation of Special Economic Zones, and creation of new urban neighbourhoods. Urban projects like the agglomeration-plan under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), the contemporary 'Smart City guidelines', envisaged by the central government (2015) as well as comprehensive and total urban plans like Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) makes governance ever more comprehensive. They become important frames to situate the ethnography of the contemporary. There are specific directions issued to states regarding schemes that direct funds to Urban Local Bodies (ULB), which the centre views as para-state. The states are encouraged to enter Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the context of the reduction of plan allocation. Emerging priorities in urban renewal, like the redevelopment of inner (old) areas to conform to outer cities, are important elements of contemporary urban discourse.

Channels of capital emerge through State Annual Action Plans. With unprecedented centralization of power, comprehensive conditionalities evolve. Smart Cities Mission and AMRUT were approved for 500 cities. This is with outlays of Rs. 480 billion (~7.1 billion \$) and Rs. 500 billion (~7.4 billion \$), respectively. Individual federated entities (state governments) carry unprecedented responsibilities. The delegation of control and responsibilities, ironically through channels of decentralisation, brings subjects closer to taking responsibilities for what happens. Good governance seeks more power through provisions like conditionalities (for funding, in order to be selected as Smart Cities, of freehold rights, of single windows, of fast-track clearances, or exceptions). The logic is that they generate growth, employment and GDP what are all 'good', the obverse being stagnation, economic activity being the prime feature of goodness when it comes to governance post 2000 (Kuldova and Varghese 2017).

All these can be seen to draw the state into corporate entanglements, which were once effectively warded off through reformist and leftist interventions. I draw on the regional socio-political peculiarities in order to make the contemporary versions of urban processes legible. The urban spatial structuring signifies the state's modernization in terms of global order. This order becomes a matter of design through which elements and functions of a place are differentiated, classified and redistributed. The production of spaces throws open the question of how people are constituted as the medium through which the spatial ordering takes effect.

Roles people assume in urban contexts, display severance from historical continuities and certitudes. At present, through characteristic modes of incorporations and supportive logics, they carve out regimes of living that have

implications for a changing order. Urban renewals and exceptional zones display best the new incursions in ordering that resonate global corporate demands. The relatively egalitarian social structure and rights based polity bring in characteristic demands upon an overstrained state. The existing repositories of capital -- be it the public infrastructure, contiguous towns, educated population or nonresident resources - get used and expended in the consolidation of contemporary order. The perceived lacks and exclusions characteristically manifest as rejuvenated demands on the state both for, maintenance of welfare as well as realization of transnational urban aspirations.

Urban spaces in Kerala, never had phases and scales of industrialization as in the major Indian cities like Mumbai and Delhi, or violent imposition of industry (as during the 70s emergency) that involved active demolition of slums and settlements<sup>4</sup>. But in the contemporary order a bourgeois, consumerist, and globalist aesthetic reconfigures the urban, invoking exceptional clauses from colonial times. Thus a Land Acquisition Act of 1894 that was supposed to give infrastructural amenities for 'colonial' forms of extraction<sup>5</sup> could be re-invoked with ease through institutions with statutory powers (like KINFRA) to remove or relocate people. Or Urban Reforms could do away with clauses of historical land reforms<sup>6</sup>. All these generate the bulk of resources out of characteristic engagements with master signifiers like *vikasanam*. The concept of *vikasanam*, is in fact a co-birth with the post reform order. The idea that approximated development before used to be *purogathy* (roughly translatable as progress, emanating in engagement with mutually encompassing public sphere). The first left governments had taken the State to an exceptional status within the national frame. Accordingly, *purogathy* was also informed by formation of food committees, committees in the fields of education and health, as well as fair price committees with a class character within the rigidities of the Five Year Plans and centralised budgets. The deliberative- *avakasham* based expectations persisted and took novel effects towards the post developmental nineties. *Vikasanam* now is pegged to a chain of signifiers capable of encompassing people as inevitable building blocks that produce inclusive exclusions in material lives and geographies.

Urban situations refashion sovereignty as mediated by global processes. People are delinked from places to be re-articulated to global financial circuits through urban *vikasanam* that works through exceptions. The secessionist cultures that Spivak (2000) talks about in the context of urban Bangalore, is a much more spread out phenomena in an egalitarian state, where divergent demands of incorporation in global urban arena and state protection go alongside. *Vikasanam* of any sort happens only in the state of transition and incorporation into the dominant global order through urban exceptions. In Kerala the capital that percolates the

contemporary service or tertiary sector (hospitality, tourism, real estate, or education) is not generated domestically and comes as investments from external sources. In the newly constituted urban spaces the predominant concern is to reduce risk for the private capital than reducing risk to people on account of external contingencies. Decentralised urban bodies that come under the directives of private capital and good governance get ever more linked to market mechanisms over which there will be least control. Presently welfare itself connotes investment. This is more about welfare with a price tag, which insists on full cost recovery!

There is progressive alienation from the immediate ecology in terms of daily requirements because the physically immediate spaces become conduits of investments of all kinds -- heritage, health, back offices of multinationals, sanitized investment zones, and resource bases for large capital. There are newer dependencies on transnationally mediated or constituted consumption spaces (the malls, the supermarkets) or employment zones (in and around the Special Economic Zones). The fundamental principle of modern consumerism is the realization of private fantasy that is let loose from local investments (cultural, inter-subjective, and social) and driven by a desire that can never get satisfied. People once let loose from mutual implications in space get networked to abstract desires and communities. They create distinctive life spaces and find fulfillment in the realization of fantasies. The commodity that gets consumed becomes more than a show to others, a pleasure in itself (Campbell 1987). The self directedness does not stand alone though. It is accompanied by other directedness -- therefore the need for security and suspicion of the other.

There is the concomitant operation of both disciplinary and control structures: while the dominant rhetoric is one of flexibility, autonomy and networking; the disciplinary apparatus of the state assures smooth functioning through legislatures, hassle free investment mechanisms (as in SEZs), and efficient policing. Deleuze (1992) used the paradigm of whatever dominant technology there is to explain how the control system works. Thus the communication networks become the model. [Within networks there are several protocols beginning with the invisible-by-consent TCP/IP of the internet, and extending to all stages of the network.] Protocols (Galloway and Thacker- *Protocol, Control, and Networks* -2004) are a system for maintaining organisation and control in networks. There is no confinement in space like in disciplinary systems, but things are far from the freedom and flexibility conveyed by flat earth sermons. Here there could be innumerable 'free ways', options, choices. But in the environment of permissiveness and freedom, the options or choices in themselves become its controlling agents. Thus in order to have options one has to opt from a set of developmental patterns; choices yes, but only when translated to consumption practices. When the perceived 'maligancies' (which are

innocuous elements of everyday life) are addressed in new spatial circumstances, what becomes clear is that *freedom* involves a sanitization over which one has no free option. In order to really enjoy the new spatial reality replete with freedom and flexibility the pre requisite is that one should adopt the means of control or go by certain protocols; in order to be included one has to be excluded from everything else. Urban exceptions to erstwhile normative orders offer in effect exclusions through demands for inclusion.

In the multi-scalar neoliberal cartography it is evident that through much of the ingredients of futuristic rhetoric a sure transformation of the Hobbesian contractual state is well in the making. For the contractual state the logic of rule derived more from a system rooted in territories. In the case of corporate states the logic is one of control and here control refers to the control of market. The issue of public order which characterised the Hobbesian state is transformed now to the problems of security (Kapferer 2005). Security becomes a private matter and has been corporatized. Through a preoccupation from the states to individuals with 'security', greater violent power of dominant groups goes against a general citizenry. In the case of states any kind of resistance, as with the recent episodes of anti corporate mining activities<sup>7</sup> gets portrayed as a security issues. The state in such contexts has surely turned corporate. But contrary to general perception, it deploys the ultimate disciplinary techniques.

*The military and paramilitary exercises called 'Operation Green Hunt' was announced in 2009 against 'Maoist forces' precisely after the then Prime Minister called them the single biggest internal security challenge ever faced by the country. As Arundhati Roy observed the shares of mining companies subsequently went up.<sup>8</sup> The neoliberal state is ever more involved in making its population legible.*

*The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) was an initiative (without the enabling legislation) that will re-inscribe the entire population as biometrically numbered "bare lives". Legibility has always been a central problem of statecraft. But in the contemporary context the exercise can be carried out with no classical contract with populations and by a state that has metamorphosed into a corporation. Often the life forms in question themselves start engaging in the management of self and the translation of the language of security onto bodies. In the world of neoliberal globalization of capital and concomitant urbanisation, securitization represents attempts to make omniscient the military rationality. Accordingly there is a spatial reconfiguration of security to the everyday management of bodies as populations (Foucault 2009). Such populations are mass individuations and are functions of the replacement of hierarchical and linear spatial organisations. The mediation of people in the process parallels larger fractalisation and fragmentation. Despite regionally distinct rationale in the urgencies for security, all these indicate the coming of a distinct spatial order. The present proposals for a network of one hundred 'smart' cities based on urban competition through the medium of information technology and the idea of less government and more governance not only strengthens the modes of control but envisages a fuller form for the societies of control (Deleuze 1992). Here market modulated urban codes*

*and spatio-temporalities become the determinants of getting included, and systems of surveillance not only continues but will become strengthened.*

Populations have to be defined by what is inside and what lies out there. Like the state rhetoric of security against terrorists, urban populations now identify an extensive range of ambient threats amidst the chaos. Thus one begins to see large hoardings advertising surveillance systems and CCTVs tailor-made for home. Business start-ups and sales people specializing in security and surveillance systems proliferate even in the small towns of Kerala. Through the modes of consumption (large malls for example), communication, and transportation, security permeates the everyday. The specialized imagination of security shatters the positive connotations. Instead everything (autonomy, security, flexibility, annihilation of space) becomes more about controls and protocols. Impositions of protocols happen with consent and often through the dominant urban discourse. This makes them all the more hegemonic in everyday life. The present concern with security in the immediate urban spaces within Kerala in particular, is manufactured in the dominant discourse of real estate investments and land accumulations. These offer new communities and *sell* security. Security and segregation, for many, become symbols of status. Where once lives became exceptional through mutually encompassing public sphere, it is now individuations and isolations as well as demands for incorporation that mark exception. Exceptions with distinction, with the added aura of security, and controls-with-consent give character to urbanising spaces in Kerala.

## Notes

1. The Art of Living is a foundation, started by Ravi Shanker (Popularly known as Sri Sri Ravishanker), has a network of institutions at present. They resort to particular ways of using meditation, yoga, and breathing as a means for self-development and stress relief. Once it claimed to be the largest volunteer based non-governmental organisation in the world.
2. A mining controversy Prafulla Das, Frontline Volume 21 - Issue 24, Nov. 20 - Dec 03, 2004/ 'Kolla Sarkar Othaashayode' (in Malayalam), by D. Sreejith, Dillipost.in/ He was removed after pressure from Reliance, says Medha Patkar by Mahim Pratap Singh, *The Hindu*, October 30, 2012/ Are we the enemy you fear? By Tusha Mittal, *Tehelka*, Nov. 21 2012.
3. Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam
4. This doesn't mean that people didn't confront forms of violence here. Crucial points like the 1920s or during food scarcities and price lowering created by depressions (1930s), repressions of agrarian revolts in Malabar and the states (in 40s) as well as labour revolts in traditional industries like coir (in Alleppey), and the iron handed repression of leftist movements that took the agrarian revolts into another level post independence (Gopalan 1980) are instances in which people have confronted violence and informed political



public sphere. But in Kerala it was land based agrarian questions that came to the fore and in turn gave rise to a reformist state, unlike the violent repressions that persisted in the north (Delhi, or in the case of mill workers in Bombay- the labour itself came in through rural to urban migrations- they had to undergo several rearrangements of spatiotemporalities (Nigam and Menon 1989/Chandavarkar 1994/ Anand 2007/ Farooqui 2006)

5. With the colonial Land Acquisition Act (1894) the state dispossessed at least fifty million people of their livelihoods.
6. Kerala Land Reforms Act, 1963. Individuals were prevented from owning, holding or possessing land in excess of the ceiling area with effect from first January 1970. With reference to JNNURM proposals ([jnnurm.nic.in/nurmuweb/Reforms/Primers/.../5-RepealULCRA.pdf](http://jnnurm.nic.in/nurmuweb/Reforms/Primers/.../5-RepealULCRA.pdf))
7. 'Plunder & profit' by Venkitesh Ramakrishnan. Cover Story. Frontline. Volume 27 - Issue 14 :: Jul. 03-16, 2010
8. Arundhati Roy. "Walking With The Comrades," *Outlook India*. March 29, 2010.

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## Discourses on Social Justice: Community Rights and Kerala Reformation

Rekha Raj

**T**his paper is an analytical journey of the different discourses of Dalit reformation movements. It would be an analysis of the major points of debates and events of the Kerala reformation discourses and an evaluation of its relationship with the contemporary Dalit debates. The topics of debates discussed here are religion, community, reservation, and the body. It is under these four headings that these debates are usually carried out while talking about Kerala's past. What is important here is not how the Dalits were talked about in these debates, but how Dalits critically engaged and participated in these debates. In an important sense, this would critically trace the Dalit critique of 'Kerala's renaissance.'

The term 'discourse' has been widely used in Social Sciences, Humanities and cultural and literary studies. To Michel Foucault discourse is the "ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations" (Foucault 1972: 15). According to Roger Fowler, 'discourse' is speech or writing seen from beliefs, values, categories which it embodies; these beliefs, values and categories constitute a way of looking at the world, an organization and representation of experience – 'ideology' in a neutral non-pejorative sense. Different modes of discourse encode the different representation of experience. And, the source of these representations is the communicative context within which the discourse is embedded (cited in Mills 1997). According to MacDonnell, "dialogue is the primary condition of discourse....discourses differ with the kind of institutions and social practices in which they take shape and with the positions of those who speak and those whom they are addressed" (MacDonnell 1986). Sara Mills says, "Discourses structure both our sense of reality and our notion of our own identity." Pecheux's work "enables us to consider ways in which subjects can come to a position of disidentification, whereby we not only locate and isolate how we as subjects have been constructed and subjected, but we also map out for ourselves new terrains in

which we can construct different and potentially more liberating ways in which we can exist” (Mills 1997: 15). According to Pecheux, discourses “do not exist in isolation but are the object and site of struggle. Discourses are thus not fixed but are the site of constant contestation of meaning” (Ibid: 16).

Above discussion clarifies how an idea of a new subject is formed through discourses and undergoes constant transformation. Dalit discourses reject the caste notions of identity in general and redefine Dalit subjectivity according to a new set of political ideologies and the socio-political-cultural context in which they are located. Anti-caste debates during the reformation period also show the existence of an imaginary community irrespective of subcaste identity. The discussions around different ‘rights’ of lower caste people during the reformation period were, in fact, reformulative of Dalit discourses. In the stream of subaltern renaissance movement – we shall focus on the Dalit movement of Ayyankali <sup>1</sup> and Poykayil Appachan <sup>2</sup> and their interventions. How did these movements engage with the modernity question?

Kerala modernity features differently in various historiographies of Kerala. While the mainstream historians used Marxist framework to address the relation between caste and Kerala modernity (Gurukkal and Varrier 1999), some other scholars attempted to understand these issues from a gender perspective and post-colonial perspective (Saradamoni 1980; Devika 2007; Sreekumar 2011; Kodoth 2005; and Linberg 2005). There is a strong tradition of history writing by the subaltern intellectuals, though they received less attention in mainstream academics. It is this stream of historiography, written by the subaltern and lower castes, that forms the focus of this chapter (Kochu 2012; Chentharassery 1979). Here the attempt is not to write a history of lower caste assertions in Kerala, rather look at the debates and discussions on caste during the early decades of the twentieth century. How were the ideas of social equality, social justice, individual freedom and other community rights imagined by the lower caste movements and how did it contrast with the upper caste imaginations? Why did these initiatives fail to attain fruitful results? What are the external and internal difficulties faced by these movements in addressing caste? In short, the attempt here is to understand critically the discursive formations of lower castes in Kerala modernity.

The nineteenth-century witnessed significant changes in the history of Kerala, not only on account of administrative and political developments by the indirect influence of colonial rule in the southern princely states of Kochi and Travancore but also through the anti-caste struggles from the lower castes and caste reformation initiatives from both upper and lower castes. The closing decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a dramatic change in the political sphere of Kerala. We could find two major streams in the renaissance history in Kerala: one, the internal reform initiated by the upper caste communities which largely focused on both the individual

and reformulation of community practices or rituals (Renukumar and Raj 2000). These initiatives eventually led to the consolidation of community identity and modernisation of the upper castes and some caste groups from the backward community. Indeed this phase had a crucial role to play in the democratisation of Kerala society. However, the benefit of these changes went by and large to the upper caste communities. Saradamoni observes:

Kerala at the end of the nineteenth century was a very different place from what it was at the dawn of the century. The powerful economic forces set in motion by the land and revenue policies of British, as well as the other measures they introduced rattled and churned up Kerala society to its core and resulted in a new ferment, which gathered tremendous momentum in next century. But in the highly stratified society that existed in Kerala at that time, the impact of these measures did not fall evenly on all sections of society. The benefits and hardships of the new measures were felt differently and in varying degrees of intensity by different communities and castes (Saradamoni 1980: 121)

On the other hand, the lower caste people's take on the renaissance – the second streams in the renaissance history in Kerala - was quite different from that of the upper castes. The lower caste agitation was marked by its anti-caste elements and a desire for equality. M. Dasan observes:

If we trace Kerala's socio-political history to the nineteenth century, we are presented with a double face. While at the turn of the twentieth century, it helped the consolidation of community identity and modernization of the upper castes and cream of the OBC's (other backwards communities), especially the Ezhavas, it precluded the same in the case of lower castes. When many similar caste collectives with different caste names grouped under the umbrella term Nair and Ezhava (an OBC caste) and consolidated their power, the Dalits remained fragmented as castes and sub-castes. At a later stage in Kerala's history, the elite communities and castes which had earlier consolidated their position through identity politics transformed their accumulated energies into nation-building politics and class politics (Dasan 2012: xiv).

Yesudasana finds Kerala reformation mainly as a Hindu reformation, which resulted as a response to the missionary activities among subaltern caste sections of society. To him "it was to the renaissance of the depressed sessions of society to which the twentieth century started. The tensions between western missionary activities and reactions of Hindu reformative movements towards missionaries together constituted the dialectical energy to the subaltern arising" (Yesudasana 2010:66). On the contrary, V.V. Swami (2010), another Dalit scholar, observes that though Sree Narayana Guru and Chattampi Swamikal intervened within the Hindu system, they focussed on caste. They dared to address the caste system. In short, the classification like Hindu reformation and Christian reformations are irrelevant and does not do justice to historical facts as the content of these movements are not religious, rather it was caste, social equality and liberty (Swami 2010: 29).

Sanal Mohan writes:

In the light of missionary documents, we see that one major site where the question of equality was articulated, forcefully was the struggle for resources that included land, employment and modern education. In the case of the lower castes honour, social dignity and the recognition of individual worth was of great significance. These were necessary for them to surpass the state of abjection in which they lived for centuries. The twentieth century lower caste social movements carried forward the struggles for securing social equality (Mohan 2005:156).

Though it is widely known and acknowledged that the missionary activities had a major role in the making of a lower caste movement in Kerala, there are different positions on this matter among Dalit intellectuals. For instance, a critical PRDS discourses display reservation towards missionary activities. These writings argue that the political situation then compelled the British to increase the number of converted Christians in Kerala and India. The missionary activities never aimed at forming true Christians, rather missionaries admitted the disparities among Christians without any objection (Swami 2010). They couldn't make any significant changes in caste power relations in Kerala. Poyakayil Appachan's life itself shows his criticism towards Christianity in Kerala.

Though lower castes, in general, fought against caste-related social power relations, each movement within these caste groups differed each other in their relations with Hindu social order and the diverse micro-level operational dimensions of these movements. For instance, the Sree Narayana movement mainly focussed on attaining a 'space' within the Hindu religion by claiming a modern identity of the community by discarding pre-modern elements of Ezhava sub-castes behind (Sanu 1999). But lower caste movements mainly focused on social equality through collective public action and negotiating with the government. Though one could arrive at a position that lower caste movements were influenced by the Ezhava social movements in general, in terms of the specific trajectories, they took different paths. The following section offers a discussion on this.

J. Prabhash writes:

Unlike the Sree Narayana movement, DMs (Dalit movements) did not attempt at challenging the caste orthodoxy through consecrating temples or establishing its priesthood or manipulating religion to negate the inhuman social code that very religion was instrumental in establishing. The attitude of these movements towards Hinduism seemed ambivalent. While Ayyankali tried to situate the *Dalit* community firmly within Hinduism, and wreck its inhuman core from within, Poykayil Yohannan [Appachan] and Pampady John Joseph flirted with Christianity, though both of them later became critical of the caste practices within that religion. Poikayil Yohannan even turned hostile to Christianity and established his religious order. Further, while Sree Narayana movement tried to make use of traditional knowledge to serve the cause of modernity, *Dalit* movements fell back on colonial modernity (Prabhash 2005).

## Mapping Lower Caste Discourses of Modernity

Three major movements during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from the lower caste standpoints were Sree Narayana movement, which later became the Sree Narayana Darma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam, Ayyankali movement which later came to be known as Sadhujana Paripalana Yogam (SJPY) and then the Pulaya sub-castes organizations and the movements under the leadership of Poykayil Yohannan which later became Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha (PRDS). Like other social reformation movements, these movements also started as a separate reaction against societal oppressions. Three historical figures who were the icons of the uprising of downtrodden of Kerala were Sree Narayana Guru, Ayyankali and Poykayil Appachan. Here, we would rather go through the discourses of these movements than detailing the historical events that took place as part of these movements.

## Body and Kerala Modernity

The major project of these subaltern movements was reforming body practices. Body reform was constructed around the concept of equality and self-esteem, which was set by upper caste ideals and dominant practices that were informed by missionary discourses. Here is an attempt to understand the dynamics in which lower caste movements conceived the body.

The body was one of the major projects in modernity. The colonial gaze on colonized bodies in oriental societies was filled with amusement and wonder, especially in societies where the bodies were constructed in varied forms and rituals, even with conflicting style of controlling bodies in different layers of society. For instance, in a society like India where social and moral life is determined by caste relations, the caste inscribed bodies (of both upper and lower castes) have to perform in totally different ways to present their bodies to show where they are located in the caste hierarchy, and these performances in a way control their body through the control and humiliation received through this performance. Thus the hyper-values and de-value of the bodies in our society became one of the major concerns of the British and the missionaries active in the region. The colonial anxieties of these colonized bodies were evident in the missionary writings and travelogues of western travellers. Not only the body presentation/performance but also the conjugal relations, inheritance, the half-covered bodies in public spaces and the rituals in which bodies became central also disturbed them.

Bodily presentations and practices were strictly by the caste order which ascribes different set of body presentations for each caste depending on their position in the caste hierarchy. Both male and female bodies were controlled by such bodily

practices. Robin Jeffery observes that “anyone after living a little while in the country even at first glance tells to what caste a stranger belongs by the way he or she wears their hair or garments” (Jeffery 1976: 10). These inscriptions were more rigid on female bodies. It was manifested in varied ways such as from covering the female body to forced practice of appearing in the bare upper part of the body. While Antharjanams<sup>3</sup> were compelled to wear ghosha<sup>4</sup> to cover their body and their mobility was strictly regulated within temples and private spaces, the lower caste women were instructed to wear Kalla and mala (an ornament made up of shells and stones) and keep their body bare.

Dehumanizing of the body in Kerala has its roots in the slave system. The missionary documents are the main sources for information about slavery in Kerala. Unlike Europe or America, here the slavery system was based on caste. There was a complex situation in which one could not easily differentiate between caste and slavery. It was lower caste people who were invisible and abandoned in this social system. Slavery in Kerala was deep-rooted in the caste system and existed here even before the colonial invasion. The people who did not belong to the ‘four varna system’ were more or less made into slaves. Ninety per cent of slaves were so by birth and belonged to Pulaya, Paraya, Cherumar, and Kuravar castes. It is because of these historical facts that Poykayil Appachan called his followers *adima santhathikal* (slaves). The agrarian labour was referred to as *adima* or slave. Besides the Pulayas and Parayas, some tribes were also made into slaves. Kusuman observes that “In India, the origin of slavery is closely related to the inception of the caste system, which in turn was based on our hierarchical social order. And the whole structure was given a religious background and holy garb.” Yesudasan uses two concepts to explain the slavery experiences of the Dalits. For this, he employs the concept of ‘abjection’ and post-colonial thought developed by Albert Memmi, where Memmi observes that the black (colonized) was becoming mere objects or animals in the gaze of the colonizer. The Dalits in colonies were used to be called as ‘poocha’ (literary means cat, but a derogatory term to humiliate the black skin of Dalits) by Malayali people. The cats are usually chased by men. The dichotomy of the relation between man and the beast was what subconsciously determined the relation between Dalits and the upper castes (Yesudasan 2010: 20). Kristeva fixes abjection as one of the fundamental processes of subject formation. The subject is formed by vomiting everything other than one’s self. The infant who is born to earth without any arenas eventually constructs boundaries around him to become himself. By using this concept, Yesudasan adds that “the upper caste infant who is in the process of being a savarna adult, vomits a load some of wastes and junks, including the Dalits as well. The proximity of an untouchable was believed to pollute savarna people and it had religious sanction. By defining Dalit bodies as polluted and making this construction



as a religious belief of Ezhavas and the castes which stood above them in the caste hierarchy, the caste slavery was maintained (Ibid: 21).

Rejikumar observes:

Even if slavery was banned by the princely government, Dalit lives did not affect it. They continued as slaves. The proclamation which Rani Lakshmi Bai of Travancore State did in 1811 abolishing slavery was only due to the compulsion of Diwan Colonel Munro. Due to the above-mentioned proclamation about one lakh, thirty-six thousand Ezhava slaves were set free. But the slave castes of Parayar, Pulayar were continued as slaves. This proclamation strengthened the legitimacy of the slave trade of castes like Kuravar, Parayar, Pulayar, Pallar, Malayar, Vedar. The Ezhavas found freedom through this proclamation. It is again after half a century that the above-mentioned castes got freedom through a proclamation in 1029 Kanni 30 (Rejikumar 2004:18).

Here the observation of Yesudasan is more pertinent:

When a person's body is used by another for sexual pleasure without his/her permission we call it rape. When a whole community's bodies are considered feminine bodies - without the power of phallus and raped for the sexual pleasure of the dominant community we call it slavery. Malayali consciousness adorned the veil of modernity hiding the dark secret of the social mass rape (Yesudasan 2010: 39).

Untouchability and distance pollution were two ways in which violence was practised on the lower caste bodies. It was assumed that the bodies of lower castes cause pollution or the body of a lower caste is polluted. This concept and practice does not simply restrict lower caste people from coming closer to members of upper caste, but most importantly regulate bodies and their movements based on a hierarchical caste order. This regulation of the body was not only defined to the Brahmins, but also between every caste. Untouchability was not confined to body touch or distance to be maintained from savarna castes; it denied all sort of access to social life. Untouchables were denied access to public roads, temples, wells, market and other social spaces as they were believed to be polluting bodies. They were considered as mere animals or subhumans. In no way does this mean that the practice of untouchability didn't involve physical violence. Those who failed to perform these rituals were subjected to death in that period or they would be subjected to physical violence by upper castes. They were denied all the requirements needed for a decent life. The women were not allowed to wear gold or silver ornaments and new, white clothes. Every caste body was assigned a peculiar style of ornaments depending on their caste status; no upward or horizontal mobility was allowed in case of body presentation or practices.

Regarding the practice of untouchability, Ambedkar observes:

The Hindus who touched them [untouchables] and becomes polluted thereby can become pure by undergoing purification ceremonies. But there is nothing that can make

untouchable pure. They are born impure, they are impure while they live, they die the death of the impure, and they gave birth to children who are born with stigma of untouchability affixed to them. It is a case of permanent hereditary stain which nothing can cleanse (Quoted in Ray and Ray, n.d.)

It was the interventions of missionaries which brought in a new idea of conceiving body. Besides seeing 'body' as an embodiment of collective consciousness which is discriminatory and exclusive in practice, the missionaries apprehended body as a site of individual choices. According to them, purity is something related to one's soul of the internal self. If somebody is baptized once, he is considered as a complete individual and he is equal in front of the god, at least in the theological understanding of human self. This western liberal understanding of humanity functioned as a catalyst for the social reformation in Kerala. The comparatively better status of converted lower caste attracted other lower caste people into the Christian fold. The liberal ideas and the opportunity opened by the British rule attracted the upper castes as well. Devika says "the missionaries intended to refine native Christians and convert others into Christianity. They worked as 'agents' of 'civilization' advancing new ideas of culture, justice, morality and economy" (Devika 2009:3).

The project of modernity as it unfolded in Kerala (Chatterjee 1997), was neither civil nor secular. First, the initial endowments of the modernizing castes varied considerably. This coupled with the state policy that reflected the caste biases of princely government meant that different castes and communities were differentially drafted into the project. There were, therefore, discontents and unfulfilled desires, specific to caste and communities. Within a caste or a community, modernity was unevenly distributed between genders. The desires and discontents of modernity were articulated through, besides individual action, community-based social movements that emphasized social equity and upward mobility through industry, education and employment (Rammohan 2010). Different social groups in Kerala society have related to the world beyond given cultural borders differently. These trajectories have been shaped by both the internal social dynamics of the late nineteenth century to early twentieth century Malayalee society and the opportunities opened up to specific groups by the integration of economy of the Malayalam speaking regions to the capitalist world system in the mid-century (Devika 2012).

To Sathese Chandra Bose and Shiju am Varughese, "The experience of modernity in Kerala was not universal across the region, a point often missed by scholars. Modernity of region as negotiated through its complex geography of multiple space-time is incomprehensible from the methodological vantage points which rely on 'given-ness' and internal homogeneity of the region" (Bose and Varughese 2015: 11).

The project of colonial modernity was aimed at the reformation of inhabitants of the colonized places. The Indians also underwent such projects during the colonial periods. But these changes affected different communities or social groups differently and this dissimilarity was determined by many sets of factors like the discontent for the colonized elite. They may hitchhike on the grand narratives of western civilization and at times even manage to insinuate themselves as illegal immigrants on to the project of modernity (Menon 2000; Guru 2015), taking a step further while analyzing the impact of modernity on Dalits, suggests that the conception, reception and retention of modernity among different social groups in India, varies depending on the structural advantage offered to each by historical concerns. Caste and patriarchal character of Indian society do not allow certain castes to consolidate their modernity claim and make progress. Dalits do not grow or they only grow with suffix with their names - as in 'Dalit intellectual' - where being intellectual is the universal description of a person. Dalits are not allowed to appear in public with a different identity. They are denied a generic identity (xiv).

Sanal Mohan contextualizes the modernity of Kerala thus:

Colonial interventions effected a long-standing transformation of lower caste which led to the creation of a new subjectivity. This was instrumental in the evolution of a new social agency among lower caste people of Kerala, in certain cases around new institutional sites. These institutional sites were colonial and are not free from the powerful effect of colonialism. But as they were negotiated by different social groups and in this instance by 'lower caste', the ensuing process was different from what the dominant Dalit other, those actors-the missionaries, colonialists, the local elites-expected (Mohan 2005: 162).

Further, in the reform discourses of the twentieth century, one of the central themes had been the reform of bodily practices and reconceptualization of self. The human body and self have come to be considered as an integral part of society. In the missionary project, human body and newly bodily practices were important when the question of reformation was dealt with. Hence an idea of social reformation came to be considered as the reforming the bodily practices and the self (Ibid: 165).

The feminist take on reformation reflects the feminist criticism at the national level- various scholars showed complicity between western and native patriarchies in nineteenth-century debates over women empowerment and women status. For instance, Lata Mani (1987) and Uma Chakravarti (1995) analyses the debates about women in social reform movements and nationalist debates in India giving a picture about the simultaneous proliferation of discourses about women and their uninvited marginalization in these movements. Lata Mani demonstrates that women were not the concern of these various groups in debates, but women were merely the site on which competing views of tradition and modernity were debated.<sup>5</sup>

Feminist scholars who work intensely on Kerala society have also expressed doubts about the impact of the reformation in the life of women in Kerala. According to Kodoth and Eapen (2005), these institutional questions were not so important among lower castes. Nevertheless, gender question entered into reform caste indignity in central ways. For instance, the onus of community honour/dignity was made to rest heavily on women. The lower caste and agrarian struggles questioned the feudal rights that the upper caste men had over the lower caste women, but well within a framework of patriarchal rights of lower caste women. This was implied in allowing women to cover their breast and achieve a conjugal monopoly over their sexuality (Kodoth and Eapen 2005: 3279).

Before going into the detail of reform discourses, it is important to understand the operational ways in which social mobility of lower castes took place and the different modalities for such social changes. It is generally accepted that though the basic ideals behind reformation were the reorganizing and internal reforms of individual castes, there were different modernities practised among different social groups. The priority given to modernization was varied in each group and genders. The benefits of modernization were not equally distributed among all sections of society.

Unlike other communities lower castes gave thrust to self-esteem and eradication of direct and symbolic caste violence. In short, lower castes were trying to gain the 'human status' which they had been denied for centuries. The dilemma of any marginalized or oppressed sections of society was that they had to enter into the standards of the oppressor to make equal status with the oppressor, even if s/he knows the very 'standard' was formulated in favour of the oppressor. This dilemma was evident in most of the lower caste movements. This ambiguity in the identity formation is still a crucial issue in current Dalit discourses, which we will discuss in the course of this chapter and those following it. Attaining a human status was not easy for lower castes. For this, they had tried different ways, from conversion to the formation of new religious sects, from community reform to negotiating with Hindu religion, from direct struggles to negotiating with governments and so on. An attempt will be made here to map the history of reorganizing lower caste bodies in Kerala. As we discussed above, the body was both direct and indirect site of caste oppression. It was through regulating and de-humanising lower caste bodies that the upper castes maintained their supremacy. Even though body regulation and control prevailed among almost all castes, the brutality of such practices manifested in lower caste bodies. They had undergone consistent exploitation and cruelties. Thus generalizing caste experiences or body regulations without citing this graded violence would not do justice to history. To escape this trap, I shall use here M.S.S. Pandian's suggestion of 'multiple histories' of modernity and nationality (Pandian 1990: 2002).

Body fashioning was one of the major criteria of modernity. Upper cloth movement which could be considered as the foremost social movements in Kerala was a moment when the body was politically used to resist caste superiority. This movement was a revolt for the right of Channar women to cover their torso just like the upper caste women did. As a result of missionary activities, this community developed a new set of values on life. They started to wear blouses the way Christian and Muslim women used to do. This provoked the members of the upper castes and major confrontations happened in south Travancore. The Divan, Colonel Munro, issued an order sanctioning Channar women who converted to Christianity to wear jackets to cover their bodies. Yet, they were not allowed to wear second cloth in the manner upper-caste women were wearing it. But Hindu Channar woman demanded for the right to wear second cloth, as it was a symbol of modesty then. By years of long struggles and agitations and intervention of British rulers, the Travancore government abolished the cloth restriction imposed over Channar women. Thus it is evident that the upper cloth movement was not only aimed at covering the female body as a liberal or western ideal but it was an attempt to enter into the standards of social dignity. Devika observes,

The well known 'Breast-cloth Struggle' of the nineteenth century in south Thiruvathankoor involved not only the issue of feminine modesty but also the struggle around *jati*. Wearing the upper cloth would signify the symbolic equality of Channars with upper-caste Nairs. The ruler of Thiruvithankoor conceded the demand for feminine modesty but refused to allow this specific mode of dressing (the upper cloth) that implied the symbolic equality of Channars with Nairs (Devika 2009: 255).

Though the dominant caste<sup>6</sup> Channar had achieved the right to wear upper cloth and negotiated with Hindu dominance, the untouchable caste women had to wait for another decade to achieve the right to cover their bodies. The missionaries kept silent about the modesty of lower caste women. This event shows how the caste system acts as an inheritance law which confines the access to wealth, respect and knowledge only to the castes which are just above the Dalits in the social hierarchy.

Ayyankali movements also signified a rapid change in seeing body practices. Ayyankali's first entry into the social struggle was through *Villuvandi Samaram*. The protest mainly indicated the right for lower caste to enter into public spaces; it also implied a desire to avail a human status according to the then criteria. It was a challenge to caste dominance by claiming a performative possibility of the body. The inferior lower caste body of Ayyankali was dressed in the fashion of an upper-caste male body while he rode on the bullock cart. Through this action, he not only demanded the liberal idea of freedom of movements but also confronted with the upper caste ideal of a dignified body. Subsequent efforts were also made to challenge caste restrictions on dressing which suggested peculiar type of ornamenting and

clothing that were considered as low. In the caste hierarchy, the mode of dressing and caste, as both were attached to the body, had a direct relationship; dressing neatly and appropriately was the prerogative of the superior castes and dressing shabbily and inappropriately was the duty of the lower castes. Viewed thus, dress separated the lord from the serf (Mohan 2005). This was one of the basic reasons why almost all backward caste movements in India reacted sharply to dress restrictions. Ayyankali had also called for neat dressing and encouraged women to give up the practice of wearing 'kallayaum malayum' (jewellery made up of stones), a sign of subordination. There was another moment where body became a location of political resistance after Channar upper cloth movements, which came to be known as *Perinadu lahala* (Perinadu riot). Although Ayyankali movement could establish decent dress code among lower caste women through various struggles and protests, lower castes from nearby districts could not enjoy this luxury and it led to perinadu lahala in which Pulaya women discarded their stone ornaments which symbolises their caste subordination.

T. M. Yesudasan makes this observe that the demand for covering upper part of female body was supported by the missionaries when it was raised by the subaltern castes and neglected the same in the case of lower castes called for neat dressing and encouraged women to give up the practice of wearing 'kallayaum malayum' (jewellery made up of stones), a sign of subordination.<sup>7</sup> It was one of the major agendas of the movement to reform the caste-based dress code and bodily practices of lower caste women. Similar was the story that was happening in the national scenario, especially the Ambedkarite movements in Maharashtra. In his speech at Mahad, Ambedkar suggested Dalit women be neat and clean in appearance and give up ways of dressing and jewellery that marked them as untouchable castes. Some upper-caste women, wives of Ambedkar's close high-caste associates, even showed the Dalit women how to tie their saris after the fashion of Brahmin women (Sonalkar 2008).

These reformative measures taken by dalit leaders are often portrayed as imitation of upper caste practices. For instance, Prabhash observes that his advice was to achieve progress by faith in God, modern dressing and cleanliness, obedience and discipline. Ayyankali Movement had a strong influence of Sankritization built into it as what Ayyankali advised his fellow men to emulate were the practices of caste Hindus (Prabhash 2008). Idea of mimicking uppercastes are problematic as it fails to understand the complexity of resisting caste. Though the Sankritisation theory is useful to understand the operational ties of reformation to some extent, it fails to address the complexity of struggles by lower castes during the colonial period. M.N. Srinivas's model of Sanskritisation, which valorized consensus over conflicts and protests in the social order, reduces the Dalits and lowercaste castes to the status of imitators of the upper castes (Satyanarayana 2012).

According to the theory of Sanskritization that still holds currency in influential academic circles, the lower castes merely imitate the upper castes and try to go up in the hierarchical ladder. But the simple fact is that Srinivas's conceptual framework could not explain mobility outside the Brahmanic Hindu caste system and its meta-referential structure. It fails to explain independent community formations outside the Hindu hierarchy. And politically it aborts any possibility of the formation of solidarity among the marginalized outside the Hindu fold as in the subaltern-minority alliance or along the Dalit-Bahujan-women-Adivasi- minority axis. This statusquoist theorization, in other words, is an attempt to rescue the elite from losing historical monopoly and is itself an extension of the Hinduization project at the epistemological level. Another instance of sanctioned ignorance and epistemological violence could also be identified in this Brahmanic theorization of empirical Bahujans (Sekher 2003:239).

Factors of colonial modernity including western education, dress code, English education, science, economic development, hygiene, and development were all absorbed into a Hindu religion and Dalits were always treated as other of such values.

Sanal Mohan provides an analysis of how the newly bodily practices of lower castes were considered important for claiming social equality in the larger society in his historical study on the PRDS. He gives a picture of how new bodily practices were a central part of colonial modernity of lower castes in Kerala. For him, this newly body practices had precedence in the work of protestant missionaries in Kerala who wanted to reform the bodily practices of lower castes that included wearing clean clothes instead of rags and abandonment of eating the carcasses of dead animals. The universal theme of missionaries had been the notion of cleanliness that they wanted the new Christian across the globe to accept (Mohan 2005:165).

PRDS under the spiritual leadership of Poykayil Appachan, besides the spiritual cleanliness, laid equal importance to the cleanliness of the body. Appachan preached the importance of cleanliness of the body and set it as fundamental for the project of emancipation and practices of his spiritual cult. He used to take his people to river banks and showed and instructed them on how to use soil and soap to clean the body. They were also taught how to wash their clothes. He wanted his followers to use white clothes instead of rags. Lower castes were never permitted to wear proper clothes, let alone white cloths even after the triumph of upper cloth movement. Under such circumstances insistence on white clothes was significant as that subverted the symbolic world of dress codes (Ibid).

Use of liquor and other intoxicants were strictly prohibited by Appachan, which according to him, were the evils invented by those who oppressed their forefathers. Beef eating was also barred for his followers as their forefathers were forced to plough the field paired along with buffaloes, and therefore untouchables, Appachan believed,

had to consider them as brothers. He even advocated people to use a large quantity of water and leaves after defecation. Toilets were constructed with special provisions of a hole on the wall adjacent to the floor to throw away such leaves after use.

There was another context in which the question of the untouchable human body enters the discourses of movement. This was related to the question of sexuality of women. In the contemporary discourses of PRDS, this is related to the fall of ancestors of lower castes who were referred to as *adi-dravidas* as their women were lured by the strategies of Aryans. They developed their notion of tradition drawing from Maharshi lineage. This is a very significant notion in the contemporary discourses of the movement. It is argued that the destiny of the lower castes who had been drowned in abysmal slavery was to resurrect and continue their journey to the home of their Maharshis (Mohan 2005).

It is interesting to note that each community had raised the question of their rights - though they were in fact 'general rights' such as access to public spaces, modest dressing and ornamenting and educational right - separately and kept them as their community right and status of their social mobility. They were keen about not transferring those rights to castes located below in the hierarchical order. The Ezhavas who gained access to public space through conversion never allowed a lower caste converted Christian to enjoy the same right. The same is the case with upper cloth movement; lower caste women had to wait another decade to enjoy the same right- to cover the upper part of their body.

An in-depth reading of Kerala history would reveal that every body presentations made by Malayali women have a long history of negotiations and struggles. For instance, wearing a nose ring, which is a common practice among Malayali women today, have a history of a long struggle. Women from backward communities were not allowed to wear a nose ring and that ornament was a monopoly of the Nair women. Once an Ezhava woman went to a market place near Arattupuzha wearing a nose ring, and it invited the wrath of the local Nair aristocrats who forcefully tore away the ring from her nose. Arattupuzha Velayuda Panickar<sup>8</sup> an Ezhava reformist and landlord, on knowing this incident decided to react. He went to the same market the following day with thousands of nose rings and also took along with him a goldsmith and gave *mukkuthi* (nose ring) to all Ezhava women who were present there. This incident resulted in local caste conflicts later. These kinds of small encounters were very common in most parts of Travancore in this period and it was through constant struggles that the lower caste women gained the rights they enjoy today. It is paradoxical that adjacent castes, in the caste hierarchy, show more rivalries towards those who are located below them. These processes had never been homogenous or unanimous. Each community had to undergo their struggles and confrontations in the public space to achieve their rights. Even though there had



been a history of the same kind of struggles which had already taken up by other caste group and had achieved 'right' through negotiations and confrontations, the castes coming under those caste groups did not enjoy those 'rights'. For gaining the same 'right' they had to go through a similar process of struggle, and most of the times they had to wait for decades to realize their demands. Thus in case of social justice clever filtering happened through which the castes came under the lowest strata of castes, were always denied justice or subjected to belated social justice. Belated justice needs to be seen as injustice itself. So here the observation of U.R. Ananathamurthy that India lives in different ages is worth mentioning. Indeed, the calendar of modernity always run behind the schedule in the case of lower castes.

### Reservation and Community Representation

Reservation or positive discrimination was a key point of debate in Kerala modernity. The discourse around reservation started even before the last decade of the nineteenth century. It revolved around some communities who had over privilege over others in terms of access in education and government jobs. The monopoly of Brahmins, especially the non-Malayali Brahmins, in government jobs in the Travancore state, caused dissatisfaction among the educated Nair youths. Many educated Nair young men found no jobs in government sectors. Besides these Nairs being the shudra caste, though they performed the role of kshatriya varna as warrior class of the society, were not permitted to learn Sanskrit at Sanskrit College, Thiruvananthapuram. These discriminatory spaces in the colonial public made Nair youth to react against it in the princely state Travancore. The renowned Malayali Memorial was a grand petition submitted to the sovereign Sree Moolam Thirunal, requesting reservation of jobs for native people by their demographic pattern. Malayali Sabha, an organization under the leadership of educated Nair youth, took initiative for the Memorial. Malayali Sabha was formed with the prospect of doing welfare activities within the Nair community and giving financial support for the poorest among the community. During that time Brahmins from other states literary dominated in all the higher posts in the government. The representation of almost all communities was ensured in the Malayali Memorial. The signatories included Christians, Muslims and Ezhavas, besides the Nairs. Dr Palpu, who became the leader of Sree Narayan movement later and the novelist C.V. Raman Pillai, were prominent among others who led the Malayali Memorial. Lower castes were not included in this Memorial. As a group which were not coming under the category of 'citizen', not even to the 'human status', lower castes were never included in the imagination of social equality. It is in this way that Kerala modernity differs from western modernity. It was Malayali Memorial that started thoughts on the reservation and positive discrimination based on a demographic consideration. So we could say

that it was a move for reservation for those communities who inherited Malayali status. Unfortunately, the untouchables were not even considered as Malayalis. It reveals the fact that the question of reservation based on the difference was never an invention of subaltern politics. Rather it was introduced by the upper caste elites as we saw above.

Five years after the Malayali Memorial, another Memorial called Ezhava Memorial was submitted to Travancore government. The third signatory of Malayali Memorial, Dr Palpu initiated this Memorial. It was a desperate move emerged out of Malayali Memorial's failure to represent all communities despite being envisaged so initially. The middle caste, the Ezhaves, was dissatisfied with the result of Malayali Memorial which in effect became a Nair Memorial. Ezhava Memorial demanded reservation for members of the Ezhava community in government jobs. It raised the need for reservation in educational institutions as well. Ezhava Memorial gave rise to three important factors: Firstly, though Malayali Memorial technically represented all Malayalam speaking people, it discursively expelled castes other than Nairs and Nampoothiris. It was only meant for those who were 'suitable' for the Malayali identity which was by and large determined then by caste hierarchy.

T.T. Sreekumar (2014) points out that Shudra (Nair) dominated Malayali Memorial which resulted in job opportunities for "Malayalis" in Travancore which when practised became job opportunities only for the upper caste Nairs.<sup>9</sup> It was difficult for communities such as Christians, Muslims and Ezhavas to get the benefits by the Memorial according to the socio-political situation in Travancore. Ezhavas were ritually considered as lower caste, although they had better statuesque considering their population, social mobility and ownership of all forms of wealth including the land. The elites in the Ezhava community had objection towards their ritually subordinated position. They had to overcome this displeasure by extending their social life outside Travancore and thus challenged the casteist customary practices of Hindu kingdom. Dr Palpu studied outside Travancore; he studied in Madras and England. His father was denied a job in Travancore government service due to his caste status. Palpu also had to undergo a similar experience of caste discrimination. When he returned after his professional education, the princely government did not permit him to join in government services. This instance allows us to think about the power of caste had our society. One cannot discard his caste even if they attained other social statues such as education and wealth. This observation is also applicable to the contemporary Kerala situation. Government-funded aided colleges in Kerala mostly run by upper castes and minority communities and Ezhavas, do not follow governmental reservation guidelines for admission in their institutions. The claimed 'merit' seats are filled with people who belong to Ezhavas and castes above Ezhava communities

Secondly, the social differences between Ezhavas and upper castes and lower castes are different. The relationship of Ezhava's with the other two caste groups is dialectical. Their rich status in society gave them an associational relationship with the upper castes even though the upper castes didn't want it, and caste-based untouchability and subjugation placed them above other lower caste people. So upward mobility from this 'in-between' state is the core of the renaissance of the Ezhava community. For this, they used the model of modern Nair. Even though the Ezhava's maintained an association with lower castes, this relation itself was very feeble; the Ezhavas were far ahead of social mobility compared to the lower castes. For example, when Ayyankali was planning a strike to claim the right for his people to walk on roads, Dr Palpu was studying abroad. This shows the differences between these two communities in terms of social positions. Even though in a limited scale, this social mobility and the richness of the community helped the Ezhava's stand eye to eye with the Nairs. This organizational prowess helped to bring about the Ezhava Memorial within a couple of years after the Malayali Memorial.

Thirdly, the issue of inequality in the distribution of social justice in Kerala needs to be understood. In Kerala history itself, social justice was possible to communities due to the different agitations, protests and confrontations, which different communities undertook at different times on their own. Social justice was never equally distributed here. In Kerala, social justice was decided based on caste. In short, each community got its due, depending on the symbolic 'spaces' it occupied. The distribution of social justice was decided based on the position of each caste in the hierarchical system.

There was no space for the untouchables even in Ezhava Memorial. They didn't have the organizational skills to create a Memorial like that. But Ayyankali and Poykayil Appachan who came as representatives of untouchables in the Sree Moolam Praja Sabha had argued for the right to education for the untouchable castes. Ayyankali in his more than twenty years of life as a legislature had fought vigorously for education and government jobs for backward castes.

Representation of lower castes in Sreemoolam Sabha indicates the entry of communities which had political power into the Sabha. In the beginning, upper-caste people used to represent all the communities there. But the various lower caste movements in Travancore State created new concepts regarding social representation, thus enabling the representation of untouchables in political power structures like Praja Sabha Membership. Later on, each sub-caste wanted representation in the Sabha and finally, all communities were given representation.

Vernacular education was also demanded by different castes. From Nair to Ezhavas, from untouchable caste to Namboothiris, all came out in open demanding

this. But the untouchables were the last to gain this right. They could merely receive basic education. The upper castes used colonial modernity for effective intervention, while the untouchables were looking helplessly at the scene. They reached a state where they had to request every small thing. Untouchables, due to the lack of resources, couldn't adjust themselves to the changing times.

Lower castes' demand for special legal protection in education was not only confined to governmental structures alone. Lower castes had staged blood-shedding agitations for their democratic rights which were overtly argued in terms of community rights. The 'Thonnooram aandu lahala' was one among many. It was one of the historic struggles led by Ayyankali for the right of education for children of his community. The strike continued for one full year (1907-08) and was meticulously planned. A small bank of youth known as *Ayyankali Pada* was formed to offer protection to the strikers against criminal elements recruited by the landlords. Those who tried to violate the ban were forcibly restrained, but at the same time steps were taken to ensure alternative sources of employment for the striking workers by entering into deals with the fisherfolk of the coastal areas. In the end, a tripartite agreement was reached between Ayyankali, caste Hindu landlords and the Government whereby lower caste children were granted permission to attend schools. The strike was certainly not the product of any class consciousness (Chentharassery 1985; Abhimanyu 1990; Oommen 1985; Prabhash 2009; Kandasamy and Nisar 2007). However, refraining from agricultural labour and making use of it as a forceful political weapon, Ayyankali succeeded in creating in his fellow beings a new consciousness. He thus challenged the feudal relations in agriculture and showed his men that there was nothing sacrosanct in their relationship with the *Jemmies* (Mohan 2005).

Poykayil Appachan also built schools and training centres for the lower caste people. He also concentrated on vocational training for lower castes (Anil and Swami 2010). Even though the Travancore government and British rulers had legally sanctioned the lower castes access to education, the savarna groups were not ready to allow the untouchables to learn. So the situation demanded direct conflicts with savarna people and Ayyankali and his men succeeded in agreeing with the officials and finally lower castes entered into the promised land of education (Renukumar 2015)

### Conversion, Religious Ascend and Spirituality

Lower caste people experimented so many paths for attaining a decent and dignified life. Being helpless slaves, they were denied even a human status. Dalits had never been part of any established religion until the missionary activities led them to a new religion called Christianity. Till then they were merely outcaste, they

were not permitted to worship any Hindu god. They might have had followed their ancestors' ritual practices, but these were not part of any organised religion.

Religion was one of the major sites of confrontation during this era, especially to lower caste people. During colonial modernity and even before it, religion becomes a political tool for lower caste, as they made use of religion to challenge existing power structures. Lower castes were not part of any religion, till they accepted the Christian religion. Before that, they were slaves who were positioned as outcaste of Hindu religion. The social factors lead them to embrace Christianity. Dalit Christian discourses in Kerala draws interesting insights about the relation between conversion and social mobility, and how lower castes negotiated with missionaries to get rid of caste-based violence from Hindu religion<sup>10</sup> This resistance happened even before the reformist period. These discourses challenged the established view Conversion is a social phenomenon in which an individual or a group changes their religion from an established religion to another religion of the same kind. He also considers Dalit ascend to Christianity as an 'event' in the Foucauldian sense. about lower caste conversion; it was widely propagated that as an individual or as a collective lower caste converted to Christianity to get both material and personal benefits. According to these new debates on the relationship of Dalits with Christianity, theology and religion were not private matters, rather those were a social phenomenon. Since in pre-conversion era, slave castes were not part of any established religion, Dalit Christian scholars used the term religious embracement than the term conversion. To them, the conversion was the only source before the slaves to liberate from inhuman practices such as untouchability and slavery. Even though lower caste embraced Christianity, their relation with missionaries was not smooth. Missionaries always took a strategic position in dealing with caste atrocities or addressing caste. Even they had taken a contradictory position when lower castes and middle castes raised issues of the same nature. As backward communities (Ezhavas, Nadars) were formed the majority of members who converted to Christianity and these middle castes kept hostility towards untouchables, the missionaries were subjected to pressure from these communities and it prevented missionaries to take steps regarding the issues faced by lower caste people. For instance, in 1853, protestant missionaries took a strong position against caste order by supporting a converted Ezhava for his right to access a public road. But some years later in 1914, the same missionaries did not support Dalit Christian for his demand for the entry in public roads, because Ezhavas stood against the issue and were not ready to permit a lower caste to access public space, even though he was a converted Christian. This incident shows the double stand of missionaries and how deep-rooted caste was in human consciousness. But in general conversion to Christianity helped slave castes to attain certain kind of social mobility (albeit at a very minimal level), though it was not up

to the expectations of the lower castes. In other words, the spiritual well being as promised by the missionaries and other church authorities never manifested in the lives of lower castes. This experience of lower castes in the church is narrated in the story of T.K.C. Vaduthala titled *Achante Vendinga Innaa* (here I give back your sacred garland, father priest) The result was that Kerala society witnessed yet another, long years of struggle for equal justice within churches, by Dalit Christians. Details of these struggles will be discussed in the next chapter. Thus the conversion becomes an ‘unfinished project’<sup>11</sup> of the political as well as cultural desire of slave community concerned as observed by T.M. Yesudasan. Other subaltern intellectuals agree with this observation. The choice of conversion gave untouchable bahujans at least a temporary way out of caste hegemony, though it constructed new hierarchies in more paradoxical reality formations within promised spaces of Christianity, Islam and Sikhism (Sekher 2008)

Parallel to the move to embrace Christianity, there were also efforts to enter into Hindu religion or appropriating the ritual religion. This was put forward mainly by the dominant caste groups like the Ezhavas, Nadars and Thiyyas.

For this, there were attempts to reinterpret existing social aspect of Hindu philosophy. Sree Narayana movement was in such a track. As a dominant caste, as M.N. Srinivas saw it, these communities functioned as power group, though they did not have a fair status ritually in Hindu society. Since the community had a strong presence of elite, they could have had some negotiating space to address with their inferior status. Ezhava Memorial could be seen as an example of this observation. ‘Aruvippuram consecration’ could also be seen as an effort to enter into the Hindu fold, though it challenged the very Hindu customary practices which denied equal status for subaltern castes. Sree Narayana Guru questioned the rationality of such practices by using the very philosophical tools that Hindus approved. However, this entry of Ezhava to Hindu fold was never simple and unconditional. Both philosophical exploration and social practices were intertwined in this process. Guru made a subaltern interpretation of the Advaita philosophy on one side and at the same time he built more than fifty temples all over Kerala and he made it accessible for all castes. Once he said “even at the time of Sri Rama, the most ideal king and the incarnation of god, Sanyasam was forbidden for Shudras and similar castes” (Balakrishnan 2000). He opened Vedic patashalas (study centres) and temples with Sanskrit deities (Ezhavas worshipped pre-modern deities till then) for the lower castes. It was an attempt to reform the religion by the now learned modern ideals. This uniqueness of being an Advaitin monk (which is traditional) and modern interlocutor is seen in Guru at once and these contradictory locations featured the subaltern modernity at large. Dileep Raj in an insightful article (2005) says: His [Guru’s] effort was to “make another world possible.” In it was embedded the task

of imagining the present differently and transforming it without destroying. This particular mentality towards oneself and the present, following Michel Foucault, we can call Baudelairean modernity. It involves vigilance towards the existing state of affairs, to engage in practices to modify that and constantly stick to both tasks simultaneously...On the question of why did Guru establish temples when he did not believe in caste or religion, one could argue that as a way to gain self-respect for the Ezhava community who were caught in an 'in-between' status was through acquiring cultural capital. That age opened up possibilities of mimicking savarnas and the English. Narayana Guru's life-text had also travelled in the opposite direction of Sanskritization.

P.K. Balakrishnan (1954/2000) had perceptively observed that,

The essence of Guru's social thinking was moving down. It was not that Ezhavas must struggle to become Nayars; they should overcome antagonisms within and become Pulayas. He rejects the observations which find upper-caste identification of Ezhava through their social movements (Ibid: 56).

The temple entry was the concern of Ezhavas according to many Dalit scholars (Kapikadu 2014; Baburaj 2000; Kochu 1998; Anirudhan and Mani 2010). In response to the temple proclamation, Ayyankali said: "we don't need a god who keep silent while we are beaten up by upper castes from time immemorial" (cited in Anirudhan 2012). These words of Ayyankali show the attitude of lower castes towards temple entry. While the SNDP Yogam organized numerous agitations and protest for the temple entry, Ayyankali was almost silent about the cause. Ayyankali never talked about temple entry. He was less concerned about religion; his aim was mainly the empowerment of his community. He never talked about temple entry. It was not there in his speeches in Sree Moolam Praja Sabha. Nor did he include this demand in the agenda of his organization. Contrary to the demand for temple entry, he fought for the right to education for the lower castes. He never built temples, but only founded the first-ever school for lower-caste students. The temple entry proclamation of 12 November 1937 was a result of the political pressure of the SNDP Yogam and a result of the anti-conversion stance by Travancore government. When Mahatma Gandhi visited Ayyankali with the message of temple entry proclamation, Ayyankaali revealed to him that he wanted ten B.A. graduates from his community as his last wish, rather than entry into temples (Anirudhan 2011:72). This unambiguously shows the secular face of lower caste social movements. It was an Ezhava community which demanded temple entry. Years-long struggles were needed to get the right of temple entry. Later on, Sree Narayana Guru established many temples for his community and made it accessible to all castes.

There were also trends among the members of the Ezhava community to convert into other religions. There were parallel discussions on conversion to Buddhism.

Ezhavas were converted to many religions during the period of reformation. Conversion to Christianity was a major trend. There was also converted to Islam and Sikhism as well. C. Krishnan strongly stood for the idea of conversion for Thiyyas to Buddhism. Sahodaran Ayyappan also initiated such a discussion during this period. Five Ezhava young men visited Amritsar and converted to Sikhism. There was a counter-argument against the dominant position which tried to get a space within the Hindu religion.

Another important event in the religious discourses of Kerala was the formation of a spiritual /religious organization under the leadership of Poykayil Yohannanan. The religion was known as Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha (PRDS). Appachan also tried to create a new identity through constructing a history of his people. He realized that people could be made aware of their identity only if they knew their olden days or their once glorious but now forgotten past. In other words, through the instrumentality of history, he tried to make his people recognise the reason for their current deprivation. He said: I behold the histories of many races. I have searched every history of Kerala for the story of my race. But there was none on the earth to write the story of my race (*Kaanunnilaraksharavum Ente Vamshathe Patti... Kaanunnundaneka Vamshathin Charithrangal* -taken from one of Poyakayil Appachan's song).

He was also very concerned about the fragmentation of lower caste based on caste. This was one of the reasons why he sought to establish a new religious order for the community. Thus, he had a sense of history and had an idea about its scope in identity formation. Slavery was the metaphor he used for his theology; his new religious order denied both Hindu and Christian ethics and philosophy. Memory was another tool for self-realization in his order. He conveyed through songs and explained the philosophy of life in terms of everyday experiences of lower castes. He also advocated the accumulation of wealth among lower caste people. He formulated a morality code for those ordained to his religious order which was purely modern. By criticizing the Christian system of salvation and theology, Sri Kumara Gurudevan formulated the concept of absence of *Raksha* (redemption from both physical bondage and spiritual darkness) through his revelation based on orally communicated lived experiences of the past generations of oppressed people. It was manifested through the songs reflecting the pain and agony, oppression and displacement, and servitude and bondage of these people. Belief and declaration of faith in God were the two cardinal principles of Srikumara

Gurudeva's Sabha which emphasized its indivisible relation with historical past and its invocation to rewrite the history of the present. The truth or worldview that he projected was based on the reflexive and critical understanding on the conditions of existence of the Dalit communities and the meaning of which was always deferred



because he had actualized his ideas in a prophetic language (Madhavan, n.d.).

As a member of the Travancore State Assembly, representing the Dalit communities, Poiyikayil Srikumara Gurudevan made a discourse that transformed the untouchable communities from the dehumanized subject to a modern citizen. He had made use of spirituality as a means to acquire different forms of capitals including the symbolic ones. He tried to convert spirituality as a community resource with which he challenged the Hindu and Christian system of theology. Community formation in the modern sense of the term had been widely used by him and the experience of slavery was also used to formulate the genealogy for the political present (Ramakrishnan 2010:23).

The theology of Poikayil Appachan indicates the point that the Christian system of salvation built on the idea of sin and purity of self is not for the marginalized. He categorically stated that the Bible was not for this generation of marginalized and Christ would not come for a second time. This view posed a problem to the theological system of Christianity and missionaries of that period. In the spiritual and organizational discourse of the PRDS, slavery became a *prima factor*. Slave experience of the marginalized created the narrative structure and spiritual sphere of PRDS. Appachan argued for a philosophy that was different from the Hindu and Christian religious discourses.

## Community Formation

It is already observed that unlike Poykayil Appachan and Pampady John Joseph, the significance of Ayyankali was the development of social practice for community mobilization. But in this process, he also attempted at constructing a Dalit identity, though indirectly, by organising them into a community. The struggle for claiming public space and end of other social indignities gradually brought together people of various *Dalit* groups and this later became the basis of identity formation (Prabhash 2005).

Community formation was the most crucial process in the history of social formations Kerala. It happened through the process of the unification of identical sub-castes into a single community identity. This helped the traditional caste groups to overcome caste disabilities by legislation and administrative measures.

The subtle political dynamics of the Nairs who outwardly mimicked colonial modernity and packed away lower castes as 'other' resulted in defining the nature of public space in Kerala. If we look closely at the above-cited examples, we can see Brahmanic hegemony in both its Malayali and Tamilian varieties is posited as the visible other. But there is yet another category that is completely absent: the Dalits. By appropriating the hegemonic systems of both colonial modernity and Brahmanism

and by erasing the Dalit other, the Nairs created a new space of Malayali nationalism. It is through the cultural capital of the Nairs that the idea of Kerala has been imagined and constructed. The very icons specific to the upper caste, especially the Nairs, have been projected as 'Keralanness' and 'Malayaliness'.....hence, being a Dalit or Muslim or Tamilian is tantamount to being excluded from the sites of Kerala. It is in this constructed space of Kerala and Malayaliness that all the emancipatory histrionics of Kerala have been enacted. Naturally, this society's emancipatory dreams have no place for Dalit emancipation and anti-caste politics (Dasan 2012).

### Demand for Land and Land Rights

The land was a prime concern for lower castes. It is still a hot issue in the Dalit movements. Both Poyakayil Appachan and Ayyankali had raised issues of landlessness in Praja Sabha during their period as members of the Sabha. Pampady John Joseph and Karumpan Daivathan also demanded cultivable land for Dalits. Both these movements submitted many memoranda for getting land for lower castes (see Ramadas 2006). In discussions and debates of the assembly, Yohannan raised the problems of lower castes in general and not the problem of any particular caste. His demand included making available three acres of land per each household along with agricultural credit for starting agriculture. This would have had an impact on the development of peasantry from the traditional agrarian population who were agrestic slaves a few decades ago and many of whom continued in semi-slave status even during that time. Similarly, he demanded preference for distributing government 'puthuval' lands. Along with this he also requested for the re-distribution of the fallow lands held as property by landlords. It was demanded that the cultivable land in reserve forests should be distributed among lower caste for cultivation for which tax should be levied only after an initial tax holiday. It was demanded that the lower caste members of the assembly should be provided with the list of available cultivable land for distribution (Mohan 2005:160).

Sanal Mohan adds on: "In the sphere of education, Yohannan demanded that depressed children should be given admission in schools and arrangements should be made to give them mid-day meals and dress. He demanded that they should not be detained on account of being backwards in studies but be promoted so that they would be encouraged to opt for education" (Mohan 2005:162).

"[Ayyankali] persuaded the state to assign 'puthuval'(fallow) lands to agricultural groups like the Pulayas. Though the government considered the demand to distribute 'poduval' land for the lower castes favourably, the casteist bureaucracy that was responsible for the administration of Travancore, intervened and caused hindrance to the process. However, Pulays were allowed to use lands in areas like Neyyattinkara, Nedumangadu, Viluvamcode and so on" (Nisar and Kandasamy

2007:86). The instance was when women acted as protectors for Poykayil Appachan whenever he was attacked by Syrian Christians.

As we discussed above there was no specific women emancipation programme in lower caste movements. Though they had undergone various reformations and achieved a set of rights during the reformation period, micro-level issues such as social mobility, equal wages were not the concern of these movements. For them, basic amenities and fundamental human rights were the goals. Lower caste women were craving for a decent and dignified life, and lack of social and cultural capital made them confined to basic issues and making further move were not possible for them.

Above discussion clearly demonstrates how social justice had been functioning as community justice in Kerala, and how it was distributed to each community in accordance with their social status. The same was applicable for body presentation, religious practices and representation rights that were achieved by different communities. It also throws light on the paradoxical situation where adjacent castes, in the caste hierarchy, showed more rivalries towards those who are located just below them. These processes had never been homogenous or uniform. Each community had to undergo their own struggles and confrontations in the public space to achieve their rights. Even though there had been a history of same kind of struggles which had already taken up by other caste groups and they had achieved 'rights' through negotiations and confrontations, the castes coming under those caste groups did not enjoy those 'rights'. For gaining the same 'right', they had to go through similar processes of struggle, and most of the times, they had to wait for decades to realize their demands. Thus, in the case of social justice, a clever filtering happened through which the castes came under the lowest strata of caste hierarchy were always denied justice or subjected to belated social justice. While some communities inherited Malayali status, the untouchables were not even considered as Malayalis. Further it was shown that in Kerala, social justice was decided on the basis of caste. In short, each community got its due, depending on the symbolic 'spaces' it occupied. The distribution of social justice was decided on the basis of position of each caste in the hierarchical system.

## Notes and References

1. Ayyankali also pioneered a movement for democratizing public places and asserting the rights of workers even before the establishment of any workers organizations (like the communist movement) in Kerala. He soon became a voice for the untouchables in Kerala and associated himself with genuine social reformers who were aiming to restructure the decadent Hindu society<sup>6</sup>. Ayyankali was later nominated to the assembly of Travancore in 1910 by the then rulers as a mark of

recognition of his leadership abilities. With the support he received from his well-wishers, Ayyankali established Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham to help the lower castes by providing them with education, finance and legal support. We have to remember here that SJPS was not for organizing Pulaya castes alone, instead it organized all untouchable castes under the organization

2. Poykayil appachan was a Dalit spiritual leader, who established Pratyaksha Reksha Daiva Sabha (PRDS) advocated spiritual liberation, and wanted to empower and consolidate the lower castes, and promote a creed in which the 'slave castes' would be free of discrimination and oppression.
3. A name which refers to Malayali Brahmin woman.
4. Ghosha is a long piece of cloth used to cover the body of Malayali Brahmin woman. She had to wear ghosha and an umbrella made up of palm tree leaves while going out.
5. A couple of scholars, especially women scholars, express a similar opinion. For instance, Uma Chakravarti, Kumkum Sangari, Chandra Mohanty, Himani Banerji and Sumanta Banerji have written excellent pieces on how women were imagined in the reformist discourses in India, with special reference to various regions.
6. Dominant castes is a term coined by M.N. Srinivas. According to him the dominant caste in a village is decided by their sizable numerical presence, ownership of land and the high amount of political power they hold. Most often these castes may not be in a higher rank in caste hierarchy but enjoy higher status with above-said resources they have.
7. After this major event, a replica of this struggle, although in a small scale in the form of local-level meetings, was happening in the southern parts of Kerala, held by Ayyankali. Kochukali Amma, who met Ayyankali and participated in his movement passed away recently on June 2, 2013. In an interview of her, she recollected her association with Ayyankali movement and about the efforts of Ayyankali for reforming bodily practices of the lower caste women (Sathi 2013)
8. This incident is discussed in *Pulavrutham* compiled by Divakaruni (1999).
9. Sreekumar, T.T. "Hindutwa's Demographic Worries" <http://www.countercurrents.org/communalism-sreekumar091004.htm>.. 09 October, 2004.
10. T.M. Yesudasan (2010) coins a new term 'religious ascend' (matharohanam) in explaining the conversion of slave castes to Christianity. He explains that since lower castes were devoid of any religious practices or religion itself, one cannot term slave communities' move to Christianity as conversion
11. This is used here in a Habermasian sense that conversion or religious ascend was a conscious political move by slaves based on the idea of democracy and reason. But it did not reach its goal, though they obtained some benefits. So they need to do much for the fulfilment of the action, thus conversion is an unfinished project.

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## Capitalism and Social Labour: An Environmental Critique

Rengupta. M

**T**he value of labour is fundamental to capitalist mode of production and exchange. In classical and modern discourse of political economy, labour is motor force behind the emergence of civil life and property. Rationality of the possession of property refers to the mode administration and ownership of labour.

This paper is an attempt to see how a social and ecological critique of labour and property would look like. It begins with the internalization of the idea of labour by John Locke who considers labour expenditure as the idea that legitimises private property, expansion of wealth and new comforts. Then it tries to conceptualize boundaries for the Lockean principles of labour and goes to the discussion of margins of labour process. The idea of non-vale producing population and absence are refereed for conceptualizing a socio-ecological critique. Marx's idea of primitive accumulation is the next part of conceptual organization. The paper argues that this process of divorcing the masses from the means of production is an on-going process. In the next step Marx's concept of dual character of labour is reorganized with reference to the second law of thermodynamics. The final section attempts to conceptualize ecological movements with reference to David Harvey's idea of resistive surplus as the locus of social and ecological change.

### John Locke and the Capitalist Manifesto

The western idea of human ownership and authority over nature and natural resources has a biblical origin. Enlightenment and modern thinking continued with the same idea of mastery. For modern political thinker John Locke English factory labourer had a much more privileged life than Native American King. The world which was given in common became private property with the expenditure of private labour. Improvement of nature, a private, process was philosophically legitimized by Locke (Locke 2003: 114). Civil life from this modern political science point of

view requires humans to be separate from nature. Scientific investigations into nature provided advanced possibilities of intervening and administering nature. This was accompanied by the emergence of the capitalist system of production.

Scientific administration of nature is a necessary condition for a profit oriented commodity production system that continuously produces and exchanges. Commodities open up a new world of comforts and consumption to humanity. A world of commodity production and exchange provides a possibility for human beings to consume and experience diverse things. For consuming diverse things everyone does not have to engage in production. A system of socially organized labour that aims at exchange produces new values in matter available in nature. Therefore a social system of production and exchange of commodities emerges which allows humans to get into a world of diversified comforts.

Industry separates humans from the bondages of nature and becomes a process that brings nature in the form of purchasable commodities. Every part of the human and natural world is expected to be part of this process of separation from nature. World of industrial capitalism is not any result of natural development of humanity; it is a completely human work of art. In other words it is conscious and organized human labour that produced the world that we live in.

Now the question of the boundaries of capitalist production and exchange emerges. A considerable part of the population remains outside the production houses under capitalism; a population that is not part of both the labour expending class and industrial reserve army.

### **The 'Non Value Producing Population' <sup>1</sup> and their 'Absence'<sup>2</sup> as a Necessary Condition<sup>3</sup> for the Social System of Production**

If it is the presence and direct material interaction of the labourer that produces value out of matter, it is the absence of the masses from the social relations of nature that capacitates capital in appropriating the bio-physical bodies of nature during the expansion of the constant part of the technical composition. Locke's comparison of vast and uncultivated lands of America with the State of Nature" (Ibid: 106) cannot be treated knife after witnessing the dramatic growth of capitalist state and appropriation of land. The absence of the non-value producing part of the population, particularly that section of the population which have not been trained to fit itself into the capitalist temporality and the order of the production houses, becomes a necessary condition for the appropriation of nature.

Capitalist make use of different strategies to alienate masses from nature. Attempts to feel and declare their presence in their own ecologies leads to confrontations with the expanding technical compositions of capital. Absence from

their direct relationships with nature and absences from mobilizing themselves are ensured not just through the legal and political superstructure. When the absence becomes a necessary condition capital works through social hierarchies and forms of power such as caste, race, gender gangs and many more. Since the order of the social hierarchies differs from one context to another the social relations that the process of capital produces cannot be the same in all the situations.

Freeing the nature from its bondages<sup>4</sup> is the fundamental condition/ force that drive capital when it attempts to ensure the absence of the masses from the human ecological space. The relationship that the masses have with the nature might not be modern and scientific. The non-development of the productive forces and the emotionally constituted relationships with nature<sup>5</sup> would be an obstacle before the spread of capital. Nature has been understood as a larger process where the presence of the population is considered as something which acts as barrier before value production.

Social labour is the capitalist apparatus through which the ideology of capital gets invested in nature and its relations. The development of the capitalist production and technology and the spread of capital to all the social and natural relationships should ensure the non-involvement of the mental conceptions that drive the individual productions of nature. The elimination individual relationships with nature followed by the alienation from natural and social conditions increases with the increasing accumulation of capital.

Interaction with the nature and the production of value by capital proceed on two fundamental conditions. The first one is the presence of labour and the second one is the absence of the masses. There might not be a strict correlation between the both all the time.

Michel de Montaigne's 'Of Cannibals' describes how the modern European industrial culture became an example of cannibalism (Montaigne 1993: 105-119). After Montaigne J.J. Rousseau provides a critique of bourgeois life in his Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Mankind. European culture through its literature and history has always attempted to portray the people of America and Africa as cannibals but Rousseau writes that it is neither Americans nor Africans who are cannibal. The real cannibal is the European who annihilated the populations living 'savage' life. Savage life is placed higher than the alienated life of the European factory labourer by the radicals influenced by Rousseau. Native American King lead a prod life than the English factory labourer. Europeans always present their luxuries to the people of other cultures and claim to be superior in civilization. This tendency of the European bourgeois civilization in demoralizing savage life in the historical process resulted in the marginalization of tribal life all

over the world. Native human lives of the Americas, Australia, Africa, New Zealand, etc., were destroyed by the expansion of European civilization (Rousseau 2002: 54).

### The Continuing Process of Primitive Accumulation

The development of the new commodity market and the struggle for existence within it drives the capitalist to find new geographies of accumulation. Geographies are often produced they do not date back political economy. Geography is about power. Although often assumed to be innocent, the geography of the world is not a product of nature but a product of histories of struggle between competing authorities over the power to organize, occupy, and administer space. Imperial systems throughout history, from classical Greece and Rome to China and the Arab world, exercised their power through their ability to impose order and meaning upon space (Tuathail 1996: 1).

Exploration for the new geographies works in a different way. Capital with the inauguration of new accumulation strategies has to recondition the existing understandings of geography and social relations. In other words capital shatters the social relations of nature which had already been conditioned by an earlier phase of capitalist development. Therefore in the process of accumulation capital has different points of departures. Marx considers it as a process which has already been materialized. The history of this expropriation assumes different aspects in different countries, and runs through its various phases in different orders of succession, and at different historical epochs (Marx 1982: 915).

Primitive accumulation was a process, in Marx's perspective, which does not continue any more had an emancipatory potential. This process could free the masses from the bondages of feudal social relations and the guilds. Therefore primitive accumulation is a process that brings the masses into the process of capital. Absorption of masses into the process of capital as labours and as industrial reserve army and the dissolution of feudal social relations along with the emergence of capitalism as the dominant system of production intensify the contradiction between labour and capital during expanded reproduction (Perelman 2000: 13-25).

Harvey identifies the duality of the process of capitalist production; he writes "the process of proletarianization, for example, entails a mix of coercions and of appropriations of pre-capitalist skills, social relations, knowledge, habits of mind, and beliefs on the part of those being proletarianized. Kinship structures, familial and household arrangements, gender and authority relations (including those exercised through religion and its institutions) all have their part to play. In some instances the pre-existing structures have to be violently repressed as inconsistent with labour under capitalism, but multiple accounts now exist to suggest that they are just as likely to be co-opted in an attempt to forge some consensual as opposed

to coercive basis for working-class formation. Primitive accumulation, in short, entails appropriation and co-optation of pre-existing cultural and social achievements as well as confrontation and supersession. The conditions of struggle and of working-class formation vary widely. The result is often to leave a trace of pre-capitalist social relations in working-class formation and to create distinctive geographical, historical, and anthropological differentiations in how a working class is dened. No matter how universal the process of proletarianization, the result is not the creation of a homogeneous proletariat (Harvey 1996: 146 )

Industries are houses of mass production where large amount of matter available in nature is converted into something new through the expenditure of human labour. Since the production process is large it needs socially organised labour than individual labour. Industries therefore have the potential of liberating humans from their original ties with nature. Industrial labour is born by divorcing the masses from their means of production. By taking control of the means of production industry produces both industrial labour and the reserve army of workers according to Marx (Marx 1982: 874). Industrialization divorces masses from their means of production but does not place all of them within the capitalist production space.

In each of the non-western countries there was a section of the population which could adapt with the European kind of politics and civil life during and after the colonial period. During the colonial period itself this section had become dominant. It continued to be dominant after the end of colonial rule. These ruling elites continued with the same colonial policies of estranging the aboriginal population. Documentary evidence of ownership of land and other forms of property was absent in case of people who were living on the forest land for generations. Since they did not have any such official record and since their relationship with their living environment was much more personal than official, it was easy to take away their land from them or deny them the right to forest produce. This is what the post-colonial governments did.

In 'savage' life there would not be any kind of contradiction between human beings and the nature since the purpose of production is not exchange. Therefore there will not be profit oriented production that finally results in the exploitation of nature. Similarly, human relationships are not mediated through money. The revolutionary or imancipatory potential of industrial labour, which is socially organized, therefore is radically questioned in this context. This interrogation of the labour process extends to organized labour movements. Other than the "exploited labour power" there are potential issues which can be the loci for social change.

Independent and non-appropriated state of labour where the idea of the production of use value governs and the idea of universal value is absent centralization

of value would not happen. Emergence of a particular mode as a dominant social organization of production is process by which different values get appropriated by a singular value. Appropriation is at the same time is the appropriation of different modes of labouring. Therefore the separation from nature is a necessary condition for the process of production. Social production of nature cannot be reduced to the mere scope of the material relationships of matter and energy. It is a process where value, which exists in the form of idea, has been added to the matter and energy. Production of value in nature and its accumulation marginalizes the individual production initiatives. This marginalization which reduces the involvement of the masses in the production process to the level of objects in the social relations of nature is a condition in which the mental conceptions of the masses stand alien.

### **Environmentalist Perspective of Dual Character of Labour and Entropy under Capitalism**

The principle of ecological realism of André Gorz is a kind of warning to the increasing commodity production which leads to the disappearance of both usable material and good living conditions (Gorz: 1980: 13). The reality of Capitalist Mode of Production cannot be reduced to the mere scope of the Marxian idea of the exploitation of labour; it is much deeper. With radical leaps in technology productivity of labour increases which results in the reduction of the numerical strength of the working class. Expecting working class to bring a radical social change in this context is also pointless for Gorz. The majority of the population now belong to post industrial neo proletariat with no job security or definite class identity fills the area of probationary, contracted, casual, temporary or part time employment (Gorz 1982: 62). Traditional working class organizations generally do not consider this part of the working class as potential agent for social change considering the complexity and diversity.

Species quality of labour of human beings has been characterized with mental conceptions of the modifications expected. Labour is a conscious process of translation of the mental conceptions in the material bodies. It is the mental conceptions that have been transmitted through labour which produces value out of matter. Mental conceptions being non-material<sup>6</sup> the production of value becomes limitless. The appropriation of labour and its social organization produces massive values than individual productions.

Production is a process of 'creative destruction (Schumpeter 2003: 143).' It always eliminates a definite quantity of the conditions of production. In other words fullest utilization of matter is impossible. Production of any kind throws a particular quantity of matter from usable to non-usable form and emits heat and residuals of the matter employed in production into the nature surrounded. The appropriation

of labour and its social organization produces massive crisis in the relations of nature than individual productions.

Matter-energy enters the labour process in a state of low entropy and comes out of it in a state of high entropy. Production combines human labour with low-entropy forms of matter and energy to produce useful goods and services, but only at the cost of a one way conversion of materials and energy from more ordered (and thus more useful) forms into less ordered (and less useful) forms. The increase in entropy occurs both in production itself (dispersal of heat and material pollutants), and through the disposal of products once they are used. From this perspective, 'the Entropy Law is the taproot of economic scarcity'. Recycling in this context cannot be treated as solution for the ecological crisis that social labour produces (Burkett 2006: 144). This crisis generated by labour process in the post industrial era refers not to relative surplus value than absolute surplus value. Productivity of labour is revolutionized with sophisticated technologies. Working class as population has become a very abstract and vague category. Who represents working class has become new political economic question.

### Conceptualizing Change and Ecological Movements

The transformation of relationships into social hierarchies and the positionalities of production, accumulation (of value) and emission within it, produce surplus moments, in social relations, which take the form of critical responses to the order of the practice. The unities of these surplus moments and its material context have been conceptualized as the loci of social and ecological change by eco-socialist theorization (Harvey 1996: 106). Since the form that nature takes in the social relations is historically conditioned that form can be shifted into another one with the change in the mode in which the social relations of nature evolves. The labour as a material process would still produce and emit and the material relationships of nature would be in process but the meanings of the forms of both would be incommensurable with the same in a paradigm where (social) production always leads to centralized accumulation.

Various attempts for the appropriation of the resistive surplus are in process related to the strangeness that the population confront with. Process of the production of resistive surplus, unlike the surplus value production which has the quality of being money, is not an organised process. Resistive surplus are moments of disagreement with the mode in which the production of nature progress. Resistive surplus even when it is produced out of the immediate transformation of nature presupposes the production and accumulation of value in the form of money. Displacement of values produced from the direct un-alienated relationships with nature is the potential condition of the production of resistive surplus. Since the

production of resistive surplus is varied and complex; its accumulation does not happen in the same line of capital accumulation. Social movements and political parties are the agents who appropriate this surplus and provide the form of organized struggle against the regime of accumulation. Resistive surplus being moments that represents displacement and absence of adaptive social relations positions itself against the production of surplus value, it represents the absence value therefore it is anti value with reference to capital.

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The mode of relationship with nature is a complex process where forms of powers like sexuality, gender, patriarchy, beauty, moral codes, literature, religion and the rest associate and disassociate. A common narrative of capital's appropriation and production of these forms of powers (which cannot be reduced to the scope of capital alone) might become superficial. Resistance against the alienation from the ecological conditions, from a critical perspective of capital, and its conceptual/ideological representation as eco-socialism therefore might not be a sufficient system to conceptualize the complexities of ecological change.

Differently conditioned understandings of the material crisis would find its assertions through radically different paths. Resistive surplus moments might glorify the values<sup>7</sup> of the cultural pasts, where nature had its harmonious relations with humanity, without referring to social hierarchies. Therefore concept of socialist mode of production where the social relations of nature do not take the form of repressive regimes gets into a conceptualization crisis. This political and intellectual crisis of eco-socialist theorization refers to the complexity of social relations of nature which has been produced by differing strategies of interaction between capital and the population.



## Notes

1. Non value producing populations here refers to the masses who do not directly expend their labor in the capitalist production house. To be more specific and clear it represents the populations who stand in the margins of the mainstream discourse of capital. They can be populations' fall under the category of post industrial working class that Gorz writes about.
2. Absence does not mean the total absence of individuals or communities from the larger process of capitalist production. It points towards their absence from their direct relationships with nature and their reproduction of life independent of the capitalist process.
3. It is a necessary but not sufficient condition.
4. The idea of freeing the nature from its bondages is purely a capitalist idea. The very issue of nature which is independent of the traditional chains cannot be something that emerges out of the mass psychology with no intervention of capital.
5. This again is reading from the point of view of the capital, the masses might not consider their relationships with nature as something illogical or emotionally powered. The solutions of the problems (if there is any) that the communities face are traced within their system of knowledge.
6. Here non-material means irreducible to bio physical relations.
7. Value compositions might have been conditioned by the histories repressive regimes on occasions.

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## Foreign Direct Investment and Food Processing Sector in India: A Critical Thinking in Line with Creative Destruction

Anuraj K. R. and V. Mathew Kurian

**F**oreign Direct Investment is a vital tool for the growth and development of a nation. With the commencement of globalization, developing countries, particularly those in Asia, have been witnessing enormous flow of FDI during the last three decades. Inflow of FDI is more important in economies where domestic saving is not sufficient to generate resources for capital investment. It supports not only the investment requirements of a nation but also brings new technology, managerial expertise and contribute to the foreign exchange reserves (Malhotra 2014; Mathiyazhagan 2005). Our policy towards Foreign Investment was not favourable at the time of independence like most other newly independent countries during that period. This hesitation came from the threat of Neo-colonialism, that is, our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was strictly conscious about the influence of foreign countries on our policy making. But later, due to the deficiency of resources, we eased the policy towards foreign capital, right from the latter half of 1940s through its various declarations in 1949, 1950, 1956 and so on. The liberalisation process grew slowly and gradually and the role of foreign investment became more and more important. The financial crisis of 1990 forced Indian policy makers to liberalize our economy substantially. The government on 24 July 1991 announced a New Industrial Policy as a part of The New Economic Policy and opened the doors of several industries for foreign investment. Meanwhile, the Uruguay Round of Negotiations of GATT lasted for seven years between 1986 and 1993 ended, and resulted in the establishment of WTO in 1995. Since then, the magnitude of FDI inflows expanded on a large scale. In 2017, developing countries alone received thirty seven percent of world's FDI. They received forty three percent of global investments. When we take the case of Asia, foreign direct investments rose two percent, and it became the largest recipient region in the world.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India is the nodal agency for motoring and reviewing the FDI policy on continued basis. India was 15<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of FDI inflow in the year 2013. The country improved its rank to the ninth position in the year 2014. The present Indian government which took office on May 2014 has laid great emphasis on FDI. Launching of some ambitious initiatives like Make in India which aims to improve the manufacturing sector reveals it. The government's efforts leads to the point where India became the top FDI destination in the world in 2015 overtaking China and USA (World blaze, 2016). The Table – 1 shows the inflow of FDI to India between 2000 – 2013.

**Table – 1**  
**FDI inflow to India during the period 2000 - 2013**

<b>Year</b>	<b>FDI inflows to India (US \$ Billions)</b>	<b>Percentage Growth (US \$ Billions)</b>
2000 – 2001	2.31	--
2001 - 2002	3.4	47.19
2002 – 2003	3.45	1.47
2003– 2004	4.27	23.77
2004 - 2005	5.5	28.81
2005 - 2006	7.6	38.18
2006 - 2007	20.3	167.11
2007 – 2008	25.5	25.62
2008 – 2009	43.4	70.20
2009 – 2010	35.6	-17.97
2010 – 2011	24.2	-32.02
2011 – 2012	36.5	30.17
2012 - 2013	46.3	62.6

Source: India, Ministry of Food Processing ( 2014): Annual Report 2013 – 14

The changing scenario had prompted the governments of both developed and developing countries to attract Multi-National Corporations and other foreign investors with various incentive packages. The reason is to solve the problem of paucity of resources viz. capital, technology, skills, market access etc. Developing countries looked foreign direct investment as a panacea; however the countries have over looked the fact, that all the flow of FDI does not benefit the host countries. Fortunately India have 3Ds that is, Demographic dividend, demand and democracy

but when the developed country trading partners are adopting aggressive, activist and even protectionist trade policies, a passive approach may be damaging to developing countries interests. Thus a vigorous process of industrial restructuring and consolidation is necessary to developing countries like India to strengthen its international competitiveness and protect the national enterprises.

IMF defined FDI as “a category of international investment that reflects the objective of a resident entity in one economy obtaining a lasting interest and control in an enterprise resident in another economy”. The Dictionary of Economics defined FDI as, investment in a foreign country through the acquisition of a local company or the establishment there of an operation on a new site (Babu & Sekhar 2015). In simple terms, it is the direct investment into production or business by a foreign company. It refers to the net inflows of investment to acquire a lasting management interest in an enterprise operating in an economy other than that of the investor. It requires to own more than 10% of its equity. FDI can be composed of equity capital, other long-term capital, and short term capital as shown in the balance of payments (Banerji 2013). It usually involves participation in management, joint venture, transfer of technology and expertise. As per RBI documents, FDI can be in the forms of incorporation of a company under the Companies Act, 1956, as a joint venture or a wholly owned subsidiary or set up a liaison office or representative office or project office or a branch office of the foreign company which can undertake activities permitted under the Foreign Exchange Management Regulations, 2000.

### Food Processing Industry in India

Attaining Food security is one of the big challenges facing the economic decision-makers in developing countries. As per the ‘State of Food Insecurity in the World’s Report’ of Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), nearly 870 million people (15% of the world population) are chronically undernourished in 2012; and in which the vast majority lives in developing countries. The natural rate of economic growth may not be sufficient to reduce hunger and malnutrition in these countries. Agricultural investment can play an important role in promoting agricultural growth, reduce poverty and hunger in these developing countries (Slimane et al. 2013). Most of these periphery countries attract foreign direct investment as a solution to address the problem of deficiency in investable funds. Our country India allowed 100% FDI in Food Processing sector.

India accounts for 7.68 percentage of world agricultural output. Contribution of Indian agricultural sector to GDP is 17 percent and which is much higher than world’s average 6.1 percent. Agriculture and allied sector shares 17.32 percent of the Gross Value Added and which is around 23.82 lakh crore Indian rupees (Ministry of Planning and Programme Implementation, 2017). Even though, agriculture plays

a significant role and it is demographically the broadest economic sector which contributes employment to 60 percent of the country's population. As per FAO's world agriculture statistics 2016, India is the world's largest or the top listed producer of certain agricultural products. These products include milk, certain spices, fresh fruits, vegetables and fibrous crops like jute. India is the second largest producer of wheat and rice in the world. Our country is at the top positions in the production list of some dry fruits, many agriculture-based textile raw materials, roots and tuber crops, pulses, farmed fish, eggs, coconut, sugarcane etc. India is also one of the world's five largest producers of livestock and poultry, with one of the fastest growth rates, as of 2015 (Tarachand 2017). Thus India has a unique position in the world-wide production matrix.

India is one of the leading exporters of the processed food products in the world. It has a competitive advantage over other countries because of the cultivation of wide variety of crops as a result of geographical and climatic diversity. In India, FDI inflows in food processing sector were worth Rs.198 crore in the year 2000, these inflows rose to Rs.1314 crore in 2009 and it has fallen to Rs.826 crore in 2011 (Babu & Sekhar 2015).

The term 'food processing' can be defined as a process of value addition to the agricultural or horticultural produce by various methods like grading, sorting and packaging. In other words, it is a technique of manufacturing and preserving food substances in an effective manner with a view to enhance their date of expiry; improve quality as well as make them functionally more useful. It covers range of products from sub-sectors including agriculture, horticulture, plantation, animal husbandry and fisheries (Ibid).

In terms of production, consumption, export and growth prospects, the Indian food processing industry is one of the largest in the world. Earlier, food processing was confined to the activities like food preservation, packaging and transportation, which basically involved salting, curdling, drying, pickling, etc. However, over the years, it has started producing many new items like ready-to-eat food, beverages, processed and frozen fruit and vegetable products, marine and meat products, etc. It also includes establishment of infrastructure facilities for processing of various food items like cold storage facilities, food parks, packaging centres, value added centres and irradiation facilities (Ibid). The Indian food processing industry is predominantly an export oriented industry. India's exports of Processed Food was Rs. 31551.99 Crores in 2013-14.

The Government of India permitted hundred per cent foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the food processing industry. Imports and exports in the food processing sector increased from 1999 to 2008 at an average annual rate of 17.4 per cent and 19.25 per cent respectively. Likewise, the inflow of foreign direct investments flowing

into the food processing industry also grown rapidly. The Indian food processing industry attracted around Rs. 45.2 billion during 1991-2005 as FDI, which was 3.3 per cent of the total FDI into India for the same period. FDI is allowed in all the processed food products up to 100 percent. It can be made through automatic route except items reserved for MSMEs. In MSMEs, the permissible FDI limit is 24 percent through automatic route. Foreign investment more than 24 percent can be made through the government route (Ibid). Table 2 shows the inflow of FDI into the food processing sector from 2000-01 to 2008-09.

**Table – 2**  
**FDI Inflow to the Food Processing Sector (Rs.Millions)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>FDI</b>	<b>Percentage of FDI</b>
2000 – 2001	1981.30	6.25
2001 - 2002	10361.20	32.67
2002 – 2003	1765.30	5.57
2003– 2004	5108.50	16.11
2004 - 2005	1740.80	5.48
2005 - 2006	1829.40	5.77
2006 - 2007	2220.00	7.00
2007 – 2008	3125.20	9.85
2008 – 2009	3585.00	11.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>31716.70</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: *RBI Report 2012-13 on FDI*

Literature on FDI inflows into food processing industry shows various factors which influences the inflows such as, market size, inflation, trade openness, interest rate, wage rate, business environment, etc. In addition to that, respective government agencies trying to enhance FDI aided growth of the Food Processing Industry. One of such initiatives was the Vision 2015 Action Plan, that includes trebling the size of the food processing industry, raising the level of processing of perishables from six per cent to twenty per cent, increasing value addition from twenty per cent to thirty five per cent, and enhancing India's share in global food trade from 1.5 per cent to three percent. The Vision Plan was formulated by Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI). According to the website of MoFPI, the Government of India is actively promoting the concept of Mega Food Parks (MFPs) and is expected The to set up 30 such parks across the country to attract FDI(Babu & Sekhar 2015).

## Foreign Direct Investment and Food Security

Studies on the relationship between FDI inflows and food security have emerged since early 1980's. Results of certain important effort to find out the relationship between FDI inflows and food security are citing here. Studies in early 1980s focused on two contradictory theories: the dependency theory and the modernization theory. The first theory argued that the dependency on foreign investment has negative effects on growth and income distribution. Second theory, focuses on internal and external sources of economic development. Internal sources come from domestic investment, growth and education creating industrialization and cultural modernization, and finally provides social welfare (Jenkins and Scanlan 2001). External sources come from FDI which brings technology, organizational capability, managerial skills and marketing know-how. FDI inflows provide easy access to international markets and diffuse new skills and knowledge in the host economy (Kumar and Pradhan, 2002). The technology transfer and know-how lead to productivity gains and improving the efficiency of allocation of resources (Graham 1995; Tulus 2004). Thus the second theory stands with the positive effects of FDI on host country.

Studies made by Mehdi Ben Slimane, MarilyneHuchetBourdon and HabibZitouna conclude that FDI in agriculture and in the secondary sector do have a positive effect on agricultural production and agricultural production is positively linked to different food Security indicators. This reveals that FDI has direct and indirect effects on food security of a Nation (Slimane et al. 2013). Wimberley (1991) examined the effect of transnational corporate investment on food consumption in 60 developing countries over the period 1967–1985 and found that countries with less penetration by transnational corporations have gained more calories and protein per capita per day. This shows that the FDI has a negative effect on food security. Wimberley and Bello (1992) studied the relationship between FDI, export, economic growth and food consumption in a sample of 59 developing countries. The study found that FDI inflow and primary export dependency harm food consumption. Firebaugh (1992) criticized sociologists who consider that dependency on foreign capital affects negatively economic growth and welfare. A deep study conducted by Mihalache-O'Keef and Li (2011) based on the studies of Wimberley (1991), Wimberley and Bello (1992) and Firebaugh and Beck (1994) regarding the relationship between sectoral FDI and food security found that the effect of primary FDI is negative on food security. These effects can be explained by the increase in unemployment, changes in the use of agricultural land, and negative environment and demographic externalities. Though, FDI in the secondary sector improves food security by raising employment and wages, technology and knowledge spillovers. Jenkins and Scanlan (2001) found that economic growth, domestic investment and democratization

improve food supply and reduce hunger while political instability, foreign capital and age dependency decline access to food (Slimane et al. 2013).

Various studies mentioned above with contradicting results lead us to confusion and keep us unable to state whether FDI is good or bad. This confusion arises from its creative and destructive sides. This twin feature is often called as Creative Destruction and which most often co-exist with innovation, capitalism and LPG policies.

## Foreign Direct Investment and Creative Destruction

Globalisation, knowledge revolution, proliferating technology and information technology, accelerated the pace of economic growth and development. It is a matter of fact that the market-capitalist model of economic development is widely accepted across the globe. Existence of a situation closes to free trade, opening up of new markets- foreign or domestic and organizational development allows the consumer to choose among large varieties of products. This will raise the satisfaction and welfare of the consumer and there by enhance investment and innovation. Innovation brings about 'creative destruction' which is "*a force contains within capitalism that incessantly revolutionize the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one*" (Schumpeter 1942).

The phrase 'Creative Destruction' is coined by Joseph A. Schumpeter in 1942, to describe how innovative capitalist products and methods incessantly displace old ones. It has been observed that since the emergence of capitalism and innovation, a co-existing phenomenon has come up, popularly known as 'Creative Destruction.' Innovation and creative destruction are essential parts of capitalism. Innovators are normally all about efficiency and not about people. They will not consider job losses, disruptions, complete re-engineering of business etc. The phrase has a creative part and a destructive part and here lies the real problem.

Provisions of WTO such as TRIPS, TRIMS, GATS and AOA ensure a favourable climate for free trade of goods and services and free flow of capital among different nations. This provides sufficient potential for the growth of Multinational and Transnational Corporations. MNCs and TNCs are the front runners of capitalism across the world. Of course after socialistic pattern of economic development, once again the capitalist idea of free trade, competition and market mechanism are widely accepted as the promoters of economic efficiency and growth.

When a country moves from socialistic pattern to capitalistic pattern of economic development, the notion- 'creative destruction' becomes evident and it is the summation of two clashing ideas creation and destruction. That is creation of new ventures leads to the destruction of certain existing ventures. Since the introduction of New Economic Policy in 1991, our country too, moving from a



socialistic pattern to a capitalistic pattern of economic development. The change paved the way for creation and destruction in many fields. This will definitely strengthen the process of creative destruction and disruptions in the economy due to the displacement of old ones for new ones.

In a free market economy, creative destruction ensures that the most efficient businesses will survive and prosper. Even though our country India is not a free market economy, the governments of different periods conditionally allowed inflow of foreign capital in various fields. One of such most discussed efforts with a dimension of Creative Destruction was the decision to allow 51 percent FDI in multi-brand retailing in India in the early years of this decade. There was no evidence for a net loss of jobs in the retail sector as a direct consequence of FDI and it was argued that the Indian retail market is challenging and small retailers will be able to hold on to their traditional customer base. Even though two studies conducted on this direction gave contradictory results. These contradicting results regarding the entry of corporate retailers lead to confusion and there arise serious protests against the decision from the part of indigenous retailers. Thus the government withdrew the decision.

## Conclusion

Free trade, widened markets, competition and economies of large scale production etc. accelerate the process of investment and innovation. Innovation brings about 'Creative Destruction.' Joseph A. Schumpeter who coined the term 'Creative Destruction' described capitalism as "the perennial gale of creative destruction." According to him, the agents of innovation and creative destruction are entrepreneurs – "the pivot on which everything turns." Their projects create new jobs, higher incomes and general economic progress. But in releasing their creative engines, rising entrepreneurs shove older ones aside, destroying their dreams and often their fortunes. Creative destruction may foster economic growth but it undercuts human values. A steep rise in living standard is worth; yet capitalism has an awful reputation for robbing the poor to profit the rich and it had never achieved a fair distribution. The supporters of innovation holds its creative side and argues that, it will generate skilled or unskilled jobs, reduce the wastage of products, rises consumers' surplus and satisfaction by technological transfer and infrastructural development. But the destructive side should also be considered. The domestic companies feared that they may lose their ownership to overseas companies; fear due to less competitiveness, fear on giant firms' monopoly power, fear of job losses in existing firms, and fear of less government control over foreign firms are also there. Here the policy makers may consider the weights of both creative and destructive side for a solution. But still an issue persists; the issue of losers. Do they

are sufficiently compensated by the 'new ones' or by the government? A policy decision is advisable only if the creative part is stronger than the destructive part both on positive and normative settings of economic thinking. That is, in our context, the losers created by the inflow of investment from abroad should be compensated by the creative side of Foreign Direct Investment.

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## India-China Trade Relations: Trends and Issues

Nikhil Seethi

**T**he relationship between China and India, the two fastest growing economies in the world, is of special significance in the contemporary world and it calls for an analysis based on the strategic and cooperative partnership in the past leading up to the present, as well as the setbacks the two nations had to face in the context of bilateral relations as well as in the global scenario. The events leading up to what is now being seen as a hard-pressed diplomacy between the two need to be examined to have an idea of the strategic position of India vis-s-vis China. The economic relations between India and China, an essential part of which is trade, have been affected by all political and diplomatic ups and downs and therefore they tend to have an impact on each other's global position as emerging economies. So, the trends that the two countries have followed in bilateral trade can be understood by looking at the political and economic policies that both countries have adopted in the past years.

After independence, India saw China as an inspiration because of its economic progress despite many problems the country had faced, which had striking similarities to that of India's problems. Both the nations had suffered foreign economic domination and imperialism" and also "shared the basic problems of severe population pressure on the land, large volume of unemployment and underemployment and low levels of productivity (Frankel 2005). So quite naturally, the social objectives set by both the countries initially were similar, especially that of ending a widespread economic disparity and creating a socialist atmosphere of governance. But within a short span of time, both the countries faced many conflicts in their views, both politically and economically, and this naturally led to a wide range of problems which led to the drifting apart of the two neighboring states, strategically and diplomatically, although in the recent years the gap has been tried to be narrowed down. China and India are undoubtedly the two Asiatic countries that seem to have taken the most advantage out of globalisation, which is evident in

the high growth rates of both the countries. The impressive growth of both the countries can be attributed to their respective policies which invited huge foreign investment as well as opened up their economies to foreign trade. But, obviously, the development patterns of these countries differ by a considerable margin due to several factors such as the socialist mode of government in China which has a more concentration of authority and also in its agenda which were far progressive and quickly implemented than that of India's. But it is certain that, apart from the difference in structural and development orientation of India and China, economies of both the countries can be seen from a similar point of view because of the fact that the two countries were facing similar problems and sought out almost the same methods to tackle them (see Dreze and Sen 2013: 7-15). For instance, China's policy of integration with the world economy has had a great impact on India's policy as well and it is important to acknowledge how much India could learn from China in terms of both its triumphs and failures (Seethi 2009). There is also a need to acknowledge the fact that change in political environment is inevitable, at least in India, and that despite all the conventional notions that India and China could not be expected to establish a strong economic relations, China has become India's largest trading partner. What can be inferred from this is the fact that both the countries are capable of putting aside their differences, if they want to, and maintain stable economic relations which obviously can be a stronger foundation for bilateral ties between them. The main objective of this paper is to analyze the trade relations between India and China against the backdrop of socio-political changes in both the nations, and it is essential to begin with a historical context of trade relationship which follows up to the current scenario.

## Historical Trade

The connectivity between India and China is as old as the history of both the countries. Although Buddhism was believed to be the main component that steered the Sino-Indian correspondence, trade also played an equally important role (see Sen 2004: 161-190). The Chinese imports of material goods to India started from time immemorial. The reference to Chinese fabric or silk as gift items in Mahabharata and other ancient texts proves this point. It is also apparent that the Chinese goods were of high value and were considered as precious articles, as had been pointed out in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, which was a Sanskrit monograph on economics and politics written in the fourth century BC. It is noticeable that the consumption habits of rich Indians were influenced to great extends by these innovations made in China. Indian traders, on the other hand, were mainly engaged in importing goods from China to re-export them to Central Asia more than two thousand years ago. Thus, India, during that time, had played an intermediary role in trade between China and the rest of Asia, which continued over centuries. The commodities of exchange

were dynamic, ranging from Silk to Porcelain and leather, to pear and peach. The material world of India was undoubtedly enriched by the Chinese, while India was exporting Buddhism to China, two thousand years ago. The impact of Buddhist ideologies on Chinese were tremendous, owing to which, a large number of people from China came to India to learn more about Buddha and his teachings, and also took advantage of the Indian educational institutions such as Nalanda University, and also extended their fields of study to medicine and health care and so on (Ibid). There was also a similar flow of Indian population, mostly monks and scholars, to China, which continued till the eleventh century after which it declined due to the rise of neo-Confucianism in China (Ibid).

Apart from these factors, trade relations between the two countries were negligible or virtually non-existent, especially after the colonization by the West. The British East India Company had a distressed relation with China from early 17<sup>th</sup> to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Opium was the main export from British-India to China. The British even used Indian soldiers against China in Opium wars and the Boxer Rebellion, thus creating a rift between the two countries. But, both the countries sympathized and admired each other's national movements and sought inspiration from one another, and supported each other in their struggle against western imperialism.

After independence, both the countries embarked upon their exclusive paths of development. The People's Republic of China was established in October 1949 and very soon, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of India came into being, in 1950. India, under the leadership of Nehru, was on good terms with China and viewed the Chinese competence and their efforts as part of the overall economic and political development, which were compared to that of India and called their combined efforts a symbol of the 'new spirit of Asia.' It wasn't too late before India realized how much it could learn from China, whose development was much more impactful and immediate. The radicalism of Chinese politics began to be admired in several parts of India and was even considered by some as essential for a revival of India's deep economic and social miseries. China followed a socialist policy regime where the state or the communist party had complete control over the economy and its wealth whereas India followed a capitalist-mixed economy model where private enterprises had control and certain essential elements such as defence, telegraph, railways and some industries were under state control. It was obvious that even though China and India were seemingly supportive of each other, there was a tension between them as both of them viewed each other with suspicion. The period from 1947 to 1959 was more or less a benign phase for the Sino Indian bilateral relations, although in 1958, Indians were aware of the Chinese encroachments along the international border into Tibet which was a clear violation of the Panchsheel Agreement (1954). It

was after 1959 that the crisis phase had begun, initially set off by an anti-Chinese uprising in Tibet which led to the Dalai Lama fleeing to India in 1959 and the Chinese feeling betrayed. The arguments that followed between two governments contributed to an inevitable herald to armed conflict which finally ended in the 1962 Sino-Indian war (Seethi 1997). During war, the bilateral trade came to a complete halt. There was barely any sort of relation between the two and India took this attack as a severe blow to their diplomatic stands with respect to China and also transformed their foreign policy and security. Both the countries began seeing each other with vicious suspicion and till 1976, trade did not seem to even stand a chance amidst the hostile political climate. China under Mao Zedong had a closed economy and this was the main reason for uneventful or almost nonexistent diplomatic relations between India and China. After Mao's death in 1976, China began to focus on the economic development of the country and started an opening up of its economy. There was a "fundamental shift in the strategic understanding of the country's needs" and this was only possible through a normalization of relations with other countries, especially its neighbours. Thus China set on to a path of building a peaceful environment and developing its economy by expanding foreign trade and attracting more foreign investments and technologies. India was on a similar line of development too which was that of building a liberalized economy. Although post-1976 was an emerging period for Sino-Indian relations, bilateral trade between India and China was almost stagnant up till 1983, due to the political disparities, resulting in it being evident that the economics relations had consolidated into the political relations of the two countries. The trade was formalized by the Most Favored Nation Agreement (MFN) which was signed by India and China on 15 August 1984. Thus the official trade between India and China had resumed. By the clauses of the agreement, Indian goods which were exported to China enjoyed minimum tariff duties. There was also a list of commodities included by both the countries whose import or exports were to be facilitated. The major items of Indian export included "iron ore, chrome ore, un-manufactured and processed minerals, engineering goods, marine products, Tea, spices, chemicals, cotton, etc. While, china exported items such as raw silk, crude minerals, organic and inorganic chemicals, textile yarns, fabric, pearls and precious stones, electric machinery, etc."

The political patronage by the Indian and Chinese leadership also provided a great impetus to the bilateral trade which evidently had immense potential to grow. Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in 1988 proved to be a catalyst to the trade, when the India-China joint Working Group on Economics and Trade, Science and Technology was set up. By then, China had already been admired everywhere for its export-led growth and India also saw an opportunity as both the countries had certain comparative advantages and trade specializations which provided the enormous

trade potential for both the countries. The trade started at a low base of US\$ 200 million in 1989, and since then it has grown tremendously, reaching US\$ 72.34 billion in 2014-15. The period from 1981 to 1991 saw a rather admirable improvement in the overall strategic and economic relations between India and China and efforts were made for negotiations concerning the border problems. But still, the basic structure of development and policy making differed widely between the two countries in terms of the control over the state over its economy. Until 1991 “India maintained a mixed economy with a capitalist path of development as the objective while giving importance to the welfare- development capacity of the state,” whereas China had an authoritative “economy with self-regulating mechanisms.” Even after the opening up of the economy or after the liberalization period, China still had state control over many macroeconomic elements, but the situation in India was not the same. Post-1991 period saw the era of globalisation and liberalization and both India and China decided to move forward to integrate their economies with the rest of the world. India followed the LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) policy whereby the economy was opened up to a large number of private firms and groups and also attracted huge foreign investments. Although China also had their own liberalization policies, the state control over certain areas in their economy couldn't be compromised and went on with their own form of a globalized interaction and trade.

### **Economic Relations after the 1990s: Major Concerns and Areas of Cooperation**

The economic relations between China and India saw a consistent and gradual rise over the years, especially after the 1990s. The upsurge in the bilateral trade accounts to a number of factors (see Boillot and Labbouz 2006; Desai 2003). The huge demand for raw materials, intermediate goods and other products in China led to an increase in supply of these goods in India. Meanwhile, China had been exporting value added items like machinery to India. The resumption of border trade by the protocol signed in 1988, and the agreement signed in 1994 to avoid double taxation also contributed to the gradual rise in trade over the years. The bilateral trade crossed US\$13.6 billion in 2004 from US\$ 4.8 billion in 2002, reaching \$18.7 billion in 2005 (India, Ministry of External Affairs 2006). India-China trade relations have been further developed from 2006 with the resumption of border trade between Tibet, an autonomous part of China and India through the Nathu La Pass, which was reopened after 40 years, and it was visible in the booming of trade to almost \$52 billion in 2008 and reaching US\$ 70.2 billion by 2014 (*The Economic Times*, 20 June 2006; India, Ministry of External Affairs 2015).



Despite the impressive and extraordinary growth in trade, there are certain areas of concern in the bilateral trade, especially, for India. From the beginning of trade between the two countries, the balance of trade was mostly in favor of China except for a brief period of time. The trade deficit for India also kept expanding every year and this is one of the major concerns for India in the bilateral trade with China. The trade deficit was calculated to be almost US \$-23.14 billion in 2008-9 which has swollen to US \$52.69 billion in the 2015-16 fiscal year.

### India-China Trade: Exports and Imports (2008-09—2016-17) In \$US billion

Year	Exports to China	Imports from China	Trade Deficit
2008-09	09.35	32.49	-23.14
2009-10	11.61	30.82	-19.21
2010-11	14.16	43.47	-29.31
2011-12	18.07	55.31	-37.24
2012-13	13.53	52.24	-38.71
2013-14	14.82	51.03	-36.21
2014-15	11.93	60.41	-48.48
2015-16	09.01	61.70	-52.69
2016-17	10.17	61.28	-51.11

This might be because of the fact that China has a large and developed manufacturing base which results in a large export of manufactured goods to India while India is quite sluggish in that context. The scant development of Indian manufacturing sector stagnated the export growth of the country. Raw materials still constitute a major part of the exports from India, iron ore alone being almost 60%, whereas, the major imports from China include telecom instruments, computer hardware and peripherals, electronic components and so on. Thus, it is noticeable that a friction has been caused in the trade due to the imbalance of trade in favour of China. China accounts for almost 25 % of India's overall trade deficit with the world, as had been found out by a study in 2012. Due to the complaints from various domestic manufacturers, India was compelled to initiate several anti-dumping investigations on Chinese imports. The huge gap between the Chinese imports and Indian exports which accounted to nearly \$40 billion (as of 2012) was considered to be unfair and speculated that such a kind of trade would be unsustainable. It rose to more than \$52 billion in the year 2015-16 (India, Department of Commerce 2017; India, Ministry of External Affairs 2016).

Also, there is an absence of a Free Trade Agreement with China mainly because China was more interested in a regional trade agreements due to its export-based economy, and India is often forced to levy duties on Chinese imports due to pressure from domestic companies. This led to the Chinese enterprises complaining about the discriminatory policy of India against Chinese investment and the restrictions imposed on their export items. But India cannot give in to China's demand for a Regional Trade Agreement with India on the basis of its export-based economy and highly developed manufacturing sector, as well as recognition as a 'market-economy.' But the Indian industrials do not believe that India is yet ready for that agreement with its exports to China mainly being primary goods and having a weak service sector in comparison to that of China's.

India and China signed the bilateral investment promotion and protection agreement (BIPA) in November 2006. Indian companies made investments in steel, textiles, chemicals, automobile components, pharmaceuticals and IT apart from service sectors like restaurants, entertainment, culture and banking. The Chinese companies invested in telecom, metallurgy, transportation, electrical equipment and financial sector (India, Ministry of External Affairs 2007). However, the mutual investments are observed to be comparatively meager as compared to investment on other countries. But the Chinese investments in India appeared to have increased, over the years, considerably from where it began. China accounted for only 0.04% of total foreign investment to India in 2010 which rose to 0.50% in 2016. But the Indian investments in China have not increased substantially and thus the relative advantage is still largely on Chinese side.

### FDI inflows from China

Period	Rank	FDI Inflows (In Rs crore)	FDI Inflow (In \$ million)	Inflows*(%)
April 2000-December 2016	17	9,933.87	1,611.66	0.50
April 2000-December 2015	17	7,996.09	1,322.81	0.48
April 2000-December 2014	28	2,508.64	453.82	0.19
April 2000-December 2013	30	1641.9	313.02	0.15
April 2000-December 2012	31	1,224.89	240.87	0.13
April 2000-December 2011	35	493.44	102.56	0.06
April 2000-December 2010	36	254.37	53.05	0.04

Source: Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion: \*As percentage of total FDI Inflows

The global financial crisis of 2007-2008 was a setback for the global trade as well as the Sino- Indian bilateral trade. The bilateral trade in January 2009 fell by 37 percent over the same period in 2008 (India, Ministry of External Affairs 2010). The GDP of both India and China were affected negatively and both the governments had to come up with stimulus plans which tried to work towards increasing domestic consumption or keeping a self sustainable economy. This was indeed a great challenge and both the countries had to cut their imports by great amounts. China imported less iron ore and India imported less steel. Indian government also imposed heavy taxes and duties on several Chinese goods and there was even a temporary ban on Chinese toys. New Delhi initiated about 14 anti-dumping cases against Chinese goods and started imposing several safeguards. According to the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, ‘from October 2008 to February 2009, India launched 17 trade remedy probes, including those of anti-dumping and anti-subsidy, against Chinese products, covering industrial salt, steel, auto parts, coal products, porcelain products, textile and rubber products, which meant a total loss of more than US\$1.5 billion for the Chinese products and Chinese traders’ (Domain-b.com 2009; also see Das 2006, 2008).

The global economic slowdown was visible in the Sino-Indian bilateral trade when the trade stood at US\$66.75 billion from US\$69.37 billion in 2011. India’s exports to China reached US\$ 51.88 billion in 2012 recording a decline from the 2011 figures. The trade deficit for India was US\$37.01 billion in 2012. The bilateral trade increased to US\$65.9 billion in 2013 showing a gradual recovery from the global meltdown (India, Department of Commerce 2017; India, Ministry of External Affairs 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2016).

The bilateral investments also showed a gradual rise in terms of both financial and non financial forms of investment.

### Chinese Investment in India

2007	US\$ 16 million
2008	US\$ 49.1 million
2010	US\$ 33 million (China’s non financial investment in India)
2011	US\$ 95.90 million (China’s non financial investment in India)
2012	US\$ 154 million (China’s non financial investment in India)
Till Dec 2013	US\$ 2.763 billion (cumulative, China’s non financial investment in India)
2014	US\$ 243 million (China’s non financial investment in India)

### Indian Investment in China

2006	US\$ 52 million
2007	US\$ 34 million in 78 Projects
2008	US\$ 257 million in 92 projects
2010	India's FDI in China- 77 Projects; investment of US\$ 55 million.
2011	India's FDI in China- 130 Projects; investment of US\$ 42.17 million
2012	India's FDI in China- US\$ 44 million
2014	India's FDI in China - US\$ 50.75 million
Till 2014	Indian Investment in China (cumulative): US\$ 0.564 billion

It is still very clear that China has a comparative advantage in trade, both bilaterally with India as well as globally. The latest statistics shows that for China, the export in the beginning of this year (2017) was US\$853.85 billion, and the import was US\$709.58 billion and the trade surplus stood at US\$143.77 billion. India had its exports valued at US\$ 12904 Million in 2017 April and its imports at US\$7222 million and the overall trade deficit was estimated to be US\$21408.91 billion. The current GDP growth rate of China is 6.9% in 2017 which was above the market expectation of 6.8% (*China Daily* 2017):

On the other hand, in India the current GDP growth rate in 2017 is 6.1% which is a sharp slowdown from a 7% expansion in the previous year. "It is the lowest growth rate since the last quarter of 2014, due to a slowdown in consumer spending and a drop in investment, following the demonetization program started in November of 2016 that removed 86 percent of India's currency in circulation" (Trading Economics 2017).

So it is clear that India's economy has a long way to go to reach the level of Chinese splendor and it has to do a lot with the changing political atmosphere in the largest democracy in the world and the policies being undertaken recently which has seemingly set a path towards rampant privatization of multiple sectors of the economy. China on the other hand, still following a communist authoritative government, easily gets its policies implemented across the nation with ease and do not experience the sort of hindrance from minority interests in its execution like India does. In that sense, China would be the most capable nation in the east to pose as a challenge to the US in terms of economic development.

### Areas of Cooperation

Despite all the strategic challenges India and China faced, there are several grounds on which both countries have tried to cooperate over the years and have successfully managed to establish a seemingly friendly relation. Science and

Technology is one such field where both the nations have made tremendous developments over the past years and have also appreciated each other's contributions to the particular field. The Indian and Chinese sides have been cooperating on the S&T fields such as Information technology, biotechnology, space related technologies, agricultural machineries, energy related technologies, etc. for so long and the formalized agreement for this cooperation was signed in 1998 December during the visit of Rajiv Gandhi to China, when a India-China 'Joint Economic Group on Economic Relations and Trade, Science and Technology (JEG)' was set up. This agreement "envisages exchange of scientists, exchange of scientific and technical information and documentation, organization of bilateral scientific and technical seminars and conferences, joint identification of scientific and technical problems as well as formulation and implementation of joint research programs etc" (India, Ministry of External Affairs 1999; India, Embassy of India, Beijing 2013).

<b>Some of the recent agreements signed between India and China</b>	
Memorandum of Understanding on Science and Technology cooperation between Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of the Republic of India and Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of the People's Republic of China	Beijing/ September 07,2006
Memorandum of Understanding between Indian Mountaineering Foundation and the Department of International Scientific Expedition(DISE) of the Institute of Geology and Geophysics of CAS	New Delhi/ December 21,2006
Memorandum of Understanding between Tsinghua University, Beijing, China and Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, New Delhi, India	New Delhi/ September 08,2008
Memorandum of Understanding between Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India and the Chinese Academy of Sciences(CAS) on Cooperation in Science and Technology	New Delhi/ October 28,2009
Memorandum of Understanding between Council of Scientific and Industrial Research(CSIR) of The Republic of India and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in Science and Technology	New Delhi/ 2009
Memorandum of Understanding between Indian Space Research Organisation and China National Space Administration on Cooperation in the Peaceful use of Space	New Delhi/ September 18, 2014

Source: *India, Embassy of India, Beijing (2013)*.

The cooperation between India and China in the field of trade and commerce is equally important. JEG has set up various working groups in the past to review

the trade statistical analytics, trade cooperation, etc. A joint Working Group for Trade and Commerce had been set up which is supported by a Joint Business council which represents the business interests, especially of the private sector. Their regular meetings have been directed towards the purpose of removing obstacles and evolving new frameworks for trade between the two nations. A free trade agreement (FTA) is something that has also been something that has been desired, particularly by China, to facilitate easy and fast trade. But the domestic condition in India doesn't allow such an agreement to be in place, which would flood the Indian market with more Chinese goods. Many groups have been formed to study and determine the feasibility of such a trade agreement and China has no other option than to be cooperative with India on that terms.

India has also been an observer of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) since 2005, and has participated in several of its meetings which were mainly focused on ensuring security and economic cooperation in the Eurasian zone (Seethi 2013). In June 2017, India became a full member of the SCO and it is expected to strengthen India's position in the Central Asia and also to promote cooperation, stability and connectivity across its borders. Thus the joining of India in the SCO was also a landmark event as far as the cooperation between India and China is concerned (India, Ministry of External Affairs 2017; Stobdan 2017).

India and China are also members of the BRICS which is an association of five emerging national economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Apart from discussing bilateral trade policies and methods to facilitate trade between the countries, there are also important decisions being taken to fight terrorism and value safety and security of its citizens. In the recent BRICS summit, Indian Minister for state of External Affairs, General V.K Singh met the Chinese Foreign Affairs minister, Wang Yi and the latter said that China and India were both major countries with great influence and that they should boost cooperation in the BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and all other multilateral frameworks to make contribution to peace and stability in the region and the world at large (India, Ministry of External Affairs 2017). Thus, the participation of India and China in these multilateral organizations helps to promote easy connectivity and the trade pattern shows how both the countries have been determined towards establishing a cooperative stance on the bilateral issues between them, keeping aside their political and strategic differences.

## Conclusion

There have been some issues, of late, between India and China in the border as well as in their strategic policies which created tensions between them. The recent Belt-Road policy of China has had some impact on India's strategic position and it

has sustained threat perceptions regarding the sovereignty of India's border. This policy was basically meant to open up a trading route for China with Central Asia, West Asia and parts of South Asia. Though the Belt-Road policy aims to create the world's largest platform for economic cooperation, including policy coordination, trade and financing collaboration, this would mean that China would get access over the PoK (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir) which would establish a direct route between China and the strategically important part of India which is seen as a threat to India's territorial sovereignty. In the meantime, India has also been making efforts to convince China that the burgeoning trade deficit between the two countries would not be in the best interest of bilateral ties, as the former continued to be the net loser. India also sought to expand its market access in China with demands for the facilitation of more exports from India.

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## Review Article

### Uganda: Paradoxes of Power

A.M. Thomas

Aili Mari Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda: Paradoxes of Power in a Hybrid Regime* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2010).

Tripp's *Museveni's Uganda* is an eye opener to similar regimes that have come up throughout Africa in the post-Cold War period. Most such regimes can be characterised as semi-authoritarian or hybrid as they embody elements of both democracy and authoritarianism. The book opens with the statement that "hybrid regimes are fraught with contradictions." Their leaders not only adopt trappings of democracy but also subvert democracy for the purpose of clinging on to power. Uganda is no exception to this. The country which saw the notorious and tyrannical rule of Idi Amin has undergone other political experiments culminating in the regime of Yoweri Museveni which is currently in power.

A major challenge confronting semi-authoritarian regimes involves the difficulty of dispensing with autocratic tendencies like politicizing ethnicity, regional and other such identities as a basis for building clientelist power. When Museveni took over power in 1986 after a prolonged conflict, he introduced a government that was non-sectarian and broad based. But in course of time, power became concentrated in a narrow group of loyalists, undermining the claim to broad based government. Charges of narrow ethnic promotion can be disregarded for a short time, but eventually the objective of inclusive government comes into conflict with the imperative of remaining in power.

The National Resistance Movement (NRM) led by Museveni and others experienced tensions between the contradictory needs of maintaining control on the one hand and pressures for greater openness and democracy on the other. However, in authoritarian regimes, elections are fairly irrelevant and there are few expressions of open dissent. In Uganda the military leadership is the most important elite group shaping political liberalization. But placating the military has come at a high price.

Further, the fact that the military is split in its allegiances makes the process of democratization potentially treacherous, particularly when changes at the top or in party dominance in legislature are involved.

One of the central dilemmas for semi-authoritarian regimes is how to maintain the status quo while opening up space for civil and political society, which may press for greater liberalization. It was only after a decade since the passage of the 1995 constitution that multi-partyism was permitted. A great effort had previously gone into the creation of a no-party system which had as its objectives the consideration of personal merit as well as to avoid sectarianism in society. But finally the National Resistance Movement relented and opted for a multiparty system. Unfortunately, the NRM has strived to entrench itself through the constitution and various pieces of legislation which have subordinated the even more important goal of expanding executive authority and consequently staying in power. The rights of the people have been superseded for the ultimate goal of remaining in power and all democratization measures have been controlled by the regime which has been limiting political space and centralizing power.

The NRM has been able to assert its dominance through the central government's relationships with local governments, historic kingdoms and local associations. These are indicative of the various strategies adopted by it to build its power base by creating vertical relations between the centre and the regions. In the process, horizontal relations between societal actors have been suppressed or constrained. The development of political parties and civil society has faced limits and the media harassed. The features of governance in Uganda are indicative of the imperatives of semi-authoritarian states to concentrate power in the centre and limit potential bases of opposition or fragmentation of power in the hinterland, in civil society and within parties and competing centres such as the kingdoms.

In the chapter titled "The Carrot and the Stick", Tripp looks at the connections between patronage and (in)security. It examines how corruption fosters patronage, and clientalistic networks build and maintain political loyalty. Those involved in corruption cannot leave office and must protect themselves from prosecution or other forms of retribution. They do so by continuing to use violence and patronage in order to remain in power. The remilitarization of Uganda and the perverse forms of so called security that emerged have more to do with suppressing dissent and internal party politics rather than national defence. The military is central to controlling society in a semi-authoritarian state. Further, the state also uses extra-military and paralegal forces to crush political opponents. Power is thus exercised through both patronage and repression. Leaders cannot relinquish power because they have engaged in corrupt and violent actions to suppress their political opponents and to leave office is to invite retribution of the same kind upon themselves.

Countries that are democratic are less conflict prone. A major factor impeding democratization has been the prevalence of conflict in Africa. The roots of conflict generally existed prior to political liberalization but they still persist under a new dispensation. A brief study of the various rebel movements that have persisted since the NRM took over shows how volatile the country has been despite its frequent claims at this time of having brought peace to Uganda. Consequently, one third of the country has yet to enjoy peace and benefit from the development that accompanies peace.

Speaking of the links between economy and politics, economic gains in Uganda have helped legitimize some of the more undemocratic tendencies of the Museveni regime at least in the short term. Foreign aid provided with the intention of strengthening political liberalization, at times unintentionally encouraged Museveni's most repressive and regressive tendencies by providing an external stamp of approval for some of the problematic aspects of the Ugandan regime. Pleased with progress on the economic front, foreign donors were often willing to overlook the less democratic aspects of Museveni's rule, further lending credence to the semi-authoritarian regime. Interestingly, donor funds were often used to create political networks of patronage.

Uganda today embodies many contradictions of semi-authoritarian rule. Political spaces have opened, multipartyism is present and there are demands for more autonomy. But we also see a paradox in this semi-authoritarian state where there is a nexus of power and where force is used excessively to suppress opponents. Compared to 1986, it is better off, but political freedoms are susceptible to restrictions, the military dominates and the independence of the judiciary and legislature is constantly being challenged. As Tripp remarks, "such ambiguity is at the heart of semi-authoritarianism." Semi-authoritarian regimes embody both democratic and authoritarian tendencies. Where and when democratic provisions have eroded in resource poor African states, the likelihood of conflict has increased while state capacity has deteriorated. More democratization is the need of the hour for countries like Uganda and in the rest of Africa. Conflict and poverty are the main foes of democracy. If democracy is not strengthened by increasing freedoms and guaranteeing rights and civil liberties it could disappear in no time.

The theme of Tripp's book is relevant today as it had been almost a decade back. Though specifically focusing on the Ugandan case, it could be a description of almost any other African regime today. Tripp has made an interesting analysis of the characteristics of hybrid regimes, combining democratic and authoritarian/ illiberal traits and their implications for all walks of life in a state – including civil society, governmental institutions and the economy.

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## **IJPAIR: Aims and Scope**

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There is a view, however, that the agreement is, in fact, a continuation of the process of the last few decades (Bajpai 2005).

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Writing on a hypothetical possibility of India threatening to proliferate, Perkovich (2005) writes, “....China proliferated to Pakistan and Pakistan proliferated to Libya, Iran, and North Korea. Nor does proliferation that occurred before the NPT was negotiated justify promiscuous proliferation behaviour today.”

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as Vanaik and Bidwai (1989) demonstrated

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Srinivasan et al. (2005) found

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(World Trade Organisation (WTO) 2006)

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(WTO 2006)

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*Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2007)

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(Srinivasan, Grover & Bhardwaj 2005: 5183-88)

#### Journal Article: where the page numbering continues from issue to issue

Bajpai, Kanti (2005): “Where Are India and US Heading?,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, XL(41), August 6: 3577-81.

Perkovich, George (2005): “Faulty Promises: The US-India Nuclear Deal,” *Policy Outlook*, 34(4), September: 18-20.

#### Newspaper Article

Rappai, M.V. (1998): “China: a status quo nuclear power,” *The Hindu*, 18 June.

#### Book

Jalan, Bimal (1991): *India’s Economic Crisis*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

#### Article or Chapter in an edited Volume/Book

Thomas, A. M. (2005): “India and Southeast Asia: The Look East Policy in Perspective,” in Rajan Harshe and K.M. Seethi (eds.), *Engaging with the World: Critical Reflections on India’s Foreign Policy*, New Delhi: Orient Longman.

#### Website:

“President Meets with Displaced Workers in Town Hall Meeting” at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/12/print/20011204-17.html>





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