

Majoritarian Nationalism, Religious Extremism and Democracy in India

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Foreword

A Deeper Introspection to Present Turmoil in India

Many social scientists are burning midnight oil to grapple with the truth of present situation. As Hindutva politics is ascending and undermining all the democratic institutions; a worrisome situation has been created. The dissent is being labelled as anti-nationalism, the rights of weaker section of society is declining at a rapid pace along with their socio-economic situation. The state of employment is pathetic and health services are becoming out of reach from the average people in the society.

Professor Uday Mehta, a sociologist, who has developed deeper insights into the social and political aspects related to religion, has applied himself deeply into the present morass in which Indian society is writhing with pain and anguish. His essays in this volume show continuity from the conflict between Buddhism and Brahmanism in the past to present scenario where Brahmanical values are flourishing under the garb of Hindu nationalist politics. Buddhism stood for non violence and equality while Brahmanism is for birth based inequality and has no qualms in resorting to violence. This violence was most manifest from Pushyamitra Shung to later anti Buddhist campaigns in Indian history.

It is here that Ambedkar rises tall to give us the core reasons for the persistence of Caste system, and untouchability and anti-Dalit violence right till current times. It is another matter that today subjugating dalits goes hand in hand with social engineering where they are co-opted into Brahmanical fold. Prof Mehta with his keen observations and a review of most important works on the theme churns out the real goals of Ambedkar, those related to annihilation of caste. Ambedkar, totally dejected by dominance of Brahmanism in the fold of Hinduism finally decides to leave Hindu fold and embraces Buddhism in mass conversion ceremony in 1956. Understanding Ambedkar, his deeper experiences of Hindu society, his own humiliation from upper caste; makes him the best commentator on the principles of Buddhism. The journey towards equality was the path which was dear to him, for which he struggled all his life.

Rise of communalism during colonial period has a lot to do with the struggles towards equality, the initial spark of which was lit by Jotirao Phule, who encouraged dalits to go for modern education. Savitribai phule, the tall leader in her right, also cracked the Brahmanical edifice by starting school for girls. Along with this as the other changes of rise of modern educated classes, the industrialists and new legal system totally disheartened the declining classes of landlords and kings. It is from these classes that communalism emerged. The Muslim and Hindu elite were against the social changes which had potential of giving equality to the dalits and women. This they called as 'Islam Khatre mein' (Islam in Danger) or 'Hinduism khatre mein' (Hinduism in danger). These medieval elite were together in the beginning but due to British policy of divide and rule, they formed Muslim League on one hand and Hindu Mahasabha on the other. For Hindu nationalist agenda RSS also came up in due course.

While the rising classes of Industrialists, educated classes, working classes, dalits and women were for Indian nationalism, these groups talked of Islamic Nation or Hindu nation. Their major concerns were emotive issues around their religion, far away from the needs of average people. After partition Muslim Communalists left for Pakistan, the Muslim

communalism in India was deflated and took the defensive form. Hindu communalism went from strength to strength, particularly from the decades of 1980s. Today it is the major political force, with RSS as the vast back up for its electoral politics.

Congress party, which led the national movement, was bereft of the idealism from decades of 1970s. Secularism was its backbone during freedom movement. After the death of Nehru the secular policies got a big pushback. Many power brokers started entering the party and it was riddled with opportunism and compromising positions on crucial issues. The rise of regional parties further led to its weakening. The anti corruption movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan in seventies was a severe blow to the strength of Congress. This anti corruption movement was repeated in twenty first century. Led by Anna Hazare and Arvind Kejriwal, planned and supported by RSS ideologues, it attacked the Congress from which it is yet to recover.

BJP on the other hand emerged stronger from Janata experiment led by Jaya Paraksh Narayan (JP). This JP movement also gave legitimacy to RSS. So far in public image RSS was in the dumps. JP gave it credibility, and since then it has not looked back. At deeper level the RSS Shakahs kept working ceaselessly through its various shakhas and kept spreading silently all over the country. It is RSS, which is the electoral manpower of BJP. RSS also gave rise to over two hundred organizations which spread the Hindutva ideology, far and wide. It has twin agenda. To demonize Muslims it resorted to spreading distorted version of History. Christians are under attack on the pretext that they are converting by force fraud and allurements. On the other side it is glorifying the ancient times when birth based caste and gender hierarchy prevailed. Parallel to this scientific temper is being undermined. Today the situation is that due to rise of communalism, the issues like Ram- Krishna temple, Love jihad, and ghar wapasi dominate the social scene. The biggest victim is the democratic values.

Democratic institutions are being undermined; freedom of expression is regarded as equal to anti nationalism. The fright amongst minorities is on the rise. With each election coming the agenda to polarize the communities are intensified.

In current scenario, the Congress seems to be the only national party which can come up to take the challenge of communalism. But it is ridden with factions and seems to be lacking the will to raise the national platform to create the program for countering sectarian politics and strengthening democratic ethos.

This book by Prof. Mehta raises many pertinent questions, which have roots in history and answering which in practice is the only hope for saving our country and democracy. The essays are well researched, drawing from various scholars on the subject. It will surely raise the level of our understanding to help us combat the rising tide of a politics, which has elements of populism and fundamentalism in particular. Our Centre is publishing this with the hope that the questions and debate raised by Dr. Mehta's book will enlighten us to take our struggle at a higher level.

Ram Puniyani

Chairperson

Centre for Study of Society and Secularism, Mumbai.

AMBEDKAR AND BUDDHISM

The riddle of caste in Indian society is a key to appreciate Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism. Ambedkar had deeply grasped that the Hindu social order does not recognize the individual as of any social significance. The Hindu social order is based primarily on class or Varna and not on individuals. The unit of Hindu society is the class or Varna, to use the Hindu technical names for class. In the Hindu social order, there is no room for individual merit and no consideration of individual justice.

The doctrine that the different classes were created from different parts of the divine body has generated the belief that it must be divine will that they should remain separate and distinct. It is this belief which has created in the Hindu an instinct to be different, to be separate and to be distinct from the rest of his fellow Hindus.

That the principle of graded inequality is a fundamental principle, is beyond controversy. The four classes are not on horizontal plane, different but equal. They are on vertical plane. Not only different but unequal in status, one standing above the order. In the scheme of Manu, the Brahmin is placed at the first in rank. Below him is the Kshatriya. Below the Kshatriya is the Vaishya. Below the Vaishya is the Shudra and below the Shudra is the Ati Shudra or the Untouchable. This order of precedence among the classes is not merely conventional. It is spiritual, moral, and legal. There is no sphere of life which is not regulated by this principle of graded inequality.

The Second principle on which the Hindu social order is founded is that of occupations for each class and continuance thereof by heredity.

Endogamy or the closed door system, was a fashion in Hindu society, and as it had originated from the Brahmin caste it was whole heartedly imitated by all the non-Brahmin sub-divisions or classes, who in turn, became endogamous castes. It is the infection of imitation that caught all these sub divisions on their onward march of differentiation and has turned them into castes. The propensity to imitate is a deep seated one in the human mind and need not be deemed an inadequate explanation for the formation of the various castes in India.

In a way, the status of a caste in Hindu society varies directly with the extent of the observance of the customs of sati, enforced widowhood, and girl child marriage. But observance of these customs varies directly with the distance that separates the caste. Those castes that are nearest to the Brahmin have imitated all the three customs and insist on the strict observance thereof. Those that are less near have imitated enforced widowhood and girl marriage, others, a little further off, have only girl marriage, and those furthest have imitated only the belief in the caste principle. --- that caste in the singular number is an unreality. Castes exist only in the plural number. There is no such thing as a caste, there are always castes.

The 'fissiparous' character of caste is a consequence of the virtue of self-

duplication that is inherent in it. Any innovation that seriously antagonizes the ethical, religious and social code of the caste is not likely to be tolerated by the caste, and the recalcitrant members of a caste are in danger of being thrown out of the caste, and left to their own fate without having the alternative of being admitted into or absorbed by other castes. Caste rules are inexorable and they do not wait to make nice distinctions between kinds of offences.

Socialists and the Caste System

The Socialists of India following their fellows in Europe are seeking to apply the economic interpretation of history to the facts of India. They propound that man is an economic creature, that his activities and aspirations are bound by economic facts, that property is the only source of power. They, therefore, preach that political and social reforms are but gigantic illusions and that economic reforms by equalization of property must take precedence over every other kind of reform. One may take issue on every one of these premises on which rests the Socialists case. For economic reform having priority over every other kind of reform, one may contend that economic motive is not the only motive by which man is actuated. That economic power is the only kind of power, no student of human society can accept. The social status of an individual by itself often becomes a source of power.

That religion is the source of power is illustrated by the history of India where the priest holds sway over the common man, often greater than magistrate and where everything, even such things as strikes and elections are decided by him. Can you have an economic reform without first bringing about a reform of the social order?

The socialists of India do not seem to have considered this question.

Men will not join in a revolution for the equalization of property unless they know that after the revolution is achieved they will be treated equally and that there will be no discrimination of caste and creed. The assurance of a socialist leading the revolution that he does not believe in caste, will not suffice. Secondly, how can there be a revolution if the proletariat cannot present a united front? Turn in any direction you like, caste is the monster that crosses your path. You cannot have political reform, you cannot have economic reform, unless you kill this monster.

Destruction of Caste

Caste is not a physical object like a wall of bricks or a line of wire which prevents the Hindus from co-mingling and which therefore can be pulled down. Caste is a notion, it is the state of the mind. The destruction of caste does not mean the destruction of physical barrier. People observe caste because they are deeply religious. The real remedy is to destroy the belief in the sanctity of the *Shastras*. How do you expect to succeed, if you allow the *Shastras* to continue to mould the beliefs and opinions of people? Not to question the authority of the *Shastras*, or permit the people to believe in their sanctity and their sanctions and to blame them and to criticize them for their acts as being irrational and inhuman is an incongruous way of carrying on social reform. Reformers working for the removal of untouchability including Mahatma Gandhi, do not seem to realize that the acts of the people are merely the results of their beliefs inculcated upon their minds by the *Shastras* and that people will not change their conduct until they cease to believe in the

sanctity of the *Shastras* on which their conduct is founded.

The Hindus hold to the *Shastras* of the social order for caste has a divine basis. You must therefore destroy the sacredness and divinity with which caste has become invested. In the last analysis, this means you must destroy the authority of the *Shastras* and the Vedas. Hence one must give a new doctrinal basis to religion a basis that will be in consonance with liberty, equality and fraternity, in short with democracy.

(Reference: Ghanshyam Shah (Ed) Caste and Democratic Politics in India – Chapter 5 Caste in India. B.R. Ambedkar PP 83-107 Publisher Permanent black – Second Impression 2005.)

The above exhaustive appraisal of Dr. Ambedkar's understanding of the caste system and its determinant role in shaping Indian socio economic development and polity enables one to properly appreciate his role in influencing the development of this country. Dr. Anand Teletumbde's exhaustive appraisal provides deep insight in understanding Dr. Ambedkar's role and immense contribution he made in influencing socio-political development of this country since pre-independence period. We shall briefly sum up his exhaustive appraisal of Dr. Ambedkar's contribution and role in shaping socio-economic and political development in this country.

In annihilation of caste, which Dr. Ambedkar wrote twenty years after 'Caste in India', he realized with sense of realization that social reform within the ambit of Hinduism, was not possible. The developments of 'Brahmanshahi and Bhandawalshahi' (Brahminism and Capitalism) as an

antagonistic duo and tried to appeal to the larger body of working classes. It led to the formation of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) IN 1936, to fight the provincial assembly elections the next year as per the India Act 1935. This party was modelled after the party of the same name in England, strongly influenced by the Fabian Socialists. The base of Ambedkar's ILP, however, hardly extended beyond his own caste. The candidates the party fielded in the 1937 elections were mostly Mahars. The Chambhars, who were socially and economically better placed than the *mangs* and *mahars*, were hardly represented in the party. As Christophe Jeffrelot points out, "Indeed Ambedkar met with many difficulties in attracting the support of Chambhars or Mangs who considered him to be a Mahar leader" (2005, 76-77).

Much later in 1946, when Ambedkar proposed a model of state socialism in the tract of States and Minorities, he again came to use the idiom of class although the treatise itself was written on behalf of a caste based party – The Scheduled Castes Federation.

While struggling against the caste oppression of Dalits, one could easily perceive that Ambedkar avoided using a caste based idiom and always referred to various communities as classes. It re-flooded his desire to bring all the untouchables castes other than his own, together as depressed class or Dalits. Apart from this label, nevertheless, the content of his movement did not make much difference even to untouchable castes other than his own. The people of other castes who followed his remained a minuscule minority.

During the 1930s, Ambedkar actually tried his hand at class politics. He

founded the Independent Labour Party on 15th August 1936 in the run-up to the 1937 elections to provincial assemblies. This party had a rigorously expressed class agenda. The word 'caste' occurred in its manifesto of the ILP preferred the word labor instead of the word depressed classes because labour includes the depressed classes as well. The party advocated State management and ownership of industry and supported credit and cooperative societies, tax reforms to reduce the burden on agricultural and industrial labour, and free and compulsory education.

Ambedkar formed the Mumbai Kamgar Sangh in 1935 and made efforts to organize dockyard workers and railway workers in 1948. Through the corresponding efforts at land reform and abolition of hereditary privileges in the countryside, these organizational efforts sought to forefront caste as a crucial factor. For the working class movement, he led a massive agitation against Khoti – a kind of landlordism prevailing in the Konkan region – bringing together over twenty thousand Dalits and kunbi peasants and landless labourers to march in a massive procession in Bombay. During this period, when Ambedkar was at his radical best, he addressed a number of conferences of peasants in and around the Bombay province.

In sum, it was Ambedkar who really demonstrated that the struggle against caste could be embedded into a class struggle.

Unfortunately the communists, could not go beyond their theoretical fixations and remained confined to trade unions. Ambedkar's bitterness towards Marxism / communism should be viewed keeping this kind of sectarian conduct of the communists.

In the textile mills as it is now widely recognized in Bombay, despite the communists control over the workers, the practice of untouchability persisted. Such experiences proved a big hurdle in bringing these movements closer. Hence, when communists called for a mill workers strike in 1929, Ambedkar in alliance with Frederick Stonos, Manager of the E.D. Sassoon Mills asked Dalit workers to resume work, breaking the strike, a move that generated lot of resentment among the communists.

Ambedkar's disillusionment with the Hindus and Hinduism

Mahad struggle in 1927, in a sense was a turning point in Ambedkar's life and his response to Hindus and Hinduism. He expected that if the Dalits agitated for their civil rights, the advanced section of Hindu society would wake up to its duty and pursue reforms. The Mahad conference, conceived originally by young Ramchandra Babaji More, also came to be known subsequently as Comrade More was attended by over three thousand Dalits, mostly first World War Veterans. The meeting was first conceived as just a depressed classes conference – 'Depressed Classes' - originally adopted by the British administration for Dalits since 1916 onwards. But it was decided that the participants would use the occasion to assert their civil rights by marching together to the Chavadar tank and drinking water. The Bole Resolution had affirmed that "all public water resources, wells and *dharamshalas* which are built are maintained out of public funds, as well as public schools, courts, offices and dispensaries" should henceforth be open to the use of all without any hindrance. Its provisions were later adopted by a special resolution of the Mahad Municipality. Addressing the

delegates on March 1927, Ambedkar said, "We are not going to the tank to merely drink its water, we are going to the tank to assert that we too are human beings like others. It must be clear that this meeting has been called to set up the norms of equality". However, on their return from the tank the delegates came under attack from an orthodox Hindu mob. Twenty people received serious injuries, while sixty to seventy others, including women, were wounded. The Brahmins, then decided to 'purify' the 'polluted' chavadar tank by pouring into it 108 earthen pots of cow-lung and cow piss, milk, ghee and curd what they called panchkarma amidst vedic chanting. Ambedkar was incensed at this and planned another conference ninth months later, this time as a 'Satyagraha' by the depressed classes and was attended by more than ten thousand volunteers. This time too, the outcome was inconclusive as some caste Hindus obtained a court injunction against the Satyagrahis by making the Fraudulent claim that Chavadar was a Chaudhary tank, a private property that could not be trespassed. It was at this second conference, on 25th December 1927, that a copy of the Manusmriti – the Second century CE text which Ambedkar called, 'the book of the philosophy of 'Brahmanism' enjoining the worst kind of proscriptions against untouchables – was burnt at the hands of Bapusaheb Sahasrabuddhe, a Progressive Brahmin.

Subsequently, Ambedkar gave up his efforts to bring about social reforms from within Hindu society and turned towards newly emerging opportunities in politics. Right after Mahad, he began to speak publically about delivering the ultimate message to the Hindus by renouncing Hinduism. (Reference : Anand Teltumbde, 'Republic of caste', 'Ambedkar,

Ambedkarites and Ambedkarism Chapter 3 PP 118 to 120 Published by Navayana Publishing Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi 110049, April 1)

Dr. Ambedkar's interpretation of Indian History and Intervention in shaping Indian Society.

Ambedkar is one of the most brilliant scholars of modern India with a deep commitment to emancipate the socially and economically oppressed Dalit masses. He felt that the Congress Party with its Upper Caste leadership was unwilling to even take up the question of Dalit oppression seriously, all he could do was to bring about constitutional provisions by way of reservations to the Dalit and tribal masses. Although he was acquainted with the Marxist philosophy and appraisal of society in terms of class formation through the ownership of the means of production. The ownership of the means of production, still he was disillusioned by the traditional approach of the Marxist Parties in the country which failed to take up seriously the unique caste problem. Knowing fully well how deeply religious Indians were bent upon perpetuating not only the caste division and hierarchy but also the in-built mechanism of discrimination and oppression of the lower and outcastes. He hence, at the far end of his life, focused his attention on religion, and wanted to open up another more humane religious alternative to the Dalit masses. He undertook a serious study and analysis of the Hindu religious scriptures with the intention of showing the intrinsic contradictions that he thought were part of the composition of the Hindu scriptures themselves. He made a scholarly studies in this regard through his book, "Who were the Shudras?" First published in 1946. His work is focused on the thesis that the Shudras were

originally part of the Kshatriya caste and it was essentially through a manipulative process initiated and promoted by the Brahmins that they were reduced to the fourth category within the caste hierarchy.

As per Ambedkar's appraisal, Indian social history could be summed up as below:

1. The Shudras were one of the Aryan Communities of the Solar race.
2. There was a time when the Aryan society recognized only three Varnas, namely, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.
3. The Shudras did not form a separate Varna. They ranked as part of the Kshatriya Varna in the Indo-Aryan Society.
4. There was a continuous Feud between the Shudras Kings and the Brahmins in which the Brahmins were subjected to many tyrannies and indignities.
5. As a result of the hatred towards the Shudras generated by their tyrannies and oppressions, Brahmins refused to perform the Upanayana of the Shudras.
6. Owing to the denial of Upanayana, the Shudras who were Kshatriyas became socially degraded, fell below the rank of the Vaishyas and thus came to form the fourth varna. (Ambedkar B.R. who were the Shudras.) Thacker & co. Ltd, Bombay, 1946 PP Xiv, XV)/ Purusha Sakta Version.

Ambedkar substantiates his position by citing the Version of the Purusha Sukta which first made reference to the four castes. All human societies as it is now widely acknowledged that after the primitive society of hunting generations have

been class, societies. This was equally true of the post-vedic period. Ambedkar, however, brings out that 'though the existence of classes is the de facto condition of every society, however, no society has converted this de facto state of affairs into a de jure connotation of the ideal society. The contention of the Purusha Sukta is the only instance in which the real is elevated to the dignity of an ideal... No society has accepted that the class composition is an ideal. At the most they have accepted it as natural. The Purusha Sukta goes further. It not only regards class composition as natural and ideal, but also regards it as sacred and divine'.

In Ambedkar's own words – The last and the greatest of all these riddles, which emerge out of a sociological scrutiny of the Purusha Sukta, is the one relating to the position of the Shudra. The Purusha Sukta concerns itself with the origin of the classes, and says they were created by God – a doctrine which no theology has thought it wise to propound. This is itself is a strange thing. But what is astonishing is the plan of equating different classes to different parts of the body is not a matter of accident. It is deliberate. The idea behind this plan seems to be to discover a formula which will solve two problems, one of fixing the functions of the four classes and the other of fixing the gradation of the four classes. (Ibid P7 to Ibid P 15).

Consequent to the de jure justification of the class division of society in sacred terms, the dominant Brahmin class went about ascribing Varnas to each of the classes. The society was divided into 'Savarna' and 'Avarna'. The Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishyas and Shudras are Savarnas. The Untouchables or 'Ati-Shudras are called avarnas, that is, they are outside the 'chaturvarnya'. Again, those within

the 'chaturvarnya' are called 'Dvijas' (twice born), and those outside 'non-Dvijas' (born once only). In this way Ambedkar concludes, not only the division of society into castes but also the justification was made evident (Ibid, P20).

Ambedkar moves another step forward by stressing that the Shudras not only belonged to the Kshatriya class but also that some of the most eminent and powerful Kings of the ancient Aryan communities were Shudras.

The Rigveda itself provides enough evidence to support this observation. Prof. Max Mullar, the eminent Indologist, and many other Scholars hold the view that Purusha Sukta is an interpolation that happened long after the Rigveda was closed. Rigveda and the Brahmanas, which fall under the category of Sruti, clearly state that there were only three Varnas. Both hold that the Shudras did not form a separate Varna, much less the Fourth Varna. (Ibid, PP 1216.47)

The degradation of the Shudras was actually the outcome of a violent conflict between the Shudras and the Brahmins.

Violent Conflict between Brahmins and Shudras

Ambedkar puts forward exhaustive evidence from different sections of the Hindu scriptures to bear evidence to a violent conflict between the Shudra Kings and the Brahmin Rishi. There are also several incidents of an on-going enmity between the Kshatriya Vishvamitra and the Brahmin Vasishtha, although these two were priests, but they reflect the enmity between two classes. The dispute centered around three main issues, namely,

- 1) The right to receive gifts. The Brahmins claimed that the right to receive gifts belonged to the Brahmins only and hence nobody else was entitled to receive gifts from anybody.
- 2) The right to teach the Vedas. The Brahmins claimed that the Kshatriya had only the right to study the Vedas. Teaching the same was the exclusive privilege of the Brahmins only.
- 3) The right to officiate at a sacrifice. The Brahmins contended that the Kshatriya had the right to perform sacrifice, but had no right to officiate as a priest at a sacrifice. This was the privilege of the Brahmins (Ibid PP 146-147 & Ibid PP 160-167).

Thus the roots of the antagonism between the Shudras and Brahmins was not just confined at the level of the Rishis and priests but also at the level of the Shudra Kings and Brahmin priests and persisted up to the Puranic period.

The Mechanism adopted by Brahmins to degrade Shudras was in refusing to perform the Upanayana of the Shudras. Originally this rite was a very simple ceremony which subsequently became very elaborate and became obligatory and requirement for the young boy entering the stage of Brahmachari (i.e. a pupil). Ultimately, the right to wear the sacred thread became the real and the only test of judging the status of a person whether he is a Shudra or Kshatriya. Ambedkar argues that originally all the members of the society including women, had the right to wear the sacred thread, only at a later stage when the conflict between the Shudras and the Brahmins became severe, the

Brahmins used this denial as a weapon to degrade the Shudras. (Ebid P 18).

The Brahmins claimed exclusive right over the performance of the Upanayana because of the established tradition over which they held sway over the centuries.

The denial of Upanayana by the Brahmins need not be based on legal or religious ground. It was possible for the denial to be based on purely political ground.

The right of appeal against the denial of Upanayana was restricted to a Vedvat-Parishad and this Parishad was an assembly for which a Brahmin alone was eligible to be a member.

Thus as Ambedkar argues it was the Brahmins who brought about the fall of the Shudras from the Second to the Fourth Varna in the Indo-Aryan society.

This act of degradation was the outcome of the spirit of revenge on the part of the Brahmins who were groaning under the tyrannies and oppression and indignities to which they were subjected by the Shudra 'king' (Ibid P. 214).

This is how Dr Ambedkar perceived the Shudras came to be degraded and depreciated by the Hindu society dominated by the Brahmins. He justifies his contention with extensive and numerous citations from the Vedas to right up to the Puranas. Thus as brought out so aptly by Stan Lourdusamy in his well-known work, 'Religion as Social Protest'. Ambedkar's final decision to reject Hinduism and his encouragement to his followers also to reject Hinduism was based on very rational grounds.

Stan Lourdusamy – Religion as social protest PP 106-107 Publisher Multi

Book Agency – Calcutta – 700084. India first published Jan ---- PP 99 to 107).

Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism – Historical Backdrop

Ambedkar spent three years in America as a graduate student at Columbia University (1913-16) where he came under the influence of John Dewey, then a professor of Philosophy at Columbia and the nation's prominent intellectual. Young Ambedkar attended Dewey's lectures, read his books and came back to India with this intellectual legacy. He could not reconcile to Mahatma Gandhi's principle of the possibility of harmonious co-existence with the four-fold division of human beings into castes, along with a half million of his fellows untouchables. He publicly renounced Hinduism and converted to Buddhism in 1956. Careful perusal of Ambedkar's the Buddha and his Dhamma (1957), the bible of Dalit Buddhist, reflect Dewey's influence in reconstructing philosophy and society in the light of scientific inquiry into the central message of the life of Buddha.

According to the author and has been otherwise also widely admitted that Dewey's ideas inspired Ambedkar to make the historic rebellion of Gautama Buddha relevant to his quest for a civic religion of 'equality, liberty and fraternity' in this country. However, apart from Dewey other equally powerful was the nineteenth century anti-caste movement in Maharashtra, his own province were the histories of numerous heterodox, anti-vedic, materialist sects / schools that have always existed on the fringes of Hinduism. Dewey, and his American exposure served for Ambedkar as a bridge between the past Dalit traditions of protest and a soft consciously liberal and secular world

view. By emphasizing the scientific temper as the central message of the Buddha, Ambedkar made respect for systematic inquiry a part of the religious obligations of Dalit neo-Buddhists. Ambedkar realized that the creative reworking of the Buddhist tradition to serve the goals of human freedom in the modern age.

(Meera Nanda, *A Prophet facing forward Critical Quest*, New Delhi 2006 PP 4-7)

Deweyan Influence

Ambedkar was drawn to science also due to his Deweyan belief in the possibility of rational evaluation and reconstruction of moral and ethical values. The stakes obviously were much higher for Ambedkar. As a part of a community that had suffered grave injustices legitimized by an objectively false understanding of nature's laws, Ambedkar realized cultural demystification as the first priority for any progressive social change in India.

For more than a decade after his return to India, Ambedkar remained optimistic that political and economic changes – access to education, right to vote, and other fundamental democratic rights would be enough to integrate the lower castes into the national mainstream. But the bitter struggles of untouchables to exercise their right to drink water from village wells (the famous civil disobedience struggle of Mahad), then to enter Hindu temples (the temple-entry movements of Pune and Nasik) and his polemics with Mahatma Gandhi over the Question of separate voting rights for outcasts (the famous Poona pact of 1932 in which Gandhi prevailed) led him to realize that advancement of the untouchables was impossible without a prior reform of the core values of Hinduism. His disillusionment with Hinduism, and with the largely upper

caste nationalism of the Congress party which placed political emancipation from the British above any urgency for integral social reform was complete by 1935 when he first declared his intent to renounce Hinduism, he is reported to have it conveyed to Mahatma Gandhi. His search for the new faith that could anchor his values of 'liberty, equality, and fraternity' ended, twenty years later, with his conversion to Buddhism.

In annihilation of caste, Ambedkar appeals to his fellow Indians to forgo the quest for certain and absolute knowledge of the ultimate truth of being, the kind of metaphysical knowledge idealized by Brahminical Hinduism. In words that distinctly echo Dewey's, he proposes a new ideal of knowledge which embraces change, and which will learn to constantly revise all that is taken as settled, the Hindus must consider whether time has not come for them to recognize that there is nothing fixed, nothing eternal, nothing sanctum (Sanskrit for eternal) that everything is changing, that change is the law of life for individuals as well as for society. In a changing society, there must be a constant revolution of old values and the Hindus must realize that if there must be standard to measure the acts of man, there must also be readiness to revise these standards. (Annihilation of caste, 1936, 132).

Ambedkar's Buddha

Ambedkar's attraction and devotion to Buddha also has to be viewed keeping this perception in mind as suggested by Mira Nanda, as against the unchanging cosmic order of the *vedas* and the Upanishads, the Buddha taught that everything is always changing and there is no continuous and coherent self that experiences an un-changing reality. To cling to the

idea of permanence is the source of suffering, while cultivating an attitude of 'mindful contemplation' of the ever-changing reality is the way to master and overcome suffering. Ambedkar interprets mindfulness as Deweyan scientific temper "Everything must be open to reexamination and reconsideration, whenever grounds for re-examination and reconsideration arise". Ambedkar reads the Buddha, like Dewey, as offering a method, not a doctrine, as a source of enlightenment.

Ambedkar presents the Buddha's own renunciation and enlightenment as an exercise in *Prajna*, with nothing preordained or divine about them. In Ambedkar's retelling, Siddhartha Gautama turns his back on his family and on his tribe not as a fulfillment of a preordained fate, as the Buddhist lore would have it, but as a conscientious objector to war and violence that his caste duties demanded of him. Ambedkar depicts him leaving home not in the dead of the night, stealthily, but openly, with a public affirmation of his pacifism, and in full consultation with his wife and his family. Not finding any of the existing philosophies helpful in explaining the cause of social conflict and suffering that he finds around him, the young Siddhartha resolves, 'to examine everything for himself', to hold nothing as infallible and permanent, including the Vedas. His enlightenment in Ambedkar's retelling, amounts to the discovery of a method by which to conquer the ignorance, the craving, and the hatreds that hold humanity in thrall. By making the spirit of inquiry the essence of Buddha's spiritual journey, Ambedkar is making enquiry itself a part of the religious duties of (the mostly) Dalit neo Buddhists.

Doctrine of Karma

Ambedkar's most touching and to some, most controversial reinterpretation remains that of the doctrine of karma. Buddhism, as is widely known, rejects the idea of immortality of soul, but accepts the idea of rebirth according to the law of Karma. In the traditional Buddhist writings, the soul is simply replaced by unidentified immaterial constituents that carry over the traces of karma into the next birth. Thus, even though Buddhism rejects the existence of the soul, this makes little difference in practice, and the more popular literature of Buddhism, such as the Birth Stories (Jatakas), takes for granted the existence of Quasi soul which endures indefinitely (De Barry 1938: 92)

But Ambedkar focused on this contradiction and raised the question. How can there be rebirth if there is no soul? Ambedkar applies the Buddha's own pragmatic maxim to this contradiction in Buddha's teachings. He raised the question that if there is anything that can be said with confidence about the historical Buddha it is this. He was nothing if not rational, if not logical, Ambedkar with this presumption assumes that the Buddha would agree with the findings of science. In short, Ambedkar interprets the Buddha disagreeing with the theory of Karma and rebirth.

Prajna, Buddha's essential part of teaching, held a deep political meaning for Ambedkar. He took it as an essential step towards the creation of a 'religion of principles' as against the 'religion of rules' that divides people into castes, living in fear of unseen powers and deprives them of an 'associated life' in the public sphere.

Ambedkar's Epistemological revolution

As brought out by Meera Nanda, the relevance of Ambedkar extends beyond Dalits and women. His true relevance rests in his insistence upon an epistemological revolution as precondition for the creation of democratic and secular habits of the heart. In ideal synthesis of John Dewey and Gautama Buddha, Ambedkar shows the way for launching an epistemological revolution in India that draws upon those traditions that share a philosophical continuity with modern science. He found these traditions in the pragmatic and naturalistic ideas of the historical Buddha and early Buddhism that lie buried under the mystical idealism of the later Buddhism and Brahminism.

Ambedkar's pragmatism could not be summed up in terms of the influence of the American Philosopher Dewey's teachings. But as Meera Nanda points out there is enough evidence that the historical Buddha himself was deeply influenced by anti-vedic naturalist philosophies prevalent in pre-Buddhist India, especially those of Lokayata (literally, prevalent among the people) and Sankhya (literally 'reflection'). The non-Brahmin, lower caste Lokayata philosophers were famous (or infamous, among the priestly castes) for insisting upon putting the teachings of the Vedas, including all the rituals and spells meant to bring about a desired result, to a 'test of practice' in everyday life (Chattopadhyaya, 1976, 235). Like their contemporaries in Athens before Socrates, the Lokayatas denied any notion of self (that is consciousness or *atma*) over and above the material body, saw all consciousness as an attribute of matter itself and tried to explain all observed phenomena by

material laws. They admitted no God, no Soul, no Survival after death. It has been established that references to Lokayatas, both in positive and in critical vein, abound in early Buddhist texts (Chattopadhyaya, 1959:47)

Similarly, there is evidence that Siddharth Gautama, before his enlightenment, had studied with Sankhya Philosophers in his own home town. The original Sankhya Philosophy accepts non-sentient matter (*Prakriti*) as the only and the first cause of all the nature, including sentience or consciousness (*Purusha*) (Ibid:381). Like the Lokayatas, Sankhya too holds that the regularities and laws of *prakriti* can be understood through evidence of direct experience. This position is in total contract to that of the idealistic monism of the Upanishads, which holds the *purusha*, or the spirit, as the first cause of all the nature, the latter having the status of mere illusion. According to these Brahminical doctrines, *purusha*, being a part of the Absolute Divine consciousness, is proclaimed to be beyond the grasp of all mundane experiences of ordinary mortals.

Thus, the pragmatism that Ambedkar highlights in the Buddha has been integral part of Indian cultural heritage since early time. But it is important to bear in mind that it was always repressed and despised by the mainstream philosophers. All that we know of Lokayata, for instance, comes from the scorn and ridicule that was heaped on it by the exponents of Vedanta, Sankhya was forced to compromise with Brahminism by gradually making consciousness (*purusha*) the cause of nature (*prakriti*) and by reintroducing thoroughly un-Buddhist metaphysical questions into the later Buddhism.

Ambedkar's was the bold attempt to revive these suppressed proto-scientific elements of Indian traditions by presenting them as the core of the Buddhists teachings, and thereby turning them into the sacred duty of his fellow Buddhists.

Ambedkar realized, like his mentor Dewey, that the method and institutional arrangements for arriving at the new knowledge of nature will have to be made the basis for a new civil society in which norms are not dictated from above, but arrived at through a rational, open and public inquiry. His acceptance and advocacy of Buddhism was an attempt to resurrect the cultural traditions of skepticism and reason that have for so long been silenced by the mystic idealism of Brahminism (Ref. Meera Nanda- A Prophet facing forward – Published by Critical Quest, New Delhi, 2006).

Ambedkar's Philosophy

No appraisal of Ambedkar's Philosophy, his Praxis, his deep insight, and his profound vision in evolving path of struggle and emancipation of the Dalits and other tolling strata of the Indian Humanity would be complete without reference to profound contribution made by Prof. Anand Teltumde in highlighting deeper dimensions, inner depth, diversity, and dynamism and profound and enriching contribution made by Ambedkar through his life, teaching and the profound philosophical understanding displayed by DrAmbedkar through various phases of struggle not only for the Dalits, but the tolling strata of Indian societies, irrespective of caste and creed.

Upendra Baxa as pointed out by Teltumbde identified as many as seven Ambedkars in his brilliant essay "Emancipation of Justice Babasaheb Ambedkar's Legacy and Vision" identified as many as seven Ambedkars from his discourse. The First Ambedkar is an authentic Dalit who bore the full brunt of the practice of untouchability. The second is an example of scholarship. The third, an activist Journalist. The fourth is a pre-Gandhian activist. The fifth is locked in mortal combat with Gandhi on the issue of legislative reservations for the depressed classes. The sixth is the constitutionalist involved in the discourse on transfer of power and the process of constitution making. The Seventh Ambedkar is --- Hindu, not just in the sense of being the man who set aflame a copy of the Manusmriti in Mahad in 1927, but in his symbolic statement on conversion to Buddhism in late 1956. And this is not the only way to go about it. One could equally take another approach, using his philosophical coordinates to see different Ambedkar, and perhaps obtain the opposite, a holistic view of him.

As we mentioned earlier also about Dewey's profound influence on Ambedkar. This could be seen in Ambedkar creatively following Dewey's brand of pragmatism all through his life.

Fabian Influence

Dewey was also a prominent American Fabian socialist and the co-author of the 'Humanist Manifesto' (1933). In 1884, small group of English intellectuals formed the Fabian Society with the aim of establishing a classless, socialist society as envisioned by Marx, but differed with him on how the revolution would be accomplished and by whom. In contrast to Marx's

revolutionary socialism. This brand of socialism would be brought about gradually through reforms by the enlightened middle classes (and not – with the working class at the Vanguard). The Fabians worked for World revolution not through an uprising of the workers, but the indoctrination of young scholars. They believed that these intellectual revolutionaries would eventually acquire power and influence in the official and unofficial opinion-making and power-wielding organs, and gradually transform the World into a socialist society.

Ambedkar was influenced by these ideas. After Columbia, he joined the London School of Economics, founded in 1895 by members of the Fabian Society. He creatively used the Deweyan concept of democracy in dissecting caste society and saw that without caste being annihilated, nothing worthwhile could be accomplished. His socialism is a correlate, an essential ingredient of democracy. His ideas of socialism was essentially Fabian. Ambedkar's first political party, the Independent Labour Party, founded in 1936, was fashioned after the Fabian backed party of the same name in England, founded in 1893. It clearly propounded the socialist objectives and proudly adopted a red flag. Later, in States and Minorities he famously proposed that a model of state socialism be incorporated into the Constitution as its basic feature. His embrace of Buddhism at the end of his life was a step towards socialism for, according to Ambedkar, it had the same ends as Marxism but without its deficient means, violence and dictatorship (Ref. Anand Teltumbde 'Republic of Caste' essay on Ambedkar, Chapter 3, Ambedkar, Ambedkarites and Ambedkarism PP 117-151) Published by Navayana, April 2018.

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Christophe Jafferlot on Ambedkar

One cannot conclude any appraisal of Ambedkar's contribution for reconstruction of Indian society on a genuinely humanist and democratic basis without referring to the very significant contribution made by a brilliant scholar of Indian Society, Christophe Jafferlot. Jafferlot's appraisal of the rise of Narendra Modi and backdrop of his success in Gujarat politics and subsequent rise and success at a national level through last general election provides much deeper understanding and factors that contributed to his success first at a State and subsequently at a national level. Similarly Prof. Jafferlot's appraisal of the immense significance and contribution made by Dr. Ambedkar in shaping Indian Society through his struggle for Dalit emancipation and subsequently in framing Indian Constitution deserve serious consideration. We are referring here to the valuable contribution he made through his address on Ambedkar and Democracy organized on the occasion of Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer memorial lecture collectively organized by Centre for Study of Society and Secularism and 'Maharashtra Lok Adhikar Manch, Centre for Development research and Action, Rajiv Gandhi Centre for contemporary Studies and Dalit Adivasi Adhikar Andolan on 28th April 2016 at JNU, New Delhi.

Giving insights into democracy as Ambedkar visualized it, Christophe pointed out that according to Ambedkar, Hinduism and democracy were antithetical to each other. This was primarily because Hinduism represents a graded hierarchy in a

caste ridden society. The religion gives legitimacy to inequality and exploitation of the Dalits. Democracy as an emancipatory force is not compatible with Hinduism. This insight into Hinduism ultimately led him to his decision of conversion to Buddhism. Ambedkar had his first brush with democratic values in the West while studying and pursuing academics. Ambedkar himself later clarified that he found an indigenous source of democracy in Buddhism. Ambedkar makes a clear distinction between Hinduism and Buddhism and does not subsume Buddhism as part of Hinduism and thereby diluting its protest to Brahminical values underlined by inequality.

Ambedkar was appointed on several posts of responsibilities from where he could formulate laws and policies in accordance to his vision of India and his understanding of Indian society and democracy. One of the greatest examples of this was the Indian Constitution. He was the chairperson of the drafting Committee. His emphasis on individual rights reflects in the fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution. He later goes to be the Law Minister in the Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet. As a law minister he is compelled to face his disillusionment in terms of the resistance to the Hindu code bill which some of the Congress members themselves rejected on account of the Bill being far reaching in its attempt to reform the Hindu society. This is where Ambedkar realized that democracy cannot sustain where its mere political tokenism and of socio economic dimension. Though as a political regime (or form of government), democracy was an equalizer in terms of political rights, according to Ambedkar, it was not adequate for democracy to sustain. He pointed out to the preconditions

required for democracy. This is socio economic democracy. If there is rampant inequality in the society, merely granting them political democracy will be meaningless. Democracy will be meaningful when it is capable to bring revolutionary changes by altering the socio economic status of the historically marginalized. When he realized that some elements in Congress were vehemently opposed to changing the socio economic order in society he resigned and became disappointed in the Congress. The speaker elaborated on the thought of Ambedkar on democracy based on four elements.

- 1) Ambedkar's view on representation.
- 2) Democracy in itself as societal impact.
- 3) Interaction between democracy and socio economic reforms.
- 4) Democracy and its relation with Buddhism.

While dealing with these four dimensions, Jafferlot brings out how Ambedkar shaped the different political ideals in India which makes him so relevant in contemporary debates. According to Ambedkar, democracy was needed to build a new India resting on equality. Hence his strong advocacy of Universal Franchise. Ambedkar grappled with the question of what would be best form of representation for Dalits who have been historically oppressed. Ambedkar started with the demand of electorates for Dalits, later demanding for Dalits in village Panchayats in 1933. In 1945, he felt Dalits needed separate settlements and representation in Judiciary and bureaucracy.

Ambedkar believed that equality can be brought about in democracy. But as stated earlier, there was a palpable

tension he was witnessing between political democracy and socio economic democracy which he thought cannot be divorced from each other. Democracy is a made of associated living between the people who form the society. For him the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity are a binding force which makes democracy sustainable and viable. It is widely believed that Ambedkar was familiarized with these ideals from his readings of the French revolution. Nevertheless, Ambedkar found these ideals in the teachings of Buddha and the practice of Buddhism. He found Buddhism to be a democratic religion and thus embraced Buddhism in 1956. He looked at Buddhism not only as a way for his spiritual wellbeing but also a political tool to counter the hegemony of Brahminical Hinduism. Buddhism was a space for acceptance, equality and humanism. This succinctly sums up Ambedkar's understanding of Buddhism and modern democracy (Ref. The memorial lecture organized collectively by Action Aid, Centre for Study of Society and Secularism, Maharashtra Lok Adhikar Manch, Centre for Development Research and Action, Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Contemporary Studies and Dalit Advasi Adhikar Andolan – date -- Place.

Concluding Observation

We have exhaustively reproduced observations made by scholars of national and global dimension of diverse aspects and profound contribution made by Dr. Ambedkar in multiple directions and highlighting those dimensions of Indian historical and cultural traditions that enriched and highlighted the sufferings of the vast majority of the toiling strata whom Dr. Ambedkar sought to cover under the category of 'Shudra' He also highlighted the rich, enduring and

pioneering contributions made by toiling strata in enriching Indian society, culture and civilization. He also brought out their pioneering role in laying foundation of scientific thought and material culture of Indian society. Unfortunately, Ambedkar's and several other liberal scholars' thesis of gradual, peaceful transformation of Indian Society into democratic, egalitarian, and liberal society has not only failed but we have since his demise moved in the neo liberal, anti poor, authoritarian framework so fast in last few decades and now further getting more and more deeply ---- in this neo liberal structure that provides a pessimistic outlook for the future of Indian humanity. Unfortunately in the present national scenario, right from extreme right wing party like BJP to somewhat liberal party as the Congress with its recently pronounced humanitarian and pro-poor thrust more in terms of slogan ----- than any demonstration of this objective getting translated into actual practice, and left parties, who have lost their credentials and bankrupt through their relatively longer period of rule in Kerala and West Bengal where they have been totally isolated, with all provincial parties. JDU to Samajwadi and Bahujan Party more or less joining the same band wagon, the crisis for better future, and a possibility of moving in the direction of social justice, liberty, freedom and liberation of the vast bulk of toiling strata is reduced to a utopia, with no possibility of ever moving in that direction in the near future. In this sense, Dr. Ambedkar's dream of even ---- just democratic society moving in the direction of upliftment of Dalits, Adivasis, labour living in rural and urban areas appear to be not having any distinct possibility.

Indian political scenario since independence probably could be better

described as a rule or domination by elites of higher, middle, backward and lower castes. Virtually it has been reduced to the power elites from those high, lower and middle castes and classes, ruling over this country since last several decades, with the result that whosoever comes into power in neo liberal regime with its --- ever expanding tentacles continue to dominate the political, cultural and social scenario, while preserving and

promoting neo-liberal policies and programs, who essentially benefit only a small section of big capitalists in urban and rural India.

Hence, this unending game of elites from different classes and castes controlling the state power and basically adopting policies and measures which ensures and promotes neo-liberal regime uninterruptedly continues to thrive.

NATIONALISM AND COMMUNALISM

The definition of nationalism has varied from time to time and place to place. The attempt to bring together all of nationalism's manifestos has sometimes seemed to be an impossible task. Rosa Luxemburg, probably one of the early revolutionaries with Marxist approach, argued that the terms "national state" and "nationalism" are in themselves empty husks, into which all historical epochs and class relations pour their special material content (see Luxemburg 1928, 294). But nationalism as suggested by Horace B. Davis has a common essence whose specific nature could enable us to understand its relevance and historical significance.

If by nationalism we imply resistance to alien domination it has been with us since the dawn of recorded history. Successive resistance to alien domination led to the formation of certain states in Europe since the initial phase of modern period but the question arises, whether they could be classified as nations. As the same author argues the nation as being comprised of the people rather than the rules and permeated by a feeling of national unity and national mission, nationalism dates from not earlier than the eighteenth century.

One more attempt to classify types of nationalism distinguishes four main patterns, each of which has been specific characteristics of some part of the world and which have appeared in more or less chronological order. They have been classified as

- 1) The nationalism of people with a long experience of concurrent development of state power and

national circumstances, with citizenship determining nationality (Western Europe)

- 2) The nationalism of countries without political experience of long duration but a common language and a common self-image (Italy and Germany)
- 3) The nationalism of countries such as those of South Eastern Europe, without a common political experience of long duration and often without an ethnically homogeneous territory, in which the region of historical association is usually an important determination of national consciousness and
- 4) The nationalism of anti-colonialism and the drive for 'modernity' generally associated with the Third World but manifest also in South Eastern Europe (Stoianovich, 1974, 450).

As the same author suggests, the circumstances under which nationalist movements arise are very varied. The first mass nationalist organization in Indonesia, known as "Sarekar Islam" or "Islamic Union" grew out of a movement for religious reform. Starting before World War I, this safari purism sought to 'purify' the modern religion much as the Puritans had sought to 'Purify' the Church of England in the seventeenth century. The movement struck deep roots in the population. It developed just after World War I into a crusade for political and economic revolution as well. It adopted an economic programme that had been suggested by the communist international. Subsequent history of massive massacre of communist

leaders and cadres and the regime opting for Islamic Republic is quite well known.

The intensity and appeal of nationalism in a world of sharply differentiated income and living standards perhaps may tend to be inversely proportional to the barriers to mobility between nations and classes, and strictly proportional to the barriers against cultural assimilation and to the extent of the economic and prestige differences between classes cultures and regions.

Under modern conditions the mere fact of cultural or racial differences in a population may be thought of as constituting an invitation to nationalism. The nation is so much a part of the European culture that Tom Nairn (1974) opened a discussion of Scotch nationalism by inquiring why there had not been Scotch nationalism until recently. Black nationalism in the United States has been endemic since early in the nineteenth century.

Measuring Nationalism

There is no accepted technique for measuring scientifically the extent and intensity of national sentiment.

In nineteenth century Europe, nationalism was redefined from the point of view of the bourgeoisie who were its main purveyors. As Lenin pointed out, nationalism guaranteed the native bourgeoisie the internal market, and furnished them a means of protecting their interests abroad. The nationalism that led to the unification of Germany and Italy was clearly of advantage to their respective bourgeoisie.

The Ethics of Nationalism

In the middle of the eighteenth century, before the term 'nationalism' came into general use, Rousseau defined patriotism in such a way as to make it coincide with ethical behaviour. In his theory, the goal and sanction of political activity was not the aggrandisement of the state but the welfare of the population, as determined by the General Will. The individual, to Rousseau, had a duty to the formation of the General Will (thus democracy was tied in with the idea of patriotism) and a corresponding duty to abide by the General Will once that had been established. Rousseau deliberately labelled this ethical duty 'patriotism' appealing to an emotional laden motive as sanction for what was essentially ethical behaviour. Patriotism was presently identified with nationalism. The association of democracy with nationalism was reinforced when the French Revolution was threatened by invaders.

The nationalism of the enlightenment was by and large rational rather than emotional in spite of two overtones of Rousseau's 'Patriotism'. But another kind of nationalism grew up at the end of the eighteenth century. It was based on culture and traditions. Into it too Rousseau's thought entered. Rousseau had developed the antithesis between the primitive and the artificial, with the former getting the more favourable treatment. The idea was picked up and applied to the nation by early German romantic nationalists such as Herder and Fichte. The nation, they said, was a work of nature and therefore, something sacred, external, organic, carrying a deeper justification than the works of men (Kohn, 1944, 381, 351-52). This idea of the nation as distinctly European has no relevance to the problems of newly formed nations as most of those in Africa,

where the state preceded the nation and conditioned its whole existence.

Nationalism and Democracy

The proposition that nationalism 'tends' to be associated with democracy (Hans Kohn's phrasing) has been a favourite idea of liberals; it is perhaps thought that the favourable connotations of democracy will rub off on nationalism morality by association. So, it becomes a matter of some interest for us to establish. (1) Whether democracy and nationalism do indeed tend to be associated and (2) whether such association, where it does occur, makes nationalism ethical or more nearly ethical, we are thinking now not of the patriotism described by Rousseau, which was ethical by definition, but of nationalism as it came to be known in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and subsequently.

A nationalist movement is ethical and democratic as long as it fights seriously for the rights of the underdog. But in this day and age this must mean that nationalism, in order to be ethical must be anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist. As pointed out so well by Rogers Debray nationalism much involve revolutionary socialism and socialism must involve revolutionary nationalism. It is not possible to think of one without the other (pp 4-33) (Toward a Marxist Theory of Nationalism, Horace B. Davis, Monthly review Press, New York and London 1978)

Above observation pertain to the peculiar features of western society and the emergence of nationalism and democracy in European context. Now we will attempt to understand the peculiar features of feudalism in our country and the subsequent development that contributed to the

rise of western domination and subjugation of the Indian society.

Tributary mode of Production

In Indian context one must keep in view the predominant role of the state in the context of tributary mode of production that prevailed in our society over a prolonged period and its decisive influence in shaping social and economic development in this country.

In Marxist theory as noted by Gabriele Dietrich and Bas Welerga in their classic work "Towards Understanding Indian Society". There has been an extensive theoretical and political debate on the Conco of an Asiatic mode of Production which over a period of time got the more functional name of a 'Tributary mode of production.' The need for such a concept arose in order to explain the character of ancient empires as in Mesopotamia, India and China. Here a strong centralised state was superimposed on traditional village communities in which pre-state traditions still were alive. This type of society differed basically from that of the Roman Empire based on Slavery and from Feudal Society with which European scholars were familiar. That is why it first was called 'Asiatic' till the term 'tributary' was introduced which names the main characteristic of that type of society, namely the extraction of surplus in the form of tribute to the state.

All societies have to produce a surplus in order to look after the needs of those who are unable to work. In tribal society a differentiation evolves in the course of which the chief and maybe also the priest are exempted from work. Slowly elite groups develop which claim a share of the surplus on the basis of their special function and status. However, as long as their

leadership roles are based on Kinship rules, we cannot speak in terms of a State.

State power gets established when a dominant group claims and exercises exclusive power over a fixed territory and all its individuals. In that case membership is no longer necessarily determined by Kinship. The development of State apparatus and the claims of the elite groups associated with it becomes an increasing burden on the population which has to produce a greater surplus to support the activities of the state, its royal family, officials, military, priests, and its constructions, palaces, pyramids, temples, towers and forts.

Romila Thaper's studies help us to get a better understanding of the role of the State in ancient Indian Society; 'Thaper' from Lineage to State. The transition to statehood took place when settlements became the foci of political power and trade, and developed into towns and wealth gets accumulated in the form of landed property whereas earlier, the wealth of chiefs was distributed as booty or as sacrificial offerings. The concentration of wealth requires military defence and enables military campaigns which go beyond cattle raids towards acquisition of other territories and towns. The emergences of the term 'rastra' derived from Raj, Rula indicated the shift away from clan - territory "Jonapads", to political territory including towns and town citizens.

The pattern of conquests by the Magadha state shows, however, that not all concerned territories and populations were integrated in the same way into the state-system. "Hegemony was extended over a range differentiated systems hunter-gatherers, chief ships, a variety of peasant tenures and exchange relationships extending from barter to

nascent market systems (Thaper p. 1 to 9). Ever the Mauryan, state did not restructure all the areas under its control for that reason a distinction may be made between a 'metropolitan state' based on a core region and subservient 'peripheral region' which paid taxes and tribute but were otherwise not integrated into a uniform pattern. The *Arthashastra* gives an impression of the range of tributes and possible sources of taxation which justify talk of a tributary system.

The history of the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires appears to have taken place without social and economic life changing very much. This has led Karl Marx to see the never changing village communities as the 'Solid Foundation' of who in his days was called "Oriental despotism" K. Marx "The British Rule in India in; colonialism" Max Weber attributed this non-changing continuity to the role of caste as the core institution. Through which Indian society reproduced itself. That would mean that religion, represented by the Brahman elite, played the key role, rather than kings and political power, structures. This view is endorsed by Louis Dumont who holds that the political power and economic domains of social life are encompassed by the religious (L. Dumont, *Homa Hierarchisuoct*). However powerful the kings might be they were inferior in terms of purity to the Brahmans and ritually dependent on them for legitimating their power. This can be seen from the royal gifts of land to the Brahmans.

Nicholas B. Dirks has challenged this approach in his study that Caste structure, ritual forms and political processes were dependent on 'relations of power.' State forms were powerful elements in Indian society, Indeed caste itself was shaped by political

struggles and process" (Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown, Ethno history of an Indian Kingdom (Bombay QI. 1989) p. 31*)

Francois Houtart and Genevieve Lemercinier discuss the role of religion in the legit motion and reproduction of the tributary system using their distinction of three social functions of religion;

- a) The symbolic reading of the relationship of men to nature.
- b) The symbolic reading of contradictions in social relations.
- c) The reflection on origin - finality and meaning of life

Given the relative autonomy of village life tradition, animist religiosity regarding the relationship to nature continue rather undisturbed. As long as the role of the king is considered as the continuation of the role of the chief and the payment of tribute as an exchange of services based on some reciprocity it suffers to understand the king as a father - figure and protector. But when the state becomes exploitative and destructive and imposes too heavy burdens, new ideological justification are needed (Houtart / Lemercinies, *The Great Asiatic Religions, op. Ct. 84*) Myths of divine origin or manmade from heaven and rituals which dramatise the role of kings in upholding the cosmic order are well known from Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, India and other places. The ideological - theological struggle in Israel to overcome the ideology of divine kingship and to replace it by other forms of legitimation provide an example of the problems involved.

In the case of the Pallava Kings in South India, during the sixth to ninth centuries provide account of how kings are presented as having descended from either Vishnu or Shiva. This relationship is sealed by great gifts of

land and wealth to Brahmins and temples

Feudal Society

The concept of Feudal Society is based on a type of Society which existed in Western Europe in the Middle Ages (approximately 9th -14th Century). As far as India is concerned, scholars differ as to where when and to which extent to apply the concept of Feudalism to the study of Indian social history. In a loose sense the word "Feudal" or "Semi-feudal" has been used to label pre-capitalist forms of dependency and exploitation.

Early Feudal Society between the 9th and 40th century was characterised by a low land of subsistence production, under hazardous conditions, a security of currency and a weak state was hardly able to protect the population against invaders. It was under such conditions that non-monetary ties of dependency evolved and shaped the structures of society.

As in other traditional societies Kinships ties were very important in Feudal Society. But they were not sufficient to protect the individual. Since village community and state were also unable to give sufficient security, people sought personal protection from those higher ups in exchange for service. This form of personal dependency or human nexus permeated all classes of society.

In the course of time this developed into two different types of dependency. Peasants became 'serfs' i.e. they had no longer the freedom to choose their lord. Their attachment became heredity. Their lords, on the other side, became "vassals" or 'Knights' of counts or other masters.

Marc Bloch summaries the features of Feudal Society in Europe as subject peasantry; widespread use of the

service tenement instead of slavery; the supremacy of a class of specialised warriors; ties of obedience and protection and in the midst of all this the survival of other forms of association, family and state (Marc Bloch, Feudal Society Vol. 1 the Growth of Ties of Dependence Vol. 2, social classes and political organization (London 1965) *ibid* p. 446)

In Medieval Europe there was an identification of church, Christian dominant Society. Society was seen as a 'Christian Common Wealth', over which the Pope held the highest authority. The 'papal monarchy' was an attempt to recreate the Roman Empire on a religious basis (S.W, Southern Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages (Penguin 1970))

Scholars differ in applying the concept of Feudalism to the history of social formations in India. Specific studies of different regions and periods are needed, as patterns have widely differed depending on economic, political and other factors. The only generalisation which can be made is that especially in irrigated areas, a class of landlords, developed between the State and the peasantry, and the burden of exploitation landed to be laid on agrostic labourer castes. But the relative strength of the state of the Brahman priests of the landlords of the servile peasantry and of the bonded labourers differed from place to place.

R. S. Sharma has studied "Indian Feudalism" in North India in comparison with European Feudalism. He notices the phenomenon of granting lands including the rights of fiscal and judicial control over the people living in the Gupta and Post-Gupta period, the difference with Europe being that these grants were not given to warriors but to priests and temples. The emerging society was

marked by the appearance of a 'substantial' class of landlords and a numerous class of servile peasantry. (R. S. Sharma Indian Feudalism A. D. 300-1000, Delhi Macmillan 1980 pp 60) He regards the pre-Muslim period as the classical age of feudalism in India whereas according to him, "the direct control of the landed intermediaries over the peasants" got loosened under the Mughals. He regards the pre-Muslim period as the classical age of feudalism in India whereas according to him, the direct control of the landed intermediaries over the peasants got loosened under the Mughals (*ibid*. P 225). Kosambi speaks of a "Feudalism from below in the late Mughal period, when a class of landowners developed within the village, between the state and the peasantry." he emphasizes as differences with European Feudalism the absence of the manor system of artisanal guilds and of an organised church. Instead the caste system plays a crucial role. (D.D.Kosambi "An Introduction to the study of Indian History", Bombay 1975 P. 295)

As in Europe, religion played a crucial role in the reproduction of the type of society with its disparities and inequalities. However, instead of an ethos of personal loyalty, the codes of behaviour and the sanctions for misbehaviours were provided by the caste system. It combines the ethos of Kinship-solidarity with a rigorous system of subordination. A caste based division of labour and set of obligations rather than personal bondage, structural society.

Tributary mode of Production

The tributary mode of Production refers to the type of society in which the state plays a dominant role. It is

impossible to discuss fully the various theories about the origin of the state. Surveys of such theories point to a range of factors, various combinations of factors, differing from situation to situation. Social stratification development of private property and classes, the need for irrigation works, the role of urban centre and trade, the need for defence or the drive for conquest are some of the factors mentioned.

In Marxist theory there has been an extensive theoretical and political debate on the concept of an "Asiatic mode of production" which in the course of time got the more functional name of a 'Tributary mode of production' C. B. Wiefenga, Marxist views on India in Historical perspective (Madras c2s 1976). The need for such a concept was felt in order to explain the character of ancient empires as in Mesopotamia, India and China. Here a strong centralised state was superimposed on traditional village communities in which pre-state traditions were still alive. This type of society differed basically from that of the Roman Empire based on slavery and from Feudal Society with which European scholars were familiar. That is why it was first called "Asiatic" till the term 'tributary' was introduced which names the main characteristic of that type of society, namely the extraction of surplus in the form of tribute to the state. (Towards understanding Indian society by Gabriel Dietrich & Bas Wielanga with centre for social analysis team. Tamil Nadu Theological seminary, Madurai - 625010, 1977pp 76-78)

Freedom struggle an Indian National congress and freedom struggle

The Indian National Congress, the premier political organization of the

Indian People, had its first session in Bombay in 1885. This congress was attended by almost all outstanding leaders of Indian nationalism.

The liberal intelligentsia who dominated the congress from 1885 to 1905 were the leaders of the Indian nationalist movement in its first phase. There were such distinguished figures among them as W. C. Bannerjee, Anand Mohan Bose, Lal Moahn Ghose, A.C. Mazumbar, Rash Bihari Ghose, Surendra Nath Banarjee and R. C. Dutt from Bengal; Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, Apte, Agarkar, Telang, Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, D.E. Wachhr Malabai and Chandvarkar from Bombay; P.R. Naidu, Subramannya Aiyar, Anand Charlu and Virranghava Charier from Madras; also Keshav Pillap, Pandit Malaviya and Pandit Dhar. Liberal Englishmen like Hume Wedderburn and Henry Cotton also played a significant role in the development of the Congress organization and its activities.

From the above list of luminaries practically from all parts of India were present right from the inception of the Indian National Congress. In this the congress had a genuine national character and rightfully reflected the sentiment of the representatives of this country and thus had a national character and representation from its inception.

The congress passed resolutions formulating for the first time demands by a national organization, such as the abolition of the India Council, simultaneous examinations for the I.C.S. and the raising the age of candidates admission of elected members to existing legislative councils and creation of Councils in the N.W.F.P., Oudh and the Punjab.

Thus the demands of the first congress started and directed by the liberal politicians were modest and restricted to administrative reform and introduction of elective principle in legislatures. Further, Hume on behalf of the congress at the close of the session proposed cheers for Victoria, the Queen Empress, thereby stressing the loyalist character of the congress. Believing in orderly progress in all once with the aid of the British nation, the Liberals rejected all revolutionary, sudden changes and methods of struggle. To achieve their programme, they adopted the weapon of constitutional agitation, whereby they, on the one hand strove to reuse and educate the Indian people and of their democratic duty to meet them.

Regarding Its progressive role; Dr.Desai suggests "In spite of their numerous political misconceptions, the Indian liberals, who represented the interests of the development of a modern bourgeois society in India, played a progressive role. They were the architect of the first all India Political National Organization. They infused national sentiment among sections of the people, disseminated among them democratic conceptions, and popularised the idea of representative institutions. They exhorted them to feel as Indians, irrespective of all provincial or communal distinctions. They were passionate supporters of the spread of the rich democratic and scientific culture of modern Europe in India and zealously campaigned against the medieval obscurantism and authoritarian social structure inherited from the pre-British period. They stood for democratisation of social relations and economic advance through industrialisation.

Congress split in 1907

In 1907 the split in the congress between the liberals and left intellectuals took place. The cleavage was inevitable since the liberals, through steadily disillusioned about the British Government, did not accept the ideology and methods of the new nationalists.

After a stormy session for two days, the Surat congress, 1907 broke up in uproar. The liberals immediately organized a convention and fixed the following constitution.

"The Indian National Congress has for its ultimate goal the attainment by India of self-government similar to that by other members of the British Empire. It seeks to advance towards this goal by strictly constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration."

The extremists considered the adoption of this constitution by the liberals as an attempt to keep them out of the congress.

The Government repression increased after 1907. It passed the Prevention of Seditious meetings Act in 1907 and the Indian Press Act in 1910.

In Bengal, Bande Mataram, Yugantars and numbers of other papers were suppressed by the government. Outstanding leaders of the movement such as Mitra A.K. Dutt, S. Chakravarti and P. B. Das, were deported Aurobindo Ghose was arrested in 1908 on a charge of being connected with a revolutionary conspiracy but, due to lack of evidence was acquitted. Before he could be arrested on a fresh charge he left British India and settled in Pondicherry.

In 1908, Tilak, the indomitable leader of the new nationalism and the author of 'Swaraj' is my birthright and I will have it, was senesced to six years

imprisonment for an article published in his paper and sent to Mandalay.

In Madalay Jail, Tilak wrote the Arctic Home of the Vedas and Gita Rahasya. His books revealed his deep philosophical and historical interest and acumen.

The year 1919 was marked by a phenomenal growth of the mass movements. Political demonstrations, Hartals and Strikes were growing. The nationalist movement was acquiring for the first time mass basis. Political discontent was rising among the people.

The Indian National Congress met at Amritsar at the end of 1919. Tilak stood for a policy of Responsive Cooperation. C. R. Das held the view that reforms must be rejected. Gandhi had described his attitude thus; the reforms Act coupled with the proclamation is an earnest intention of the British people to do Justice to India and it ought to remove suspicion on that score---- our duty, therefore is not to subject the reforms to carping criticism, but to settle down quietly to work so as to make them a success.

The compromise resolution passed at the Amritsar congress suggested that "The Reforms Act" is inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing --- that this congress further urges that Parliament should take early steps to establish full responsible Government in India in accordance with the principle of self-determination. Pending such introduction, this congress trusts that, so far as may be possible, people will work on the reforms as to secure an early establishment of full responsible Government.

The political tension due to the "Unsatisfactory Reforms Act" the enactment of the Rowlatt Act; the Martial Law regime in the Punjab, and

the general repressive policy of the government was further aggravated in 1920 by what is known as the Khilafat question. The India Muslims were indignant at the terms of treaty by which Turkey, a Muslim state, was deprived of its homelands such as Syria, Palestine, Arabia and other Asiatic Zones of the Turkish Empire. They argued that their holy places were situated in these territories therefore they should always be under the rule of the Sultan of Turkey who was also the Khalifa or the religious head of the Muslims all over the World.

Gandhi and other Congress leaders supported the Khilafat issue and allied with Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali in organising a powerful Khilafat Agitation in the Country.

The Khilafat issue drew the Muslims into the orbit of the national movement. The Triveni of the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs and the invisible how of inadequate reforms----- enriched both in volume and content the stream of national discontent. Everything was ripe of Non-cooperation.

Tilak was not enthusiastic about the plan of non-violent non-cooperation, he however did not oppose or hinder it.

Epoch of Gandhi and Gandhism

The Non-cooperation movement signaled the beginning of the next phase of the Indian nationalist movement. Gandhi was the outstanding leader and Gandhism. The ruling ideology of the movement during this phase.

Gandhi dominated the political scene like a titan. His contribution to the nationalist movement was unique.

He was the first national leader who recognized the role of the masses and

mass action in the struggle for national liberation in contrast to earlier leaders, who did not comprehend their decisive significance for making the struggle more effective.

Gandhi evolved a programme of struggle which would mobilize the masses in the nationalist movement and such that various sections of the people-workers, peasants, capitalists, students, lawyers and other professional classes, above all women could actively participate in it. He thereby made for the first time, the Indian nationalist movement a multi class and mass nationalist movement in spite of its limitations due to his ideology. Under his leadership, the Indian people became heroic, patriotic and intrepid fighters for national emancipation. They enmass courted Jails and Bravely faced firings and brutal lathi charges of the imperialist police and military. Gandhi, in spite of his compromising stand, instilled into them undying hatred for the Satanic British Government and an unquenchable thirst for Swaraj.

He provided the peasantry with the programme of the non-payment of land tax to the government thereby threatening to paralyze the financial basis of the letter. He exhorted the students to boycott the educational institutions, the source of supply of administrative personal. He called on the lawyers to desert the courts so that the judicial machinery of the state would be deadlock. He called on the women to picket liquor and foreign cloth shops which they did in their thousands and in the process courted imprisonment. He asked the people as a whole to deliberately infringe the "Lawless Law" framed by the government. Millions of Indian at his call marched in demonstrations and assembled at illegal of bullets and Lathi charges.

It was an assuring spectacle that of tens of thousands of women, who for centuries were chained to the narrow domestic life and whom an authoritarian social system had assigned the position of helots at home, stepped out in the streets and marched with their male fellow – patriots in illegal political demonstrations.

While taking over and utilizing such methods as the boycott and swadesh from the previous phase, Gandhi evolved new and far more effective techniques of struggles to exert pressure on the British Government. Satyagraha, Non-cooperation, civil disobedience, both individual and on a mass scale, non-payment of taxes, open defiance of laws, deliberate courting of jails, mass demonstrations and hunger strikes were the principal weapons he added to the armoury of the nationalist struggle.

Gandhi was not only a colossus in the field of politics but was also an outstanding social reformers, he was permeated with profound humanism and was a against injustice, in all spheres of social relations. He denounced in words of blazing moral indignation, the barbarous institutions of untouchability, the age long crime of the Hindu society against its oppressed section. He passionately struggled for the liquidation of this most inhuman institution and made it even an integral part of his political programme.

He addressed powerful ethical appeals to the higher classes of the Hindus and endeavoured to awaken their conscience against this infamy of ages.

Gandhi was classical type of a nationalist and therefore an anti-communist par excellence. He

considered both Muslim and Hindu communalisms as antinational and anti-human and combined both these with all his indefatigable energy. He finally even offered his life blood as living oblation to the liquidation of communalism in the social relations of the Indian people.

Gandhi's interest was encyclopaedic and extended to all aspects of the life of the Indian nation. They embraced even language and literature. He enriched Gujarati, his own vernacular, popularized Hindi and left a powerful impress on literatures in various languages in the country.

With a views to implement this many sided national programme, Gandhi himself evolved and inspired others to train cadres of self-sacrificing professional workers. He also established a networked of institutions, social, political, economic and educational, where these workers would carry out various programmes elaborated by him on the basis of the principles of what is popularly known as Gandhism. (Social Background of Indian Nationalism A.R.rasai pp 307-348, Bombay Popular Prakashan, 1996)

British Conquest in India

Transformation of the pre-British Feudal economy was a long-drawn out process. It was mainly a result of the British Conquest of India, the political and economic policies adopted by the British government and the economic penetration of India chiefly by British capitalism in its three phases of development - trading, industrial and financial

British Conquest its causes

The political situation of India was extremely populations for its conquest

by a well-united economically and militarily more advanced, more advanced foreign power. The conditions of chaos and internecine war which ensured after the disintegration of the Moghul Empire favoured such a conquest.

It was however, as Dr. Desai suggests not the political domination of India but the use made of this domination by the British that had profound economic consequences for the Indian Society.

India had been conquered formerly many times but these conquest had led to a change in political regimes only so far as the basic economic structure of India was concerned these conquests did not affect it. With the self-sufficient village based on communal possession of land, unity of village industry and agriculture, the village as the unit of revenue assessment and finally village production almost exclusively for village use this economic structure of pre-birth India triumphantly survived, it its main outlines, for centuries of foreign invasions, military conclusions, religious upheavals and dynastic wars. All these events, however, spectacular and cataclysmic, affected only the social, political or religio-ideological super structure of Indian Society, but not its economic base. The self-sufficient village, in which practically the entire population lived successfully, survived the most violent political storms and military holocausts.

This stubborn survival of the economic structure of pre-British Indian Society, in spite of the numerous wars and invasions which mainly comprise the history of India is due to the fact that more of the invaders or belligerents represented a new mode of production

higher than the Feudal mode on which the Indian economy was based.

British Conquest its peculiar features

The British conquest of India was however, of a different nature. It was the conquest of India by a modern nation which has abolished feudalism in its own country and created in its place modern bourgeois society.

A capitalist nation is socially, politically economically and culturally stronger than a feudal people. Since capitalism is based on a higher technique of production than feudalism, a capitalist nation is economically more powerful than a feudal nation. A capitalist nation has a higher sense of poor patriotism and nationalism since; unlike the feudal people who are physically separated, socially disunited and politically unamalgamated; it is socially, economically and politically highly integrated living under one political regime and a single economic system.

The history of the progressive British domination of India is, therefore, at the sometime, the history of the progressive transformation of the feudal economy of pre-British India into a capitalist economy.

Historically Progressive Significance

It may here be remarked that the destruction of the economic disunity of India based on self-sufficient independent village economy and the transformation of India into a single economic unit by the introduction of capitalist forms were historically progressive results of British rule over

India. However, to the extent that this transformation was subjected to the economic requirements of British trading industrial and banking interests, the independent and untrammelled economic development of Indian economy was impeded. Thus the British impact both helped as well as hindered the historical progress of Indian society.

In fact, the Indian nationalist movement was the product of the pressure exerted by British interests on the free evolution of the Indian people and the various social classes composing it. This was done by subordinating the interests of such free and normal development to British interests by obstructing or restricting Indian industrialization by distorting her agricultural production, to meet the raw-material needs of British industries. In short, it led to keeping India as primarily an agrarian, rest-material producing colony of Britain and as a market for British industries. Indian nationalists, while admitting the progressive role of Britain in India in the initial stages also criticised her for basically retarding the free healthy, historical, economic, social and cultural advance of the Indian people. The very fact of the Indian nationalist movement being in opposition to Britain indicated the pressure of Britain on India.

Communalism

Sumit Sarkar while tracing the resist of communalism in Indian society traces its sectional consciousness, bred and largely directly fostered by colonialism, to religious division - Hindu and Muslim 'communalism' clear thinking on this very complex subject has been hindered considerably by the development in the twentieth century of two opposite stereotypes. The

communalist assumption of Hindus and Muslims as homogeneous and inevitably hostile entities, two nations ever since medieval times; and the nationalist counter myth of a golden age of perfect amity broken solely by British divide-and-rule. Born stereotypes assume kinds of country-wide integration and uniformity almost certainly impossible prior to the development of communications and economic connection in the second half of the nineteenth century. Indian nationalism and Hindu and Muslim communalism are in fact both essentially modern phenomena. Instances of local conflicts between Hindus and Muslims may certainly be found occasionally in past centuries, just as there are numerous instances of Shia-Sunni clashes and caste quarrels. But communal riots do seem to have been significantly rare.

That communalism in large measures sprang from elite conflicts over jobs and political favours, and scholars have generally concentrated on this level alone. Thus Robinson's exhaustive work on U.P. Muslims frankly excludes mass riots from its purview through its focus on elite groups. (separation among Indian Muslims p 6). But the tragic fact has to be admitted that communalism also acquired a mass dimension from an early date. Though a dimension obviously not unconnected with the activities of elite groups Hindu and Muslim elites were for instance, evenly balanced in the United Provinces and Punjab and it was in this region that riots were becoming increasingly common from the 1880s onwards. Socio-economic tensions might have been ultimately responsible in part. Thus Hindu peasants faced Muslim Talukdars and landlords in large parts of Avadh and the Aligarh - Bulandshahr region urban Muslim concentration in U.P. towns mainly

consisted of artisans, shopkeepers and petty traders while most big merchants and bankers were Hindus, while in the Punjab Hindu traders and money lenders easily became unpopular among Muslims peasants.

The link between elite and popular communalism was provided by the rapid growth of communal associations and ideological. The Muslim contribution here is well known the spread of tabligh (propaganda) and tanzim (organization) from 1923 onwards the Koht outburst of 1924, the revival of the Muslim League as Khilafat bodies, the murder of Swami Shraddanand in 1926. At its Lahore session in 1924 presided over by Jinnah (the first since 1918 to meet separately from the Congress), the Muslim League raised the demand for federation with full provincial autonomy to preserve Muslim-majority areas from the danger of Hindu domination, apart from separate electoral as a slogan that would remain basic to Muslim communalism, till the 1940 demand for Pakistan. It needs to be emphasized, however, that much of this was a reaction against the very rapid spread of Hindu communalism in these years. Tabligh and Tanzim were in large part a response to Arya Samajist Shuddhi and Sangathan and extended in 1923 by Shraddanand to western UP. In a determine bid to win back for Hinduism Malkana Rajput, Gujar and Bania converts to Islam. The Hindu Mahasabha, started of the Hardwar KumbhMela in 1915 by Madan Mohan Malaviya along with some Punjabi leaders had become practically defunct in the Non-cooperation years. A major revival which incorporated the Shuddhi Programme and called for Hindu Self-Defence Squads, represented an alliance of Arya Samajist reformers with Sanatan Dharma Sabha

conservative in a Common Hindu communal form presided over, as usual by Malaviya. While the emphasis on the link between Hindu and Hindi in much Mahasabha propaganda led to its specific appeal remaining largely confined to North India (86.8% of delegates to the 1923 session came from U.P., Delhi, Punjab and Bihar as compared to only 6.6% from Bengal, Bombay and Madras combined) a development of ultimately very great significance was the foundation at Nagpur in 1925 of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh by B.K.S. Hedgawar, an associate of Tilak's old follower Moonje.

Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags

The significance of the politics of Hindutva (ref to contemporary communal organization and movement not in the of Hinduism)

The frequent representations of Hindutva as a spontaneous mass movement in search of Hindu identity naturalizes and suppresses a whole history of meticulously organized efforts towards a Hindu Rashtra.

Over a long time period we have got accustomed to equating communalism largely with separatist trends among

the minorities. A communalism that claims to represent the majority community has the tremendous advantage of being able to masquerade as democratic and national, however, no majority is ever assumed to be permanent, or based on a single unchanging identity alone; a majority is constituted from issue to issue and can change from programme to programme. The majority that Hindutva claims to represent on the other hand, is by definition permanent, so far as it is constituted solely by the fact that 85 percent of the population are by census statistics, Hindu. The multiple identities within this category of caste, sex region gender class or belief are sought to be erased, and the organised forces of Hindutva arrogate to themselves a proprietorial right to define what Hinduism means. Thus old temples can be destroyed to clear the way for the VHP mandir at Ayodhya. The community, further is then embedded into the country and nation, the Hindu Rashtra.

(Ref. Khaki shorts Saffron flags, tracts for the Times - I – Tapan Basu, Pradip Datta, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar, Sambuddine Sen, Orient Longman, 1993, New Delhi)

BJP'S VICTORY IN 2014 LOK SABHA ELECTIONS: TURNING POINT OF INDIAN POLITY

A clear majority for the BJP in the Lok Sabha and its spread practically call over the country in the last general elections exhibits a sharp departure in electoral history of this country over a long period. As so aptly brought act by Suhas Palshikar and Suri, the BJP's success was made possible among other factors, due to its electoral strategy of reinventing social engineering in what may be termed as its second transformation. As a result, it secured significant support among the Other Backward Classes as well as Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe voters to gain a winning edge. Besides this, its promise of development and its projection of Modi as a strong and decisive leader attracted support among the lower and middle classes. This will have far reaching implications to the structure of party competition in the coming years and shape post-congress policy (Suhas Palshikar, K.C.Suri, "India's 2014 Lok Sabha Elections: Critical Shifts in the Long Term caution in the short Term – National Election Study 2014, Economic Political Weekly, Sept. 27, 2014")

The BJP, known its inception for its urban base, middle class, upper caste orientation was able to generate significant support from backward caste Hindus and Dalits. In 2014 Other Backward Classes constituted the largest share within the vote received by the BJP. The party also received a substantial proportion of the dalit and adivasi vote in different parts of the country. Thus, the party's victory points towards a transformation of the BJP. While electoral politics in India

has witnessed inroads of newer sections into the political arena, this becomes strikingly evident during the 1990's. This process has been aptly described as the 'second democratic upsurge' by Yogendra Yadav. Where in the weaker sections women, dalits, adivasi's and OBCs became not only crucial electors but began to claim share in power. This social churning produced new political formations and forced the older ones to adapt to the new social arena. The BJP has shown its readiness to adapt to this new socio-political scenario.

While the BJP did get a majority on its own, one cannot overlook the fact, that its overall vote share was only 31 percent. We should bear in mind that in India's electoral history the lowest vote share of a party securing majority in Lok Sabha was 41 percent Congress in 1967 and the Janata Party in 1977. Thus, the BJP's majority in the Lok Sabha is still based on a marginal electoral base

Rise of Modi

The National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) Victory and the BJP's rather unexpected absolute parliamentary majority were not merely celebrated by the party loyalist on the streets, but they were also celebrated, more privately and lavishly by India's capitalist classes. As Radhika Desai suggest, the only publicly visible sign of these more exclusive celebrations appeared when the prophylactically named sense stock market index hit an orgasmic high of 25,364.71 crossing the 25,000 mark for the first time. No

more good fortune was being celebrated; it was on achievement. Never before had India's Capitalists stood so solidly behind a single party. Never before had they contributed so massively to it and never before had any party in India spent more on its campaign than the ruling US president had on his.

While lac controls on campaign spending and a thriving black economy permitted the astronomical contributions, their effectiveness was multiplied by the RSSs. Organizational muscle, in the most high powered electoral campaign India has witnessed, Modi covered 3,00,000 kilometers by air, hold nearly 6,000 meetings and massive road shows and generally saturated the media and social media. If this were not enough, hi-tech 10-foot high holograms of Modi giving dozens of speeches were projected to as many as a 100 locations simultaneously while most commentators competed to find superlatives to describe the BJP's victory – “an electoral revolution”, a ‘turning point’, ‘new phase’ for India's polity, Economic & Political Weekly designated it as ‘The biggest corporate heist in history’

The heist has generated much more than the robbers could have dreamed. It boosted the BJP's vote by a stunning 12.2% compared to 2009 while driving down congress's vote by 9.25% when even these unprecedented movements left the BJP's vote share at a mere 31%, the magic of the first past the post electoral system came to the rescue. It translated this meagre vote share into a majority of seats (282 out of 543 or 52% of Total seats)

The Congress loss of votes, resulted into a loss of nearly 30% of seats in the Lok Sabha (from 206 seats in 2009 to only 44 seats in 2014)

The campaign was heavily weighted in the BJP's favour. The other parties had no matching. Money power fuelled by corporate money and Sangh Cadres enthusiasm, the campaign used communal messages literally, above all in Uttar Pradesh, which the Sangh Parivar had identified as the make-or-break state.

Comparing Modi's election speeches with talk shows of Hitler and Mussolini in the 1930s, Sumanta Banerjee argued that following in the footsteps of those two notorious global personalities, he has managed to project himself as the man for all seasons and all classes. He used the harangue of Hindutva when wooing votes in the cow-bets (where he barates against the enemies of *gomaata*) The rhetoric of economic development (Gujarat model) when addressing the corporate sector, the discourse of governance to assure the middle class voters of efficiency in administration, the militant bombast of defending the nation to draw support from the armed forces and their top brass, and invokes his childhood memories as a Chaiwala to solicit votes from the poor. Like his German and Italian predecessors, he also uses his fool soldiers - The Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) – Bajarang Dal Goons – to bulldoze into submission those who oppose him.

But there is a method in this contradiction in Modi's strategy and tactics, by which he had built up an image that has elevated him from a villain (of the 2002 Gujarat genocide) to a hero (of economic development) in the popular psyche. The mainstream media, bankrolled by the corporate sector, are fostering his electoral potentialities picking upon only these aspects of his party's agenda that suit them (like promise of industrial

growth) while ignoring the other controversial aspects (liked his promise to build a temple on the disputed site of Babri Masjid, abrogate Article 370, and impose a uniform civil code). The media hype around Modi is reminiscent of the role of the European press in the 1930s, when it continued to depict Hitler and Mussolini as amiable guys who were expected to defeat the communists, till the Axis powers reached right on the doorstep of the western capitalist states.

But while recalling the past and identifying the similarities, the same author points out that, one should take a more state view of the Hindu right in India today. It is not an exact replica of the fascist forces of the past. As its most powerful representations, Narendra Modi is refashioning the strategy and tactics of a populist chauvinist nationalism (the ideology that was followed by the Axis powers in their respective states in the 1930-40 period - and by the Hindu right in India) within the present order of globalization. He has developed a concept of neo Hindutva to suit the demands of the neo liberal economy while remaining loyal to the Sangh Parivar's basic strategy of establishing a Hindu theocratic state of Ram Rajya (a parallel to the contemporary Islamic project of creating a sharia based political order). Modi is coming up with tactics to accommodate foreign multinationals and the indigenous corporate sector. Under his leadership, the Hindu right is thus attempting a mix between Reliance and Ram Janmabhoomi. It is adopting the neo liberal order in economy, while retaining its core ideology of Hindutva to establish its hegemony in the socio cultural scene (Sumanta Banerjee, "The Resistible Rise of Narendra Modi", Economic and Political Weekly, May 3, 2014)

Dominant Role of the Provincial Propertied Classes

There are various explanations for the dramatic victory of the BJP in 2014 Lok Sabha elections. However, we find that the casual factors as brought out by Radhika Desai for more satisfactory as she suggest the key that unlocks this secret is an understanding of the role of the Provincial Propertied Classes (PPCs) and their parties, the PPCs. The PPCs originated in cultivator middle caste whom M.N.Srinivas dubbed the 'dominant castes' Jats or Yadavs in Uttar Pradesh, Marathas in Maharashtra, Patidars in Central Gujarat, Kammal and Reddys in Andhra. Capitalist development transformed then into capitalist farmers and then, as they acquire the urban and industrial interacts, into capitalists pure and simple. Their parties, the PPCs are often called regional parties and the label, had it been confined to then, would indeed have been very appropriate given that each middle caste does dominate a particular region. As it happens, however, it is used to refer to all parties with a less-than-national support base irrespective & their social character such as, say parties of scheduled caste. Since the latter often bitterly opposed to the PPCs thanks to a history of exploitative worker relations, the regional parties ends up being of little analytical use PPCs is therefore a more accurate term.

Originally the middle castes formed the rural base of the Congress, providing its link men, and their desertion beginning in the 1960s initiated "The long death of the Congress Party" it was rooted in the fundamental political contradiction of Nehru's developmental model - its industrialization plans relied on taxing the surpluses of precisely the middle

caste owner cultivators on whom Congress relied to win elections.

The definite early sign of the middle caste desertion came in the 1967 elections. Congress parliamentary majority dropped precipitously and it lost eight states to PPCs. Many early PPCs state governments proved unstable and short lived, however, and the decline of Congress and the rise and consolidation of PPCs in most states was drawn out over decades, with reversals as well as advances.

While middle castes deserted to form their own parties, there was a smaller exodus of upper-caste groups from Congress into right parties – Hindu Mahasabha and Ram Rajya Parishad as well as the Swatantra and Congress (o) – were displaced and the right came to be consolidated under the party of Hindutva, the Bhartiya Jana Sangh (BJS) until 1980 and then the BJP only the regional Hindu chauvinist Shiv Sena in Maharashtra now pluralizes the right.

If the PPCs desertion caused Congress's decline, their support for the BJP direct in the states where they joined it and indirect in others where their PPCs allied with it – has underwritten Hindutva's rise in recent decades. This is critically important factor that made Hindutva's rise possible. Upper caste support for the BJP would be politically important but it is electorally inadequate. It has been because of PPC support, indirect as well as direct that BJP has been able to break out of its original confinement in the upper caste urban party bourgeoisie of the Hindi heartland.

This development as Radhika argues has dispatched a key illusion about the PPCs that their provenance in the middle castes, with their history of anti-brahminism made these parties

resistant to Hindutva. However, anti-brahminism of the past had its own material basis and the new material reality is that the PPCs are the chief manifestation of the expansion of the capitalist class in India. So, ironically perhaps, Hindutva today is the ideology that unifies the expanded and more diverse capitalist class, bridging the historically deep divides between the twice-born upper castes and the middle caste and those among its regions and languages.

In most parts of the country, on the right of the political spectrum we see a consolidation of the power of the propertied in one of two forms. Either the BJP has directly absorbed the PPCs into itself to become, quite simply, the party of the propertied as in Gujarat or it forms coalition governments with one or more PPCs as in many other states. By 1998, this advance in winning the support of the PPC directly or indirectly had brought the BJP led NDA power at the centre and since then, having proved that it can come to power and complete a full term, the BJP has become the preferred party of the capitalist class.

On the other hand, desertion of the upper and middle caste propertied has left Congress with an electoral base composed overwhelmingly of lower socio-economic groups - the Scheduled Castes. The lower and poorer middle castes without substantial property, Scheduled Tribes and minorities rather than settle down to giving authentic political articulation to these groups interacts, it has sought to keep them loyal with a minimum of welfarist measures and use such elect ability as this can muster to try to regain its position as the party of the capitalist class and the upper and middle propertied class and caste generally. Given the regional Quarantine of the left, such a politically schizophrenic

Congress has lost India's poor and marginalized with no authentic political representation, only populist promises, and their repeated betrayal, in most of the country. (Radhika Desai: - A halter – Day fascism? Economic & Political Weekly, August 30, 2014)

BJP under Modi's Leadership in Power Threat of Fascist Take Over

In this context it is quite relevant to some broad characteristics of the fascist state. Marxist as well as non-Marxist Scholar have noted some important features of the fascist state as observed since the rise of fascism in Europe after first world war.

- 1) Fascism in power, distinctive form of the modern state - extreme centralization of political power and as a logical corollary, its exceptional degree of autonomy from other major power actors and forces.
- 2) The two undisputed example of fascism in power Italy and Germany with their antecedent movements – plethora of such movements in Europe during the interwar period constitute the primary empirical data.
- 3) Fascism is a strong form of authoritarian nationalism. Fascism is always an authoritarian nationalism but he reverse does not hold good.

Common features of style and organizations

- i) Charismatic leadership central to all fascism
- ii) There is the exaltation of youth and the youthfulness of fascist leaders.
- iii) Violence is glorified and militarization of political behavior and relationships

- iv) Political meetings are carefully choreographed to arouse maximum emotions through evocative symbols
- v) Muscularity is stressed.

As Nicos Poulantzar noted a fascist state is, like a Bonapart list one or military dictatorship, an exceptional form of capitalist state, what distinguish it from the other two is that it is able to supplement state power with its own autonomous political force – such as the fascist or Nazi movements or the RSS – in the service bourgeois interests whether the Modi government crosses the bounds of constitutionality or the norms of bourgeois rule – which in India, with its everyday police brutality, Judicial malfeasance and executive and legislative corruption, are admittedly rather wide in any case – to become an exceptional state, and whether it supports as supplements state force, with Sangh Parivars goons, and does so in ways that assert their autonomy from a capitalist backers remains to be seen.

As Eric Hobshawm pointed out fascism in Inter-war Europe was part of wider resurgence of right forces that included traditional conservatives, an anti-liberal corporatist right and the religious right, such resurgence is unmistakable today as part of the general sense of crisis everywhere except Latin America. Europe is now home to avowedly neo-Nazi forces whose mass base expanded thanks to the installation of unelected governments to follow the decals of the European Commission and the European Central Bank not to mention the garden variety authoritarian governments pursuing austerity. Elsewhere, as in Thailand of Egypt, we witnessed the remarkable spectacle of social movements demanding the

curtailment of democracy in favour of military rule.

Fascism, it should be noted, emerged in Europe in the era of monopoly capital and state regulation and today's neo-liberal capitalism is prima facie practically its opposite: based on free markets, and a minimal state. In reality, however, free market the tortoise has promoted giant corporations and even expanded their political roles such that they increasingly invade the sphere of the public authorities. While, for decades, neo-liberal policy was successful in securing new sources of accumulation for a moribund capitalism in this fashion, amid an interminable stagnation in the advanced industrial world, it is clear that, it can no longer do so. So in its austerity phase neo-liberalism is charged with its most uphill task yet; legitimizing a capitalism it can no longer revive.

In this context it is imperative to refer to Jairaj Banaji's critique of the traditional left theory for the rise and success of fascism in global context. As he suggests, much of the left still subscribes to the view that fascism is primarily a product of the manipulations of capital or big business. There are several things wrong with this view. It ignores the political culture of fascism and fails to explain how and why fascist movements attract a mass following. It embodies a crude instrumentalism that conflates the financing of fascist movements sections of business with the dynamics of fascism itself. It also views fascism in overtly pathological terms, as abnormally, thus breaking the more interesting and challenging links between fascism and 'normality' finally, it contains a catastrophist vision: it sees fascism as a kind of cataclysm, like some volcanic eruption or earthquake, a seismic

shift in the political of fascism has been a gradual, step-by-step process where the fascist elements penetrate all sectors of society and emerge having built up the groundwork. So, if we in India have anything to contribute to a theory of fascism, parts of the contribution lies in disproving the catastrophist elements. This still leaves the other two perspectives, 'instrumentalist' and 'pathological'. This still leaves the other two perspectives, which Jairaj calls 'instrumentalist' and 'pathological' respectively. Both are dangerously wrong and part of the reason why the left has failed to establish a culture of successful political resistance to fascism.

In contrast to this traditional left view, Jairaj refers to another group of theories of fascism emanated from a left outside the Comintern, one by Wilhelm Reich who was practicing psychoanalyst in Berlin in the early thirties. Reich must have come across literally hundreds of active supporters of Nazism. He was a committed socialist who fled Germany when it became impossible to live there, and died ironically, in a use just in 1957.

Arthur Rosenberg, a historian, was a communist deputy in the Reichstag in the mid twenties, wrote a brilliant essay on fascism in 1934, called 'fascism as a Mass Movement'. Reich's book was called *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* and first published in 1933. These two works provide a very quick different view of fascism. The question Banaji raises is what allows for the construction of a mass base by radical rightwing parties? To answer these questions it is not enough to have to say, fascism necessarily presupposes a worldwide economic crisis or fascism is a product of economic crisis.

German society in large parts had been 'fascized' the preparatory groundwork was ready for some charismatic leader or party to come along and 'retotalized / incarnate those legacies to create the kind of political catastrophe that was created in the 1950s. the groundwork had been intensively prepared, through in an uncoordinated and dispersed fashion by for instance, the ----- Action groups that were active in the twenties, organizing programs and spreading hatred against the Jews; by the numerous organizations of demobilized veterans who experienced Germany's defeat in the war as a terrible national humiliation, a blow to the trice of al Germans. There were within the top ranks of the German army, which had suffered defeat, many who were implacably opposed to democracy, to the November revolution and its overthrow of the monarchy. There were numerous radical right-wing organizations prior to the Nazi party that prepared the ground for the success of the Nazis.

Rosenberg's essay was actually an appraisal, which indicated that fascism largely reiterated ideas that were wide spread in European Society well before the First World War. He saw the conservative elites of 19th century Europe adjusting to the era of pertinenting democracy and mass politics with an aggressive nationalism divested of its liberal overtones, canvassing support for strong states wedded to expansion abroad and abroad and containment of the labour movement at home and unashamedly willing to use anti-Semitism as a way of preventing middle-class voters from moving to the left (Weiss, conservatism in Europe 1770-1945, p-89). The more traditionalist elements in Europe's ruling elites succeeded in defeating the liberalism of 1848 with a populist conservatism that could goner

parliamentary majorities with xenophobic appeals and patriotic agencies.

What replaced the discredited liberalism of the 19th century were new ideologies of the Right, and it is against the background of those ideologies (fascism, militarism, imperialism and the cult of authority) that we need to situate the emergence of fascism in Europe. Banaji in this context suggests that fascism has to be constructed culturally at three levels. The first among these, the level that Rosenberg's work points out to, is nationalism. The Rational core of every fascist ideology is nationalism. Fascists movements deify the nation, so that fascism can even be seen as projecting itself as a sort of 'secular religion' and does this all the more effectively insofar as the vocabulary (artefacts, myths, rituals, symbols of that) deification is borrowed from religion itself. So when people ask themselves how we fight fascism, one way of fighting it is by confronting nationalism and beginning to build an opposition to it.

The second level of deconstructing fascism and offering elements of a framework is cultures of authoritarianism and repression, be it social repression, family repression, or sexual repression. For instance, the emergence of a feminist movement in 1960s and 70s.

The third and final level has to do with fascist use of what Satic (following Riesman) calls, other direction, and with violence as common praxis, that is, organized action or the 'common action' of organized groups. Rosenberg realized that the peculiarity of fascism not in its ideology, which was widespread by the turn of the century, but in its use of the 'strum trapper tactic'. A form of genocide or ethnic

cleansing is implicit in the programme of every fascist movements, as it is in that of the, whose longest serving Sarsangh chalak even glorified 'German race pride' and the extermination of the laws.

Organized groups (criminal organizations) fabricate religious mythologies to spur campaigns of genocide. Mobilization of violence in the savage campaigns of hate propaganda directed against Muslims in India, genocide becomes 'virtual', 'totalizing' propaganda creates an enemy whose extermination it posits as possible justifies or advocate openly.

Scapegoating, racism, and virtual genocide form the third level; all of these require detailed, intricate, elaborate organization and point to fascism as the concerted action of organized groups working on serialities.

Thus, Banaji suggest framework consisting of these three levels. Nationalism as the rational core of fascist ideology, with the 'nation' conceived as some living entirely afflicted by democracy, infected by minorities, in desperate need of renewal or rebirths, the level of male violence and male authority of repressive family cultures that indoctrinate women and youth in a passive and service attitude towards the 'further figure' (Reich) and root out of children everything that contributes to their humanity, to a sense of who they are as individuals (the capacity to think critically, to resist domination, to have friendships of their choice). In India, apart from gender repression, we have caste repression, the oppression of minorities, the appalling in difference towards children. Thus as culture we are replete with examples of subterranean repressive cultures in our society finally, organizes brutality or

violence as (common) praxis the fabrication of religious and racial mythologies and campaign of genocide as concerted praxes of organized groups acting on conditioning socialities other directions.

Effective resistance to fascism implies as Jairaj Banaji the articulation of a powerful, antiauthoritarian policies that encourages individuals to think cortically fosters relationships based on reciprocity promotes a social and political culture which values freedom sufficiently, and promote a social and political culture which values freedom sufficiently to resist and undermine the hypnotic spells of nationalism, hierarchy and serial domination (Jairaj Banaji, 'The Political Culture of Fascism' from 'Religion Politics and culture' volume brought out by Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, Mumbai - 2006)

Jairaj Banaji's critique of the traditional left appraisal of fascism exclusively the economic debate and the national burgees thrust for global expansion and building up their financial empire, deserve serious consideration similarly left neglect of other vital cultural and social factors that contribute significantly for the rise and success of the fascism is a serious flow and this lacuna puts serious hurdle in the effective resistance to struggle against fascism.

While appreciating the merits of his appraisal of the rise and decisive influence of the fascist for elements in Indian society, one can't overlook the serious flows or such interpretation for the rise and the success of the RSS and its political outfits BJP in capturing power in Delhi – Banaji for instance, focuses on nationalism as a major factor contributing in success of the BJP's expansion and finally capturing power at as all India level. While holding nationalism as a major cultist

for the success of the Sangh Parivar in this country, he implies deification or the motherland advocated by some early nationalist as Bankimchandra and particularly by Sawarkar Golwalkar and other leaders promoting the cause of Hinduism as they understood this category since thirties of the last century.

It is rather surprising and shocking how nationalism in this country could be reduced to the cult of deification or worship of the motherland even in the modern period. There was a sizable section mainly consisting of terrorist, in Bengal, that stood for worship of motherland as nation. Apart from that various Hindu cults and sects subscribed to this notion. But nationalism right from its inception in this country and several other colonial centers stood for the struggle of the emancipation of the country from the foreign or imperialist control. Nationalism in most of the while countries which were either politics or economically hinder the control of the pearliest nations stood for liberation from other control. In other words if implied struggle for the freedom of the country from the imperial power. In this sense all revolutionaries who stood for the liberation of the down trodden also subscribed to the struggle for national emancipation. For the understanding position, we shall briefly refer to nationalism as evolved globally since over last two centuries i.e. from 18th century as eve of nationalism is historically linked up with the emergence and success of the bourgeois or revolution, against the feudal power and state.

Definition of the Term

The definition of nationalism has varied from time to time and from place to place. The attempt to bring together all of nationalism

manifestations appears to be an impossible task. As Roja Luxemburg pointed out, the terms, 'national state' and 'nationalism' are in themselves empty husks, into which all historical epochs and class relations pour there special material content.

One attempt to classify types of nationalism distinguishes four main patterns, each of which has been especially characteristic of some parts of the world, which have appeared in more or less chronological order. As per this order, there are four major categories as

- 1) The nationalism of people with a long experience of concurrent development of state power and national consciousness with citizenship determining nationality (Western Europe)
- 2) The nationalism of countries without a political experience of long duration but with a common language and a common self-image (Italy and Germany).
- 3) The nationalism of countries such as those of south eastern Europe, without a common political experience of long duration and often without an ethnically homogeneous transitory in which the religion of historical association is usually an important determinant of national conciseness and
- 4) The nationalism of anti-colonialism and of the drive for 'modernity' generally associated with the third world but manifest also in south-eastern Europe.

In Masscist theory, it has been by and large assumed that the interests of class predominate, and that the form of economic organization exercises a determining influence on the course of

events. As a consequence perhaps, little attention has been paid to a movement which is basically political and cultural. Social classes showed to be analysed afresh when the environment is different from that of nineteenth century Europe. And the part played by nationalist motives in the social upheavals of the thirtieth century has to be brought into focus and related to other movements. Sun Yat-Sen's dictum that nationalism is one of the three great movements of the last century along with democracy and socialism

In this context, it is not surprising to find the great revolutionary leaders of the twentieth century Fidel Castro, Fanon and even Mao Tse-Tung were first nationalist before becoming committed socialists. (Horace B Davis – *Toward a Marxist Theory of Nationalism*, pp 3,4,5,89 Monthly Review Press, 1978)

Thus condemning nationalism as a broad category as what apparently Jairaj Banaji appears to subscribe, seems little strange to us while condemning nationalism, Jairaj Banaji advocates for globalization and its great potentialities for the wellbeing of the human race.

As Prof. K.N.Panikar while referring to globalization aptly points out words often disguise what they really mean, particularly when they form part of an ideological effort in pursuit of hegemony. Globalization is such a word which is a euphemism for domination. It suggests something entirely different from what is an actual attempt to achieve. When post-colonial societies without post coloniality are being re-integrated into a global order it could only ensure the subordination of the economically weaker countries. Therefore, for countries like India, globalization only heralds subjection.

It might for America, Japan and Germany hold forth exciting possibilities.

That globalization became a programme only in the 90s and not in the 50s and 60s is of some significance. The collapse of the socialist bloc paved the way for the capitalist forces to launch a new era of conquest. They had no opposition, only themselves to contend with the best and easy is to share the spoils and hence the universal outlook of contemporary capitalism.

Resistance to this movement of capital would be normally expected from countries like India which has since independence, adopted self reliance as the cornerstone of its economic policy. What is happening now is the reverse, which requires some explanation. The Nehruvian perspective of development with an elaborate permit license system was galling to the self seeking bourgeoisie and middle class pinning for an existence defined by the values of consumerism. They envisioned emancipation in liberalization and possibilities for their uninhibited growth in globalization. It was eloquently articulated by an advocate of structural adjustment and vice-chairman of a multinational corporation when he described liberalization as "Second Freedom". The new freedom is limited to the bourgeoisie and inconsequential, except in adverse terms, to the majority of Indians.

Cultural Implications

Cultural seems to be an arena in which multinational organizations are particularly active it is reminiscent of the trade preceding the first stage of colonialism. The powerful cultural onslaught the third world countries are experiencing today is an

attempt to establish cultural imperialism as a precursor to embracing domination. Through the imposition of the culture of capitalism, the third world countries are trained to prepare the ground for, in Theodor Adorno's phrase, an 'administered world' to which corporate capital would have easy access. The cultural imperialism thus provides the groundwork for exploiting the market potential of third world countries. Not that alone the cultural products of the advanced capitalist block are themselves a driving force behind the contemporary cultural invasion. The culture industry is fast expanding in the capitalist west from pornography to pizza. In recent times there is a shift in investment in North America in favour of the culture industry, the immense potential of which is being realized by corporate giants. James Petras has done in-depth studies of the culture industry has calculated that one out of the five of the richest Americans derive his/her wealth from mass medias, the television, newspaper, fast foods, soft drinks, clothes and innumerable other cultural artifacts are proving to be attractive fields for capital. To be profitable they have to find new outlet too. The cultural onslaught is intended to pave the way these cultural products to conquer new the current cultural invasion has two definite dimensions hegemonisation on the one hand and instrumentality on the other. The cognition of either of these dimensions alone does not comprehend the total reality. Globalization achieves much more than cultural imperialism: it foregrounds culture as instrument of imperialism. In other words, culture acts both as a sword and mask.

For quite some time as Prof. Panikar suggests, there has been massive investment by several global agencies in the study of various forms of

cultures there are innumerable projects probing the popular cultural forms, imparting to them meanings unfamiliar to the people. It is reminiscent of the construction of Indian culture by orientalism which is in the final analysis served the interests of colonialism. Similarly, the efforts of the deconstructionist and post-modernists to deconstructionalise and dehistoricize culture are directly contributing to the hegemony of cultural imperialism by dissociating cultures from their sources of origin the new constructions snap its umbilical cord and thus create a space for the global forces to operate - the appropriation of indigenous culture and its commoditization are two sides of the same coin. The dances of the tribals, the harvest songs of the peasants, the martial arts of rural folks, and innumerable other art forms, are placed out of context, enacted in studies and presented as exotic and primitive practices. The ensuing cultural fossilization would be difficult to stem. The cultural homogenization occurring today would also be detrimental to cultural resistance against dominant classes within society. (Prof. K. N. Panikar – Globalization, Culture and Communalism Selected Reading on Religion, Politics and culture, Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, Mumbai 2004)

Similarly, the assumption that globalization implies as advanced stage of technological innovations and integration along with dissolution of national states is also quite inappropriate and dangerous. As brought out by Ellen Meiksins word, the conventional view of globalization seems to be based on assumption that the natural tendency of capitalist development and specifically its internationalization, is to submerge the national-state, even if the process is admittedly still far from over. The

internationalization of capital, in other words, is apparently in an inverse relation to the development of the nation state, the more internationalization, the less nation state. But historical record suggests something different. The internationalization of capital has been accompanied by the proliferation of capital's original political form when capitalism was born; the world was very far from being a world of nation-states. Today, it is just that and while new multinational institutions have certainly emerged, they have not so much displaced the nation-state as given it new roles – in fact, in some cases, new instruments and powers.

In fact, globalization itself is a phenomenon of national economies and national states. It is impossible to make sense of it without taking account of competition among national economies and national states carrying out policies to promote international competitiveness to maintain or restore profitability to domestic capital, to promote the free movement of capital while confining labour within national boundaries and subjecting it to disciplines enforced by the state, to create and sustain global markets not to mention national policies deliberately designed to for fest national. It needs to be added, too, that globalization has in large part taken the form of regionalization.

To say all this is certainly not to deny that the relations between capital and nation state take many different forms. The relations among advanced capitalist economies and among their national state are obviously very different form the relations between them and weaker national states.

The other side of the new imperialism is a new kind of militarism. This one doesn't generally have territorial

ambitions, and generally leaves nation-states in place. Its objective is not hegemony over specific colonies with identifiable geographic boundaries but boundless hegemony over the global economy. So instead of absorbing or annexing territory, this imperialist militarism typically uses massive displays of violence to assert the dominance of global capital – which really means exercising the military power of specific nation states to assert the dominance of capital based in a few nation-state, or one in particular, the United State, enforcing its freedom to navigate the global economy without hindrance (Ellen Meiksins Wood – *Unhappy families : Global Capitalism in a world of Nation-States Monthly Review Vol. 51. 3 July/August 1999*)

There is also enough evidence to justify the contention that the fascist state operates in favour of big business or monopoly finance capital. In this context earnest Mandal's observations are quite significant. As he points out, it is striking how feebly most bourgeois scholars tackle the problem of the "primary of politics of primacy of economics" which plays an important role in the debate over the theory of fascism, with laborious pedantry, they try to interpret this or that action of the Hitler regime, asking such questions as was it to the advantage of big capital? Was it contrary to the expressed wishes of the capitalists? They do not ask the more fundamental question – whether the immanent laws of development of the capitalist mode of production were realized or negated by that regime. It is essential to determine whether Hitler's dictatorship tended to maintain or destroy, consolidated or undermined, the social institutions of private property in the means of production and the subordination of workers who are freed to sell their labour power under the domination of capital. In

this respect, the historical balance seems to us clear.

Further as he argues, the attempt to comprehend fascism as a product of specific characteristics of particular peoples or races or of a particular historical past is scarcely more valid methodologically, one rises from individual psychology to national psychology without in fact explaining anything more than those factors which in the most general sense, permit something like fascism to appear. Neither the historical backwardness of Italy nor the Russian military tradition of Germany and certainly not the need for discipline or the "fear of freedom" can adequately explain the precipitous rise and fall of fascism during the period between 1920 and 1945. Often these arguments are clearly contradictory: while Italy was industrially a relatively backward country, Germany was the most highly industrialized nation on the European continent. If the, "inclination of discipline" was a basic feature of the 'German National Character' (traceable to the late abolition of serfdom in Russia), then what of Italy, among the most 'undisciplined' nations of Europe and wholly lacking in a military the tradition? As secondary factors causes, these elements have undoubtedly played a role in conferring on fascism in each particular case a specific national character corresponding to the historical particularity of monopoly capitalism and of the petty bourgeoisie in each particular country. But just to the extent that one grasps fascism as a universal phenomenon that knows no geographical boundaries and strikes roots all imperialist lands and can strike roots again tomorrow attempts at explanation that chiefly emphasize this or that national peculiarity are wholly inadequate.

The detailed investigation of particular interest groups and of the mutually feuding sectors of big capital as special bearers of fascism received particular impetus from the publication of the Trans outputs and supporting materials of the Nuremberg trials. Much of this material has confirmed what was previously known by intuition of theoretical deductions that heavy industry was more interested in Hitler's seizure of power and rearmament than light industry that the organization of Jewish capital played no significant role in the German economy. That the I.G. Farben trust was able to play a particularly aggressive and influential role in a series of economic and financial decisions of the Hitler regime and so on.

But it really isn't necessary to dig through a mountain of document to recognize that in the specific situation of Germany capitalism in 1934 manufacturers of canons, tanks and explosives would profit more from rearmament than would producers of underwear toys and pocket-knives.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that profit from all industrial and commercial enterprises rose from 6.6 billion (thousand million) marks in 1933 to 15 billion marks in 1938. But while sales of the Bremen Woolen Mills stagnated and sales of AEG (Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft General Electric Company) increased only 55 percent, those of Siemens were those of Phillip Holzmann, inc, increased six times and those of the German weapons and Munitions works rose tenfold from those figures, there clearly emerges a collective economic interests of the capitalist class one which is far from being a conceptual construction while at the same time, within the framework of this collective interests,

special interests arise and assert themselves repeatedly. And the proportion that capitalist private property always develops and grows from the expropriation of many small (and some large) property owners was not written in the epoch of Hitler, but rather was asserted on the entire history of this mode of production. (Eraest Mandal, Introduction to the struggle Against Fascism in Germany – Leon Tratsky Pathfinder Press, New York, 1972)

Rise of Modi And Corporate Sector

In contrasting to Germany of the post war years in twenties and early thirties. Indian situation economically and politically is strikingly different. In this sense there is no point in comparing Modi with Hitler or Indian situation with the German soam political or even economic scenario. Nevertheless the possibility of the fascist style of governance brutal suppression of any kind dissent invasion of Hindutva forces in all economic, social, cultural and political spheres, brutal attack in minorities, suppression of dissent in any form, open support for all policies promoting corporate sector, drastic reduction withdrawal of subsidies provided for the poor and marginal strata in urban and specifically rural areas, inroads of the RSS and its stooges in right from governance, to social, culturally educational and research institutes and host of measures adopted by the Modi government once coming into power clearly betrays its authorization and autocratic pro Hindutva mode of operation in no uncertain terms. In this context it would be interesting to examine the rise of Modi in Gujarat and the response of the corporate sectors to this adventurous and brutal policy against minorities and appraisal strata of society.

Rise of Modi and Corporate Sectors

Much is made of Modi's rise from humble origins. As Radhika points out, Modi was a typical Sangh recruit; an aspiring lower middle class, upper or middle caste boy for him, the RSS's Hindu supremacist, pseudo philosophy and hierarchy was reassuring, intellectually broadening and a step-up in life, a path out of the social and geographical background of small town general poverty and the class and caste barriers it passes for social mobility.

Modi remained within the RSS's disciplinarian confines, complete its ban on marriage, now a retired teachers living in his native Vadnagar was acknowledges only in his 2014 nomination papers having been kept from previous nomination papers and other official documents until then. He served all a *pracharak* or organizer and over time, emerged as the man who mediated the RSS. BJP relationship in Gujarat, he also played a leading part in organizing the crescendo of fanatical and violent mobilizations that revived the BJP's electoral fortunes from their low point in the mid 1980s, coming to enjoy familiarity with the top leadership of the party and particularly ingratiating himself with Advani.

In 2001 the Gujarat BJP's difficulties absorbing the middle castes were compounded by dissatisfaction with its governments handling of the Kutch earthquake and allegations of corruption local elections and state assembly by elections were being lost. Modi had been long lobbying for the Chief Minister's post and when the incumbent resigned, ostensibly for health reasons, Modi was the RSS's choice for the position despite his lack

of either legislative or governmental experience.

Modi became chief minister on 7th October, 2001 the day the war in Afghanistan began on 13 December terrorists attacked the Indian parliament. International and Indian Islamophobia were now combining to reach a fanatical pitch. A few months later, the genocide of Muslims in Gajarat followed.

So far, thanks to a severally compromised police force and judicial system in the state, the suspicious deaths of several key figures, including a member of Modi's cabinet and the lamentable failure of the supreme courts own special investigation team to interrogate Modi only one member of Modi's cabinet has been convicted of complicity in one of the major massacres. So, although Modi has escaped prosecution so far, thousands of victims still seek justice. Moreover, evidence of his governments of complicity in the events appeared sufficiently persuasive. For major western governments, including those of US and the UK, to deny Modi visas. While these bas were hastily left after Modi's stunning elections victory some unease remains.

Though Modi claims Gujarat a riot – free since 2002, communal riots have occurred with depressing regularity and continue to claim many lives a repressive ideological and cultural climate, especially towards Muslims and Towards critics generally, is maintained in the state in part serial of fake encounters between police and alleged 'terrorists' out to kill Modi; they also bolster Modi's personality cult. By never showing remorse for the events of 2002 and instead justifying the carnage as a measured 'reaction' to a never – specified action Muslims, Modi has made himself a lightning rod

for the condemnation of critics which has remained largely ineffective but which wins him the adoration of fanalies. He has also devised a strategy for deflection of the criticism into further favourable attention on himself.

The corporate leaders who toady have played kingmakers to Modi one should not overlook the fact that they had reacted to the 2002 events with revulsion. The Tata's, Azim Premji, the Godrajs belong to minority religious communities and like most Indians. Indian capitalist are not averse to taking pride and credit for India's secular credentials.

At a confederation of Indian Industry (CII) event in New Delhi organized at Modi's behest, corporate leaders condemned Modi to his face. Modi listened and then lashed out at their "Pseudo Secularism" and for maligning Gujarat. This formed the basis of the first prong of the two-pronged strategy that he now devised to turn condemnation of him and his government into an asset, Gujarat Asmita Gujarat pride or serve of serif.

From here on, criticisms or condemnations of him and his government would be faulted for insulting all Gujarati's. After the CII meeting, businessmen close to him, set up a rival organization, the Resurgent Group of Gujarat (RGG) and threatened to leave the CII for insulting Gujarati's.

The RGG demanded that the Gujarat Chapter of the CII resign for failing to protect the interests of the state. Faced with an open revolution a crucial state and its powerful business community, Tarun Das president of CII had good reason to worry more than 160 companies from Gujarat were threatening to leave the CII, which

would cripple the organization's presence in western India.

The Vajpayee Government in New Delhi also backed Modi up and has begun to limit the CII's access to its ministers, jeopardizing the group's core mission as a lobbying organization Das capitulated.

Tough love having achieved its purpose, Modi turned on the charm and the freebies now capitalists began receiving unstinting regulatory cooperation and extravagant giveaways from the Gujarat government. This was the alleged development of the Gujarat Modi the other prong in Modi's post 2002 strategy.

The hype about Gujarat's allegedly exceptional growth record has already been exposed and its deplorable human development indices brought to light and even in relation to growth, the Gujarat model is based on nothing remotely resembling a development strategy, only a fawning sub services to corporations amounting to a more or less complete handover of control over the pace and pattern of development to private capital (Radhika, Ibid).

Since after coming into power, in last almost two year, Modi government has introduced a series of measures in economic social, educational and cultural spheres that has seriously disturbed the lives of people from practically all strata of Indian humanity. Acceleration of the neo-liberal reforms of inviting foreign capital in vital areas as defense and

railways under the prefect of "Make in India" deceptive banner, labour reforms imposing harrier condition and increasing insecurity of labour and threatening trade unions survival, policy for denationalization of Banks and privatization of Railway Services.

Similarly, setting up now educational institution under the hegemony of Hindutva forces eliminating or curtaining the functioning of the autonomous institution like use and other educational and Research Institute of national and international reputations. Appointing RSS or BJP stooges, totally incompetent for the assignments given to them in prime research cultural academic institutions as ICHR, ICCR, National Education Trust and Prime Research Institutes Sciences and Technological other institutes.

Such authoritarian and autocratic steps of the Modi government has led to serious resistance from all quarters of Indian Society, right from rescores scholars, scientists, social sepense, academies to film stars and film Training Institute for film artists.

Similarly there is powerful resistance from labour against labour reforms, Bank employees against denationalization, farmers against hand acquisition.

In subsequent chapters we will attempt to examine these issues more exhaustively.

RISE OF THE BJP AND THE DECLINE OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

It is imperative to examine factors promoting the rise of the BJP and its present manifestation in the form of Modi government and the causes that led to sharp decline of the Indian National Congress in terms of examining the causes that led to the decline of the Congress right from the Seventies when Indira Gandhi took over the Prime Ministership in early seventies. The decline of the Congress and the rise of the BJP should be placed in this backdrop which has been in a sense a turning point of Indian history in the post-independence period. Unless we go to the roots of the decline of the Congress from this period, our appraisal of the present Indian political scenario would be quite inadequate.

Hence, we think it is advisable to make a cursory survey of post-independent India since the time of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, his dreams, aspirations and endeavors to reconstruct Indian society by carving an independent course of development which he thought is quite distinct from the western capitalist path and the totalitarian rise of Stalin under the leadership of the communist party in Soviet Russia.

We start with Pandit Nehru's aspirations for chalking out an independent just social or promoting economic and social development though within the broad framework of Capitalist society but which eventually paves the way for just egalitarian, social and economic order in Indian society. This was evident in his dream of a development model in terms of Indian

historical backdrop and needs, aspiration of Indian society. Undoubtedly he opted for a developmental model which was largely based on the western capitalist framework.

As aptly brought out by Gabriele Dietrich and Bas Wielenga in their profound appraisal "Towards understanding Indian society" published in 1997 that Nehru acted in the true spirit of the age when he laid the foundation for a new Just, egalitarian social order. He was convinced that political and economic development based on large scale heavy industry and overall modernization. Big dams, large scale heavy industry, large steel plants, later nuclear reactors and overall modernization became the symbols of that guiding vision of modern India. At the opening of the Nangal Canal in Punjab in 1954 Nehru said "The biggest temple, mosque and gurudwara is the place where man works for the good of mankind. Which place can be greater than Bhakhra Nangal, where thousands shed their blood and sweat and laid down their lives as well? Where can be a holier place than this, which can we regard as higher?" Quoted Darryl D'Monte in *Temples or Tombs. Industry versus Environment three controversies* (New Delhi CSE 1955P).

Convinced that it was for the "Good of mankind" Nehru presented modern development as a sort of Secular religion, placing economic growth and scientific progress along with social justice at the center of his humanistic outlook.

He made tremendous efforts to propagate this outlook on modern progress as the philosophy or ideology which should unite and guide the nation. Bhikhu Parekh identifies and discusses seven goals which according to Nehru are part of this overall goal of modernization, national unity, parliamentary democracy, industrialization, socialism, scientific temper, secularism and non-alignment. The underlying thrust is the appeal to reason, to scientific attitude. He tries to nurture "Scientific temper", as the mindset needed to solve the problems facing the nation. What else he argued, can unite the nation which otherwise would be divided along lines of religion, caste, language and ethnicity? This spirit he saw embodied in the process of industrialization, the harnessing of the force lying hidden in nature, the building of a science based economy and culture, and the ideal of a democratic, social society. He used all possible occasions and channels to propagate the national ideology

He succeeded in marginalizing the Gandhian approach and making his own approach the widely accepted framework of national orientation.

How this outlook with its civilization could become the ideological frame for Indian nationalism which was born from the fight against Western domination? Nehru's argument was:

- 1) Modernization is a historical necessity and the only way to survive as an independent nation in the modern World.
- 2) It is liberative, and the way to overcome traditional fetters, as it leads to higher potentialities that can be realized more fully.

Critics have pointed out the flip side of this national ideology of modernization. (Bhikhu Parekh "Nehru and the National Philosophy of

India", FPW, Jan, SIR 1991 the same 'Jawaharlal Nehru and the crisis of Modernization in Baxi / Parekh OP Chap 2) what happens ideologically is the same marginalization which we find in economic, social and political reality. This approach appeals to the Westernized intellectual elite, the industrialists, the urban middle class, those who find employment in the modern sector and may be a section of the modern Farmers. They may consider themselves to belong to the "Forward" forces in the march of the nation towards the future. The same ideology implied that the masses of people involved in traditional occupations or using traditional techniques were bound to be seen as ignorant, and retarded. This became the fate of peasants and artisans who were at the center of Gandhi's vision which affirmed the dignity of their labour. The gradual abolition of 'basic education' for the masses as promoted by Gandhi and the gross neglect of primary education is an expression of the elitist bias of this model.

(See Krishna Kumar in Seminar No 363)

The above observation provide a glimpse of the aspirations and the problems generated over a decade of the rule under the leadership of late Pandit Nehru, an ardent nationalist, who was also one of the main architects of the State after independence, a visionary who sought to provide a new model of development with thrust on Western model of modernization in this country and its neglect of basic problems of overwhelming majority of the masses living in urban and especially in rural Indian society. In any case Pandit Nehru was committed to democratic and egalitarian model for Indian society. Under his leadership the Congress party also more or less shared this vision of development for future Indian Society.

However, after his demise in 1964, the ruling Congress party experienced a profound existential crisis. The old guards were not willing to accept leadership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi and her vision which was partly influenced by the Communist party of India under the influence of Dange. Congress became a divided house between Indicate and Syndicate which was dominated by old established leaders like Morarji Desai, Atulya Ghosh and others, coming from different provinces.

Indira Gandhi managed to retain power with her radical programme with egalitarian thrust. But Allahabad Court judgment against her brought profound change in power equation and her declaration of Emergency, for the first time, accompanied by suppression of any form of dissent, any critical review or even mild form of democratic protest against imposition of the national emergency not only shook the nation but generated all-round discontent and a protest all over the country. Leaders from practically all opposition parties, including former Congress leaders like Morarji Desai who led the other wing of the old guard designated as Congress (O). Communist party of India dubbed as right wing party under the leadership of Dange surprisingly and shockingly supported the emergency. This critical and totally unexpected situation of the emergency where any and every overt or covert form of protest was ruthlessly suppressed and the leaders and activists of all parties, barring Indian National Congress, either went underground or were arrested. Jayprakash Narayan, leading socialist current in Indian Society, practically became a voice of the people and led a struggle against the Emergency, especially in the North.

The above narration does not deny new information or insight in understanding national situation prevailing during this period. Nevertheless our focus is on the decline of Congress party that was the only party having organization and vocal support countrywide. In a sense, the Congress was truly a national party that had practically no rivals either at the national or by and large at the state level.

Our basic concern is with the style of functioning of the Congress party and its typical organizational structure and leadership at a provincial and grass roots level.

Thus, much before the emergence of Sonia Gandhi and subsequently in under Rajiv Gandhi the Congress party had begun to experience a profound organizational crisis and a decline in popularity and influence and grassroots support at the state, district levels in many parts of the country.

Atul Kohli, a Well-known scholar of Indian polity and society, as early as the eighties, noted that the Congress party had lost its edge over Indian politics. Partly as cause and partly as consequences of its loss of control, Congress has experienced a profound organizational decline. This sprawling party once provided a measure of coherence across this vast and diverse subcontinent. Now after a number of splits in the party, Congress exists little more than in name. At its apex, the organization has been reduced to Rahul Gandhi, the heir of India's 'First political family', and a few hand-picked supporters. Nothing has dramatized this transformation more sharply than Rajiv Gandhi's criticism in 1985 of what remained of the Congress party. He blasted the 'Claws' that enmesh the living body of the Congress, chided their self-aggrandizements, their

corrupt ways, their linkages with vested interests and their sanctimonious posturing. He went on to complain that millions of ordinary Congress workers are handicapped, for on their backs ride the brokers of power and influence to whom dispense patronage to convert a mass movement into a feudal oligarchy, corruption is not only tolerated but (is) regarded as a hallmark by leadership. It is ironic that Rajiv Gandhi's scathing criticism of his own party was delivered in a speech to celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding (Atul Kohli, PP 5, democracy and discontent – Introduction P5 Cambridge University Press 1991.)

Further, the same author notes that the institutional decline of the Congress party has not been replaced by the development of an alternative national party. Thus, as he notes, there is currently a growing organizational vacuum at the core of India's political space. Until recently, India's first political family, the Gandhis had occupied some of this space, but their hold on power was slipping and the perception of their legitimacy eroding. There are very few mechanisms still intact for the resolution of power conflicts. Cabinet members had also come to be selected by Indira and Rajiv Gandhi for their personal loyalty and not for their ability or their control over an independent power base. Unmediated intra elite conflict has further damaged the Constitution, the federal system, and the election process. It has also undermined discipline within the bureaucracy, especially among the forces.

Below the established state elites, the vertical patterns of caste in India's civil society have been eroding. Members of higher castes and other 'big men' have gradually lost their capacity to influence the social behavior of those

below them in the social economic hierarchy. As a result, new social groups have entered the political arena and pressed new demands upon the State without a dominant party. Conflicts resolving institutions, democratic accommodation of such demands has been difficult without established law and order institutions. Moreover, the agitation and violence that have resulted from those demands has been difficult to control. The result has been a dramatic increase in political violence in and use of para military forces to deal with them. Thus, the current political situation features an outpouring of diverse social demands, ad-hoc and vacillating responses by the State, and a growing sense that order and authority, even democracy may be disintegrating in India (Ibid, P 6).

Thus, the Congress as an organized, united party was non-existent even in seventies. Its authoritarian style of functioning was evident during this period. . Hence, the disintegration of the Congress, its break up into regional groups, internal revolts and the centralized leadership controlled by the Nehru family not always in democratic ways is an old story and one cannot attribute the blame on Rahul Gandhi for the present pitiable state of the organization and the growing discontent culminating now in almost open revolt of the Gandhi family and specifically targeting Rahul Gandhi would not be fair and would amount to ignoring the entire past tradition and style of the functioning of the party.

The decline of the Congress and the rise of the BJP has to be viewed keeping in mind this entire historical context.

RISE OF THE BJP

Rise of the BJP can only be understood keeping in mind the declaration of the emergency in mid-seventies by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, that provided golden opportunity to erstwhile Jan Sangh to gain political prominence which otherwise was quite insignificant till mid-seventies. Even its public image with its noble role during the freedom struggle and highly authoritarian style of functioning could not win any sympathy or respectability among overwhelming majority of Indian population. Declaration of emergency provided golden opportunity to erstwhile Jan Sangh to gain political respectability and foot hold among masses during that period. Janta Party consisting of major opposition parties under the leadership of Jayprakash Narayan provided an opening to Jansangh which became an integral part of the Janta Party during this period. This in turn provided it with a golden opportunity to refurbish its image and emerge as a party with democratic, egalitarian credibility. This honeymoon or cocktail of different political groups proved to be of short duration and the Jan Sangh emerged as a Bhartiya Janata Party by 1980s.

Explaining the growing popularity of the political party like the BJP, authors of well-known work published by orient Longman Limited in 1993 very clearly and aptly brings out the causal factors for the growing popularity of the communal parties. They point out (Authors Tapan Basu, Pradip Datta, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar and Sambuddha Sen) “over a long time we have got accustomed to equating communalism largely with separatist trends among the minorities. A communalism that claims to represent the majority community has the tremendous advantage of being able to project itself as democratic and national. In democracy, however, no

majority is ever assumed to be permanent or based on a single unchanging identity alone. A majority is constructed from issue to issue and can change from programme to programme. The majority that Hindutva claims to represent, on the other hand is, by distinction, permanent, for it is constituted solely by the fact that 85 percent of the population are by census statistics, Hindu. The multiple identities within this category of caste, sect, region, gender, class are sought to be erased and the organized focus of Hindutva accord to themselves a proprietorial right to define what Hinduism means. Thus, old mosques can be destroyed to clear the way for the mandir at Ayodhya. The community, further, is then divided into the country and nation, the Hindu Rashtra. (4,1,2).

The homogenizing consequences of the claim to speak uniquely for community defined by religious identity alone is present in all varieties of communalism, but only majority communalism can change the nature of the Indian polity, subverting the basic principles of democracy and secularism. Majority communalism, furthermore, has been on the offensive in recent years and the vast majority of riot victims over the past decades have been Muslims (or in 1984 Sikhs) at Meerut, Maliana, Bhagalpur, Delhi and many other places, the very meaning of communal riot changed into something very like genocide with official connivance. Riots have become integral to election strategy: a clear correlation can often be seen, for instance between riot areas and constituencies where the BJP won in the recent election. We decided, therefore, to concentrate primarily in this essay on majority communalism, on Hindutva, studied through certain structural aspects of the RSS-VHP-BJP combine within Hindutva base. We

have attempted here to study its evolution from the RSS to the VHP, mobilisation on Ram, keeping in mind that it is the RSS which really constitutes the fountainhead of aggressive Hindu communalism.

As the heart of Hindutva lies the myth of a continuous thousand year old struggle of Hindus against Muslims as the structuring principle of Indian history. Both communities are assumed to have been homogenous blocks - Hindu patriots, heroically resisting invariably tyrannical, "foreign" Muslim rulers. Every element in this myth has been demolished by historians. If the early Muslim Kings had been invaders, so presumably were the Aryans. Nor could Muslim peasants or artisan be classified as a member of 'Muslim' ruling class. Conversely, many Hindu princes and Zamindars, were demonstratively a part of this class and proportion of Hindus in the highest ranks of the Mughal administration and military service (mansabdari) reached its maximum levels under the 'bigoted' Aurangzeb who then engaged in wars with other Marathas and Sikhs. If the Hindus alone (occasionally) had to pay the Jeziya, there were many other taxes for which only Muslims subsects were liable. There were many wars between Muslims and Hindus Kings, but extremely few instances, prior to the nineteenth Century, of what even dimly resembled the mass communal movements today. Modern secular historiography still mainly composed in English has a very limited reach in a subcontinent marked by mass illiteracy, generally poor and dated textbooks and now the attempt by the VHP and BJP to dominate oral culture through the audio visual and more recently social media.

The essential point that requires emphasis is that prior to the communicational and economic integration of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, sharply defined identities and animosities across large expanses of space had relatively little chances of development. There were occasional instances of local religious clashes, though there could be as well be intra Muslim or intra Hindu such as Shia Sunni disputes or conflicts between different Hindu Castes or sects. It is not accidental, therefore that broader identities of many types started getting consolidated roughly around the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. What came to be termed a communal identity (Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh) was formed alongside of and often conflated with regional, caste, class and 'national' loyalties.

Conclusion:

The Hindu right, particularly in its present incarnation, is engaged in fundamental forms of religious engineering and this is where its political agenda differs most significantly from other right wing formations. The distinction between Hinduism and Hindutva, between traditional religiosity and its perversion by communalism has, therefore, been asserted often, enough. In such polemics, however, religiosity is equated with a rather static, textual or anthropological view of practice and belief. Along with politico-economic changes, the contours of Hinduism as practiced by urban and rural middle classes of northern India (the present basis of Hindutva) have also been rapidly and visibly changing over the last two or three decades, providing favorable context for intervention by the organized forces of Hindutva.

Even before the VHP came into its own, there was an upswing in certain

new modes of worship and new sacred symbols. These included, among many other things, a proliferation of jagarans around mother cults like Jai mata Di in places more or less without such cults so far, a media invented Goddess like Santoshi Ma, devotional pop music, a rush to modern “Hi-tech” pilgrimages for the upper middle classes, like Vaishno Devi, and charismatic gurus or god-men, each with a distinct interpretation of Hinduism and salvational strategies for their respective exclusive clientele.

The new forms of religiosity from the 50s and 60s coincided with a visible decline in the importance of traditional sanyasi, saints and mahants. Within the middle class millions, perhaps this accounts for the easy success of VHP mobilization --- investing them with renewed authority. Hindutva is an ideological formation that draws a great deal of its power from the use of stereotypes and symbols.

The death of Niyogi, as well as the living tradition of similar movements, pose questions as to how, if necessary, they can extend the range of issues they pose. In other words, it leaves us with the problems of constructing an alternative culture of change. (Ibd pp 111 to 116)

BJP shift in policy and political strategy

Shift in policy and strategy of the BJP especially after the release of the Mandal Commission Report and the strategy adopted by the opposition under the leadership of late V.P. Singh deserves critical appraisal and it appears to be the reincarnation of the Jan Sangh in the form of the BJP, with its fresh appraisal of the national

situation and the emerging dominance of OBC leaders especially in UP and Haryana under the leadership of Mulayam Singh in UP and Devilal in Haryana.

BJP with its newly occupied mass base after the emergency with being the most organized and effective part of the Janata Party, its growing popularity after the Ratha Yatra of Shri Lal Krishna Advani and the demolition of the Babri Masjid and newly acquired extensive popularity of Ram along with growing popularity of Ramayan in T.V. serials, extensive spread of the Kar Sevaks in many parts of the Country and the growing popularity of the VHP and other organization of the RSS enabled the party to gain a position of the largest political party in the Eleventh General Election.

So far, the Hindu nationalist parties could make progress only on the basis of a militant strategy (as in 1967 and specifically in 1991) or of a nationwide seat adjustment (like in 1977 and 1989). For the first time in 1996, the BJP increased its share of representatives in the Lok Sabha in 1996.

In the 1990s, the BJP gradually shifted from the ethno-religious mobilization of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement towards a softer policy. This change occurred partly because the party leaders feared that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad would overshadow their organization and that they would lose control of the Hindu nationalist political agenda to those more extremist forces, and partly as a reaction to the BJP's defeat in several States of the Hindi belt in the 1993 State Elections. Obviously, many voters had disapproved of the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the ensuing communal riots. The Party showed a growing pragmatism in

1994-95 during election campaign in Gujarat and Maharashtra where it successfully employed a broad populist rhetoric and made corruption a major theme of propaganda.

In “March-April 1996, there was a debate between leaders of the Sangh Parivar (mostly from the VHP) who advocated a rather radical policy and the BJP leaders who were more inclined to adopt a moderate agenda. The election campaign illustrated the BJP’s continued ambivalence between the militant strategy and the moderate one, reflecting deeper tension between ideological purity and pragmatism in the Hindu nationalist movement.

This dilemma of the BJP and its pragmatic resolution is ideally brought out by Christophe Jaffralot in his essay “BJP and the caste barrier: Beyond the Twice-born?”

The author aptly points out the upper caste character of Hindu nationalism has become a great handicap for the BJP. In the 1990s because of the growing political consciousness of the low castes in the wake of the ‘Mandal affair’, the party could not ignore the OBCs which account for 52 per cent of the population and which were especially mobilized in its strongholds of North India. However, to endorse their grievances would have compromised its traditional support among the upper castes and would have implied acceptance of internal divisions in the ‘Hindu nation’ against which the RSS has labored for marathon seventy years.

The Hindu Nationalist Dilemma in the Post-Mandal Context.

The 1993 election results, when the BJP lost both Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh partly because of the OBC and Dalit Voters, led the party

leaders to promote a large number of low caste people in the party apparatus. In January 1994, Hukumdev Narain Yadav, an Ahir was appointed as special invitee to the party’s national executive and Uma Bharti, from Lodhisamaj, became Chief of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (The Youth Wing of the BJP). Uma Bharti looked at herself as representing ‘the poor’ especially the low castes and women. Within the BJP in 1997, she took part in the debate on the Woman Reservation Bill to contradict the High Command’s line by declaring that ‘if social justice has to be done, there should be quotas for women belonging to backward classes, and Dalits’.

The main advocate of the inclusion of the increasing number of low caste members all levels of the party apparatus was K.N. Govindacharya, himself a Brahmin and one of the General Secretaries of the RSS. He called this policy ‘Social Engineering’.

This position raised several debates in the BJP.

(BJP and the compulsions of Politics in India. Edited by Thomas Blom Hansen – Christophe Jafferlot, Introduction).

Dangers and Dilemma of Narendra Modi's Sultan in India

On the eve of Independence architects of Indian planning as well as the entire stream of the nationalist leadership unanimously were convinced that rural reconstruction is a pre-requisite for socio-economic development of this country. Hence, the major thrust of the first five year plan was on agrarian reforms and rural reconstruction through adoption of series of measures as land reforms, community development projects, democratic decentralization through the Panchayati Raj, Technological reforms through introduction of advanced methods of cultivation, irrigation, credit cooperatives, sizable allocation of resources and provisions in five year plans and building up institutions and infrastructure by a way of construction of roads, highways, and other means of communication. As a result of these measures, the State in this Country succeeded in creating not only new institutional structure and technological innovations but a substantial class of rich farmers or Kulaks who benefited from the institutional structure and technological reforms accelerated through green revolution in sixties, and seventies in this country. Hence, rich farmers and their movements led by eminent leaders like Sharad Joshi in Maharashtra, Mahendra Singh Tikait in UP and their counterparts in South could exercise decisive influence on the State policy and terms of the trade between agriculture and industry.

When leaders like Sharad Joshi and others, while leading farmers agitations in different parts of the country in eighties, argued that agriculture and rural society in India is neglected and urban and industrial magnates only have benefited through Indian planning at the cost of rural

India, which he called 'Bharat, it was stated that this is a gross misrepresentation of Indian reality. This could be seen from the fact that on irrigation alone, over Rs 12000 crores were spent during the sixth five year plan, where the returns are negligible. Similarly on agriculture and allied activities, over Rs 14000 Crores were spent during the sixth five year plan. Apart from this, billions of rupees were spent on providing infrastructure in the form of roads, electricity, transport facilities, educational and health amenities, cottage industries, and a host of other developmental activities. The total outstanding loans in agricultural sector were to the tune of Rs 15410 Crore in 1983. The lions' share of total state subsidies had gone to agriculture. As a matter of fact, through a series of measures beginning with the community development programme, consolidation of land holdings, irrigation facilities, Panchayati Raj, tax exemptions, subsidized inputs, higher procurement, prices, education and health services, construction of roads, cheaper credit transport facilities, supply of power, multi class associations, Nyaya Panchayats, and other, the Indian Government sought to strengthen the peasants proprietors lobby and thereby ----- the ever growing, insatiable aspirations of the rich farmers lobby in the country. These measures have succeeded in achieving limited growth of agricultural productivity compared to the stagnancy during the British period.

Neo-Liberal Era and Agrarian Crisis

Since 1990s under late Prime Minister Narasimha Rao regime the government opted for neo liberal policy reforms under the pressure of

the International Monetary Fund and Financial institutions such as the World Bank, World Trade organization for the release of the financial assistance to survive the Financial and trade crisis of late eighties. The New Economic Policy implies growth through promoting financialization, monetization and increasing reliance on insurance and service sector at the cost of negligence of manufacturing and agricultural sectors.

As Utsa Patnaik argues, neo liberalism entails a strongly expenditure deflating policy package at the macroeconomic level and India has been no exception. This proposition may sound strange since India has seen 6 to 7 percent annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates. The overall growth rate can be misleading however as it tells us nothing about the sectorial composition of growth or its distributional effects. It is perfectly possible for the material productive sectors to stagnate or decline while services, including financial services are booming and this has been the case with India's growth in 1990s. More rapid structured shifts in the sectoral contribution to GDP have taken place than in any previous period, the manufacturing sectors share in GDP has stagnated in the last 15 years while its contribution to employment has declined. While the share of agricultural and allied activities in GDP has fallen sharply, the population dependent on these sectors have declined and faces falling per head real incomes.

Agriculture is always a 'soft' target for misguided expenditure deflating policies which continues to be waged by the Breton Woods Institutions (BNI) no matter how high unemployment and hunger figures might be. The impart of deflationary policies has been especially severe in

rural areas which has been already subject to declining public investment, witnessed sharp reduction in public planned development expenditure. In rural development expenditure (RDE). Utsa Patnaik refers to the five plan heads of a) agriculture, b) rural development, c) irrigation and flood control, d) special areas programme, e) village and small scale industry. All these expenditures are vital for maintaining rural productivity and employment. The employment generation programmes had assumed special importance for the drought years 1987 onwards. During the pre-reform seventh plan period 3.8 percent of Net National Product (NNP) was spent annually on RDE, with well documented positive effects in raising non-farm employment and real wages. From 1991, as contradictory fund guided policies started, the share of RDE was cut sharply to below 2.6 percent of NNP by 1995-96 and fell further to 1.4 percent by 2000-01. Using implicit GDP deflators one finds an absolute fall in real expenditure per head of rural population.

This harsh contradictory fiscal policy has had nothing to do with any objective resource constraint. Indeed with strong income shifts, the already well-to-do tax receipts have been buoyant and the tax GDP ratio has been rising.

Total capital formation in agriculture continues to stagnate in real terms, since sharply reducing public investment is not being compensated by rising private investment. The cut back of public investment and in the RDE had led to a halving of the crop output growth rate in the 1990s and a collapse of employment growth. Both food grains and all crop growth rates nearly halved in the 1990s compared to the pre-reform 1980s and fell below the population growth rate leading to

declining per capita output for the first time since the mid 1960s agricultural crises, which however had been short lived, whereas per head agricultural output continues to fall even after a decade.

Falling agricultural growth has led to fast growth of unemployment combined with a fall in number of days employed. The work participation rate has declined and open unemployment has been growing of over 5 percent annually.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that annual food grain availability per head of total population has fallen steeply from 177 kg in the early 1990s to only 153 kg by 2003-04 with over four fifth of fall coming after 1998. This level prevailed 50 years ago, in the early 1950s and is lower than the 157 kg average during 1937-41. Forty years of successful efforts to raise per capita food availability was wiped out in a mere dozen years of economic reforms. The average Indian family is absorbing 115 kg less per year of food grains than in 1991s. (Reference Utsa Patnaik, "Neo-liberalism and Rural poverty in India", Economic and Political weekly, RB, PP 31-32,34, July 28, 2007)

Historical back drop

Since 1920s peasants participated in freedom struggle and by effectively responding to Gandhi's call for non-cooperation and non-payment of British land revenues, land taxes in many parts of the country, especially in North, South and Gujarat. Such massive involvement of Kisans in freedom struggle was reflected in growing pressure on the Indian National Congress leadership as articulated in giving effective representation and articulation of the peasant grievances and the demand for

their resolution in Karachi National Convention of Congress in 1931. As Prabhat Patnaik argues, "The anti-colonial struggle in India had taken off in the 1930s. With the support of the peasantry that had seen acute distress because of the great depression, and it had held out the promise that such distress would never again visit the peasantry in independent India. The Congress regime, seeing itself as a legatee of the anti-colonial struggle had accordingly adopted an array of policies for protecting and promoting not just peasant agriculture but traditional petty production in general, that is, not just peasantry but craftsmen, fishermen, handloom weavers and other such producers. Not that all sections among them were equal beneficiaries of such measures, but not withstanding internal differentiation within the segment (within peasant agriculture, for instance the encroachment by corporate capital from outside upon this segment, was kept in check as was the vulnerability of this segment to World Market price fluctuations).

In agriculture, not only was there tariff protection and quantitative restriction for insulating the sector from World price fluctuations, but also 'remunerative price' and public procurement, including for a number of cash crops where commodity boards were entrusted with the task of market intervention. There was a substantial step up in public investment research and development in public sector organizations which were responsible for the high yielding variety seeds, subsidized inputs including credit (the provision of which was an objective of bank nationalization), and a network of public extension services. All these not only directly aided traditional petty production, but also ensured that big corporate capital whether domestic or foreign had no direct access to this

sector and hence could not subjugate it.

State under Neo-liberal Era

As Prabhat Patnaik further suggests, Liberalisation changed this. The neo liberal state with a changed focus towards the exclusive promotion of the interest of globalized capital, marked a departure from the earlier bourgeois state which appeared to stand above society and to intervene benevolently in favour of all classes including the traditional petty producers, and even on occasions the working class.

The State under neo liberalism withdraws substantially from its earlier role of protecting and promoting the interests of traditional petty producers, which is evident in the case of agriculture with the drying up of institutional credit, a dismantling of the public extension network, a removal of the marketing function of commodity boards, trade liberalization that makes domestic prices mirror World price fluctuations, a cutback in public investment, and the direct access of corporate capital and agribusiness to the peasantry procurement, on the verge of being abandoned some years ago, got a fresh lease of life because of the inflationary upsurge that began around that time. But its continuation remained uncertain, even according to this year's (2020) budget speech.

The reduced profitability of agriculture, peasant suicides, and the broader agrarian crisis, reflected in the fact of peasants abandoning agriculture to flock to cities in search of non-existent jobs, and also in the fact that the number of labourers in agriculture now exceeds that of cultivators for the first time in the country's history; are all consequences of the state's withdrawal from its role of defending and promoting petty

production. This has meant leaving traditional petty production to encroachment and subjugation by corporate capital and agribusinesses, and indeed being compliant in the process (which facilitates what Marx had called "Primitive accumulation of capital).

It is noteworthy that between 1990-91 and 2013-14 (a peak year) per capita food item output in the country remained virtually stagnant. What is even more striking is that per capita food grain availability actually declined over this period.

This decline also manifests itself in the data on calorie intake. The percentage of the urban population accessing less than 2100 calorie per person per day, which is the official benchmark for defining poverty, declined marginally from 60 in 1973-74 to 57 in 1993-94. It increased to 65 in 2011-12. Likewise the percentage of rural population unable to access 2200 calorie per person per day, which is the benchmark for defining poverty, had stood at 56.4 in 1974 -74 and 58.5 in 1993-94, it increased to 68 in 2011-12.

Two questions are immediately raised by these figures. The first relates to the sharp contrast between the apparently impressive GDP growth as an entirely inappropriate index of the performance of a regime.

In India during the period of liberalization the working population has actually become distinctly worse off by the most elemental standard of judging -namely hunger, notwithstanding impressive GDP growth rate.

(Reference "Economic liberalization and the working poor" Prabhat Patnaik, Economic and political weekly, July 16, 2016 PP 47-49)

Neo-liberal regime under Sonia-Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi – Contrast.

It is ordinarily presumed that the neo-liberal regime under Manmohan Singh and under Narendra Modi exhibit more or less continuity of the same neo liberal policies and measures which were accelerated during Manmohan Singh's Prime Ministership. These may be largely true but one should not overlook the striking contrast between the approaches of these two governments. As Prabhat Patnaik brings out, "No doubt both the UPA and the NDA governments pursue broadly the same neo liberal policies, but there is a difference. Since there were divergent views inside the Congress, with a segment around Sonia Gandhi insisting on certain measures of relief for the people even with the overall trajectory of neo liberalism championed by Manmohan Singh and P. Chidambaram, what the UPA actually ended up pursuing was an eclectic neo liberalism or "neo liberalism with a human face". The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), the "Right to Food" (which was legislated but never got implemented because the UPA got defeated) the Forest Rights Act, the Right to Information Act, each of which was disliked by the neoliberal segment of the UPA, were all, nonetheless, pursued at the instance of the Sonia Gandhi group, with strong pressure from the left during the tenure of the UPA government.

Hard-Nosed Neoliberalism

Within the BJP or the NDA, however, there are no divergent views, there is only one view held by their supreme leaders. Instead of an eclectic neoliberalism we have hard-nosed neoliberalism, a neoliberalism that shuns the human face. The running

down of the MGNREGS, the non-implementation of the "Right to Food" legislation, the repeated promulgation of the land acquisition ordinance (demanded by the corporate financial oligarchy but not translatable into law because of the NDA's lack of numbers in the Rajya Sabha), the insistence upon the Goods and Services Tax (GST) which, again, is demanded by the Corporate lobby but which would completely take away the State government's freedom to decide on the rates and hence subvert the federal nature of our polity, are all instances of this hard-nosed neoliberalism. Hard-nosed neoliberalism was presented as the panacea for the crisis which the UPA government's "Populism" had allegedly brought about.

Modi in his quest for power bought into this idea and projected it, for which he obtained massive corporate backing, and finance, during his election campaign. This backing, together with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh spadework and the Muzaffarnagar riots, won the election for the NDA, and the Corporates communal alliance that had thus come into being interpreted the election victory as a mandate as much for hard-nosed neoliberalism as for Hindutva "nationalism", which is but a euphemism for communal fascism.

Corporate Communal Alliance

In fact, hard-nosed neoliberalism and Hindutva "nationalism" complement one another and constitute the ideological brew of the corporate-communal alliance. **If hard-nosed neoliberalism is presumed to be essential for "development", and if any provision of relief for the poor constitutes "populism" that is inimical to "development", then it follows that anyone who opposes wooing international**

Capital, which is an essential component of neoliberalism, and demands descent wages and work conditions or transfers to the poor, is, ipso facto, “anti-national”. Such a person is holding up the ‘nation’s’ development. A metaphysical “nationalism” that sees the ‘nation’ as being entirely distinct from and placed above the people is, thus, as much pro-corporate as it is pro-Hindutva: not only ironically, does such ‘nationalism’. Know-tow to the multinational corporations and banks, but it’s very emptiness implies that it can be filled in by Hindutva shibboleths. Anything, from observing Karva Chauth to lynching alleged cow slaughterers and beef eaters and those not chanting Jai Sri Ram or singing Vande Mataram, can be construed as an act of ‘nationalism’ and its opponents denounced as “anti-national”.

Not surprisingly, the last two years have seen substantial social retrogression, marked by an upsurge of casteism and communalism. The “Make in India” campaign, whose basic thrust is to entice international capital to locate plants on Indian soil for meeting global demand, is the logical denouement of such a hard-nosed neoliberalism. But the irony is that the Modi Government is pursuing a hard-nosed neoliberalism at a time when neoliberalism itself has reached the end of its time. The World capitalist crisis that began in 2007-08 is not just persisting but getting accentuated: It has now spread to countries like China and India that earlier appeared immune to it.

Capitalist Crisis

Within the neoliberal framework itself there is, thus little prospect of a recovery from crisis, a fact by now so well recognized that even conservative

economists like Lawrence Summers are propagating a ‘stagnationist’ thesis with the world economy mired in stagnation and crisis, and with neoliberal capitalism at a dead end, Modi’s hard-nosed liberalism is bound to come a cropper. In the current situation, where the inducement to invest is low everywhere the Make in India campaign, quite apart from being objectionable per se for kow-towing to foreign corporates, will not even generate much investment with the consequent persistence of stagnation. The people who, even during to boom years of 2004-12 had witnessed an increase in deprivation will be hit still harder. (Reference “Road map to a failed State” by Prabhat Patnaik, ‘Frontline’, June 24, 2016 PP 8 to 10)

Authoritarian and autocratic style of functioning

As aptly observed by Venkatesh Ramkrishnan “Prime Minister Narendra Modi who came in with the slogan of minimum government, maximum governance” has become the government itself”. Modi’s cabinet and State Ministers, including seniors with decades of political experience and standing, have been virtually reduced to courtiers. Important Ministers and departments, including External Affairs, Finance, Defense and Home are run practically on the diktats and direct intervention of the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO). The sidelining of Ex External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, a Senior BJP leader, and her Ministry was conspicuous. Other seniors, such as Rajnath Singh and Nitin Gadkari, have held on somehow to whatever little authority they have in their Ministries, albeit with periods of intense disquiet. The “theatre of celebrity” is in full play aided and abetted by a powerful propaganda apparatus to which have been co-opted

some important media organisations and senior journalists.

Equally important is the timing of the advancement of the dominant project. It started unfolding soon after the swearing in of the Modi regime on May 26, 2014, and has sustained itself over two and half years despite intermittent reverses at the level of electoral politics. In the last months of 2016, this project gathered momentum and gained strength. So much so, the sobriquet “Emperor Modi” has sprung up at different levels of the political establishment, including within Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) led Sangh Parivar- The larger Hindutva-oriented ideological organizational network of which the BJP is a part. But in keeping with the dominance game, the voices within the BJP and the Sangh Parivar are reduced to practically inaudible levels.

Two major decisions of the Union government in the last two months of 2016 underscore the phenomenal dominance Modi has been able to establish upon the Indian system of governance. The second was the surprise December 17 announcement of Lt. Gen. Bipin Rawat as the next Chief of the Army Staff, who would take charge on January 1, 2017. The first was the dramatic November 8, 2016 announcement of demonetization of Rs 1000 and Rs 500 notes. Both decisions were essentially driven by Modi and his PMO bypassing the authority of Ministries responsible. For their time-tested consultative procedure at the level of the Cabinet and other segments of the government were flagrantly disregarded while pushing ahead with the decisions.

West Bengal Finance Minister Amit Mitra, speaking on a television channel, said a senior Cabinet Minister

had shared with him the sense of revolt and sterile rage he felt at the manner in which the news of demonetization was broken to him. This senior Minister, along with many other Ministers were herded into a room and made to ‘listen to the Prime Minister’s announcement on television’. He (the Minister) told me that there was no personal interaction, only this mass viewing of the announcement on television, Mitra told the channel. He added that there were doubts within the highest levels of the Union Government, among both politicians and the administrative class, about how much Finance Minister Arun Jaitley himself knew about the demonetization before it unfolded.

Appointment of New Army Chief

The appointment of Lt. Gen. Bipin Rawat went against the long-held tradition of appointing the Senior-most eligible officer to the post. Lt. Gen. Praveen Bakshi, General Officer commanding in chief, Eastern Command, should have become the next Chief of the Army Staff. Lt. Gen. P. M. Hariz, Southern Army Commander, the next in seniority, was also superseded. Even in the manner in which the announcement was made, there was an element of humiliation of senior Army officers who were eligible to be considered for the position.

A former colonel opined that the Prime Minister had often exhibited a penchant for intervention in the functioning of different Ministries and departments, grievously overturning norms and traditions, in order to advance his interests, both personal and political.

In June 2014, less than a month after being sworn in, Modi dispensed with four standing Committees of the Cabinet on Management of Natural calamities, Prices, Unique

Identification Authority of India related issues, and World Trade organization matters and reconstituted crucial cabinet committees, including those on Security, Political Affairs, Economic Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs.

Concentration of Power

Evidently, the purpose of these changes was to bring these key sectors under bureaucrats, who could be forced to report directly to the Prime Minister, or the PMO. In other words, reduce the say and influence of other politicians in the BJP as well as the ruling coalition, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), in these crucial areas.

All this was professedly done to further the cause of “minimum government, maximum governance”, a slogan coined by Modi. But what it actually did was to topple the promise of governance founded on “collective responsibility of Cabinet ministers” and push it into a presidential form of government where a singular authority guides the course of governance and dictates terms (Reference “Big Brother in Delhi” by Venkatesh Ramkrishnan, Frontline, January 10, 2017 PP 4 to 8)

Demonetization

Narendra Modi surprised the nation on November 8 with his “master stroke” of demonetizing the Rs 500 and Rs 1000 backbone of Indian currency with the avowed objective of putting an end to the black economy. He shocked the nation by the utter lack of preparedness that pushed the country into a crisis of a kind rarely witnessed by the World.

As suggested by Sridhar, from the initiation of this sudden and shocking measure it became evident that the

prime victims of the demonetization exercise were ordinary people even if the move was portrayed as a war on black money.

The timing was horribly wrong for rural India as in many places the Kharif crop had just been harvested and the need for cash was largely required.

The underlying assumption of the Modi Government that the flushing out of high value denomination notes will wipe out the scourge of black money is not only misplaced but dangerously misleading. The two denominations that were outlawed on November 8 account was about Rs 14 Lakh crore circulating as cash in the Indian Currency system. By the Government’s own admission, it was expected to flush out a maximum of Rs 2 to 3 Lakh crore as a result of exercise that has paralyzed the entire economy. Given that the GDP (at current prices) in 2015-16 was about Rs 136 Lakh Crore, the share of black money that would be impounded after the massive exercise would be a minuscule 2.2 per cent. That does not sit well with all other studies that have estimated the size of the Indian Black economy.

A study by the National Institute of public Finance and Policy in 2014 estimated the black economy to be about 70 per cent of national GDP. Prof Arun Kumar, who taught at Jawaharlal Nehru University and did a pioneering study in 1999 (The black economy in India), reckons that black money in cash from accounts for a mere 3 percent of the Black income generated annually.

Black money basically arises from two kinds of activity. Activities such as gun-running, smuggling, and child and drug trafficking fall in a category of crimes that are illegal by the very

nature of the enterprise. This implies that gains made from them are categorically illegal. Money made from such activities is black because the activities they result from are beyond the pale of the law. But this is a relatively minor part of the problem of the black economy.

The much bigger problem arises from activities that may in themselves be perfectly legal but that generate incomes at least a part of which is hidden from the eyes of the State.

Tax evasion is the prime source of black money. As the eminent economist Prabhat Patnaik explained recently it is not a stock but a flow that is constantly circulating, seeking returns and expanding in scale and size, just as capital anywhere would do. It is for this reason that black money does not sit as unproductive cash but is invested in other assets such as gold, foreign exchange assets such as dollar, or moves into other lines of business (for instance, educational institutions, increasingly privatized offer as lucrative rate of return).

(Reference “Politics at its Cyclical Worst” by Venkatesh Ramkrishnan. Frontline December 2016 PP 14 to 19).

Impact of Demonetization

Immense amount of job loss across various sectors of industries following demonetization has been widely reported.

Handicrafts industry which is the second largest sector after government jobs in the country, and lakhs of people are dependent on this for their livelihood was severely affected by demonetization.

Transaction of this sector are mostly in cash. Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh,

one of the leading industrial corridors in the country, was very badly affected by sudden declaration of demonetization. It exports brass goods alone worth Rs. 2,200 Crore every year. It reported losses to the tune of 22-100 percent in business due to demonetization. Nearly 10 Lakh people are engaged in the handicraft business, including manufacturing in this city. There are 18 Districts in Uttar Pradesh where the handicrafts industry is a primary source of livelihood.

The All India manufacturer's Organisation (AIMO) estimated that some 30-35 per cent of the jobs had been lost following demonetization. The AIMO estimated that some 30-35 per cent of the jobs had been lost following the decision of demonetization. The AIMO conducted a survey on the impact of demonetization in the first 34 days after the announcement on November 8 and concluded that all industries had suffered a hit, small and medium enterprises being the worst affected. A report by the Centre for the Monitoring on the Indian Economy stated that 48 per cent of the work force had lost its incomes, daily wage labourers accounted for 25 per cent of this group, 8 per cent comprised self-employed enterprises, small traders and hawkers, who suffered adversely as their income and business were both affected.

(Reference: T.K. Rajalekshmi, “Persistence of Miserly”, Frontline March 31, 2017 PP 43-45)

Impact on Economy

A Well-known critic of Indian economy Swaminathan Sankalesaria Aiyar argues that “After failing for five successive quarters GDP growth in July – September 2017 was 6.3%, up from 5.7% in the previous quarter.

Many cheered this as an economic turnaround. I am amused that people now get excited about just 6.3 %. How our standards have fallen”.

Further, “The economy is probably bottoming out. But it is a very low bottom. The great recession of 2008-09 hammered the Indian economy, but it bottomed out at 6.9 %. We are below that bottom today.

GST Violates Constitution

Prabhat Patnaik in his sharp critique of GST remarked:

Goods and Services Tax (GST) with lots of publicity was rolled out by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 30th June 2017. Prabhat Patnaik, an eminent economist in this context observed that this new tax measure will lead to “enormous centralization of power” amounting to violation of federal structure and the Constitution.

The implementation of GST, as suggested by Patnaik would imply that the States would have absolutely no power in deciding what tax rates to impose on what commodities, a right that was given to them under the Constitution of India.

Once you have the GST, the freedom of that state to pursue alternative strategies goes, and we have an enormous centralization of power. If the State wants change in the rates, it has to approach the GST council, in which the Centre has a substantial voice, consequently the States would become completely dependent on the Centre. It is violation of the federal structure of the Constitution and is against the basic structure of the Constitution.

Since the States need to approach the GST Council for any change in the tax

rate and since the States are just individual representatives in the Council, autonomy in fixing the tax rate automatically slips from the command of the State.

One of the basic aspects of the Federal structure of our polity that the Constitution enshrined was that the State must have the freedom to experiment with different models of growth and different ideas of development once you have GST, of course, the complete freedom of the states to pursue alternative strategies goes.

Announcing the GST roll out data, Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley pointed out that GST, over the medium to long term will raise the revenues of the Centre and States as the size of the formal economy will grow. He also argued that GST being a “more efficient system”, will also result in better tax compliance.

However, Patnaik argued that pro-GST arguments are based on economic frauds. Patnaik suggested that instead of setting up a common tax rate across product groups, it would have been better if the Centre fixed a minimum tax rate and enable the States to levy whatever they want above the benchmark. In this case, they are not violating the freedom of the States.

Countering the argument that the GST will serve a uniform national market, he cited the example of the United States, where different States have different rates and exemptions but have a uniform capitalist market.

GST is an indirect tax throughout India to replace taxes levied by the Central and State governments. It was introduced as the Constitution Act 2017, following the passage of Constitution 122nd Amendment bill.

The GST is governed by a GST Council and its Chairman was the Union Finance Minister of India Mr. Jaitly. GST is a demand of the corporate lobby in the country. Patnaik pointed out that the State Governments are being bought off by promises that their resources position is not going to worsen in the short run. (Prabhat Patnaik, June 23, 2017, Reproduced from 'Red Star' Volume 18, September 2017 PP 18019).

Impact of GST

The GST would result in a rapid movement of informal to formal economy. Crores of mostly self-employed small traders, goods producers and service providers will have to enter one India market competition with their counterparts in big organized sectors – domestic and foreign. Lakhs of traders have been agitating at national, state, district and local levels across the country. It is a question of their very survival.

Several labour intensive industries such as textile, are on the verge of closure. Many workers, mostly in unorganized sector, have been laid off.

As the GST is consumption based, in one India market under the GST structure only consumption states get the SGST and manufacturing states suffer losses. Though compensation package had been designed for a limited period, it is a discouragement to manufacturing and thereby, employment.

Collection, compilation and finalization of all GST related data have been bestowed by the government to a private entity, the GST Network (GSTN) created in 2013, with shares of 24.50% to Central government, 24.5% to State Government together and 51% to five

private firms. Some of these private firms are controlled to the extent of 75 per cent by FIIS. Questions were raised inside and outside Parliament about the Confidentiality of the data collected by the GSTN on trade and business including public sector enterprises and services which may be easily available to others including foreign firms. (Reference: GST the biggest neo liberal Push –Red Stars, September 2017 PP 20-22).

March of Hindu Rashtra

The rise of violence against Muslims across the country in the name of gauraksha seems to be the subtle push the Central and the BJP ruled State governments are giving to the idea of Hindu Rashtra. This observation by Venkatesh Ramakrishnan of 'Frontline' is quite pertinent and the Future course of transformation in this country.

The recent proclamation, as the same critic brings out, made at so-called "Hindu Rashtra" conclave held in Goa between 14 and 18, 2017 which aims for the establishment of a formal Hindu Rashtra by 2023 and the public hanging of beef eaters and seculars who support them, is also relevant in this context. It is claimed that some 100 Hindutva organisations attended the conclave, organized by Hindu Janjagruti Samiti (HJS) and the Sanatan Sanstha Members are among these accused of the killing of the rationalists Narendra Dabolkar, Govind Pansare and M.M. Kalburgi. The conclave also called for a ban on cattle slaughter, declaration of the cow as the national animal, a ban on all religious conversions, and construction of a grand Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

Although the official Sangh Parivar including the RSS and the BJP have distanced themselves from the

conclave and its proclamations, its message has had some resonance among many Hindutva groups, including sections of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). Talking to the Frontline in Ayodhya, Mahant Nritya Gopal Das, President of VHP led Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas, a trust with proclaimed objective of constructing the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, told that while a formal declaration of Hindu Rashtra would be a good idea, the country was already moving in that direction informally under the leadership of Mahapurush (Great men) Modi and Yogi Adityanath. Das explained that Hindu Rashtra as by “Margadarshak Mahapurush” (guiding great men) Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and M.S. Golwalkar was a geographical and socio cultural entity where people’s lives were defined by the parameters of race, religion, culture, language and way of life including food habits. “Whoever accepts the preponderance of the Hindu Rashtra tenets on these parameters can stay on in the country, whatever religion they practice and whichever God they pray to. Those who do not accept this preponderance would fall out of the pole of real national life. What you are seeing in different parts of the country is the process towards this social cultural altering.

According to a number of Sangh Parivar activists in Ayodhya and Lucknow the resolution of the Goa Hindu conclave marking 2023 as the year to proclaim the establishment of a Hindu Rashtra and Modi’s own repeated references to 2022 as the year to create a ‘New India’ are not accidental and must be seen in conjunction’. (*Reference March of Hindu Rashtra by Venkatesh Ramakrishnan, Frontline July 31, 2017 PP 6 to 8.*)

The impact of holy cow policy

The BJP governments’ Centre as well as states holy cow policy has led to the phenomenon of large herds of unproductive cattle abandoned by their owners creating social, economic and environmental crisis across many parts of the country. For instance, the Yogi Adityanath government issued instructions immediately after assuming office in April 2017, directing the police to take action against illegal meat shops and slaughter houses, the authorities went for an over kill, moving not only against illegal slaughterhouses but also against mechanized slaughter houses and meat procuring and packaging units. This in itself had caused considerable confusion among livestock holders, but in about a month, on May 23, the Centre came up with an order that further complicated the situation. This order, based on the prevention of cruelty to Animals (Regulation of Livestock Markets) Rules, 2017 (Animal Market Rules) imposed a virtual ban on the sale of cattle in animal markets for the purpose of slaughter. These bans, in turn, unleashed Hindutva oriented *gaurakshak* (Cow Vigilantes) groups across Uttar Pradesh. The vigilantes blocked transport of cows, bulls and calves, leading to violence and mayhem in several parts of the state. The cumulative effect of the government ban as well as the ruckus created by cow vigilantes was an abrupt and massive reduction in the slaughter of unproductive animals and the abandoning of these animals by their owners.

In UP countryside, at several places, as reported, abandoned cows were devouring fodder stored for farmers’ own milch cattle and farmers and farm workers thrashed the stray animals mercilessly. Farmers were forced to keep round the clock vigil in order to

stop the stray cattle from raiding their harvests.

The phenomenon of abandonment of unproductive cows and bulls has acquired bizarre proportions at the Katarniaghat wildlife sanctuary, which straddles the districts of Bahraich, Lakhimpur Kheri and a few other adjoining districts which have taken recourse to abandoning their unproductive cattle on the borders of the sanctuary, including on the river sides. The number of these cattle has swelled into thousands. Such is their concentration that entry to and exit from the sanctuary are now dictated by the crowding cows

(Reference: "cow Menace – Cover story by Venkatesh Ramakrishnan, Frontline November 10, 2017 PP 4 to 8).

Atrocities on Dalits

Dr. P. L. Punia, Chairperson of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), a nodal body appointed by parliament with the specific objective of looking into the welfare of the scheduled castes, was disturbed by the rising incidence of atrocities against Dalits in recent years.

In his interview to the Frontline Correspondent, he pointed out that there has been a very large increase in the number of atrocities in last few years. In 2014, as many as 47000 cases were reported, in 2015 the number was 54000, while in 2013 it was 39000. Similarly, cases against minorities were also going up, and sense of fear is there among minorities and the scheduled castes. This has never happened before.

Further, he also suggested that the pace of attacks on Dalits has increased. The State or the administration in BJP ruled states is seen as supporters of the perpetrators rather than the

victims. Take the case of Una, the victims named 30 people. It was after pressure from the NCSC that they arrested a few more for the crime. The video shows policemen silently watching the caning. They were mute spectators. It was almost as if they were in connivance with the attackers. They arrested only 11 people. Further he stated that there is employment for Dalits now in the public sector and they are not taken in the private sector.

For all the centrally sponsored schemes, they made a reduction of Rs 66,208 Crore in the 2014-15 Union Budget. The cuts affect the SCs and the STs the most as it is they who use centrally sponsored schemes. There were budgeted cuts in the sub plan for 2015-16 (I. Extracts from the interview of P.L. Punia with Frontline correspondent, Frontline, Sept 2016 PP 8-9.

Dalit Uprising

The July 11, 2016 stripping and thrashing of four Dalit boys at Una village in Saurashtra, by a bunch of self-styled cow protectors or Gau Rakshaks, for skinning a dead cow provoked movement in Gujarat of a scale never seen before in the State.

The movement is strikingly different in terms of the mode of massive organized protest, in terms of demands, leadership and its future vision.

Punia; Chairperson, National Commission for scheduled castes; suggested that Una response has to be viewed in the context of large increase in the number of atrocities against Dalits in recent years. The Una incident is part of the entire setting. In case of Rohit Vemula, a brilliant Ph.D. Dalit student from Hyderabad University who committed suicide on

January 18, 2016, he strongly felt that, inhuman treatment of the Dalit scholars in the University is part of a larger issue of NDA government's anti-Dalit Mandal mindset.

(Reference: Frontline Sept 2016).

Dalit upsurge in Gujarat has to be viewed in the context of simmering resentment against unprecedented rise in atrocities on Dalits in Gujarat and the immunity enjoyed by the offenders. The conviction rate is as low as 3 per cent in Gujarat in cases of atrocities, against Dalits. In 2015, Gujarat reported the highest crime rate against Dalits (6655 Cases), followed by Chhatisgarh (5008 Cases), Rajasthan (5911 cases) (Ibid).

Recent Dalit movement in Gujarat is unique in terms of its strikingly different type of leadership and also in terms of its distinct character of demands. As Dalit leader Mevani demands land for the Dalit in place of giving up of Dalits' traditional occupation of cow skinning.

Indian Economy since the Advent of the Modi Government – Balance Sheet

Swaminathan S. Anklesarya is a well-known advocate of neo liberal economic reforms. His observations on the Indian economy under Modi government in this context are quite pertinent. As he argues, after failing for five successive quarters, GDP growth in July-September was 6.3% up from 5.7% in the previous quarter. Many cheered this as an economic turnaround. I am amused that people now get excited about just 6.3%. How our standards have fallen.

The economy is probably bottoming out. But it is a very low bottom. The great recession of 2007-09 hammered the Indian economy, but it bottomed

out at 6.9%. We are below that bottom today. Optimists may say “thumps up”, but a more accurate reaction may be “bottom down”.

GDP growth is simply the sum of productivity growth and population growth. Population growth in the West is stagnating along with productivity growth. That makes for a bleak long term global scenario. We should not get misled by the short term spurt in World growth this year, it will not be sustained.

Our working age population is growing, and our productivity is still slow in many sectors that we can reap large gains by simply catching up with the West. This is indeed what happened in the early 2000s. At least these sectors – information technology, autos and pharmaceuticals soared and became World class.

Alas, India created no new star sectors in the 2010s. Its exports that once grew by 30% per year barely managed single digit growth. Stiff competition and pricing pressures have shaken pharma exports.

No country, he further remarks, has ever become a miracle economy with 7-8% growth without export growth of 15-20%. Indian exports have not regained their 2013 level.

(Reference: Swaminathan Ankaleswararia Ayar “Economy: It's not a thumps up but 'bottom down', Times of India, Dec 3, 2017).

Similarly, it is widely noted that employment crisis is growing in this country. It has become more acute since the BJP come to power. While the country is growing at just over 7% per year, jobs increased by just 1.1% last year. An earlier report had pegged joblessness at a five year high of 5% in 2015, and under-employment at a staggering 35% of the over 15 years

labour force. Seen in this context, the Government is clearly facing growing unemployment crisis which its various initiatives are unable to address.

Only 61% of people in the workforce were found to have year round jobs with 34% working only 6-11 months even though they were willing to work for 12 months. The report also revealed that 68% households were earning only Rs 10000 per month or less. In all, nearly 16 Crore persons in the workforce were under employed in this manner.

(Employment crisis: Economy grows at 70%, jobs only at 1%. Report on Non farm sector highlights growing joblessness. Times of India, Friday, May 19, 2017).

Beginning of the Decline of Narendra Modi's charisma and disillusionment with his sweeping, adventurous reforms as demonetization and GST in last couple of years, Shocking outcome of the UP civic polls and exclusive involvement of Narendra Modi in Gujarat assembly elections are striking evidence of the displacement of sizeable sectors of the country with the rule and adventurous measures of the Modi Government at the Central and the execution of such measures at the state level.

Almost half of BJP candidates in UP civic polls lost their deposit. As brought out by Times of India survey, contrary to the perception of a landslide win for BJP in the UP civic elections, the number of seats in which the party lost its deposit (3656) was significantly higher than the number of

seats it won (2366). That means about 45% of all the candidates it put up in the elections failed to secure their deposits.

The BJP had put up more candidates than any other party in these polls by contesting 8038 of the 12644 seats for which results were announced. It ended up with almost half of them losing their deposits. Indeed, at the Nagar Panchayat member level, while 664 of its candidates won, more than twice as many 1462 to be precise, lost their deposits.

(Reference: Times of India, Dec 6th 2017).

Similarly, irrespective of the outcome of the Gujarat Assembly poll, exclusive engagement and involvement of Narendra Modi and the entire cabinet, other State Ministers apart from prominent party leaders involvement in Gujarat assembly poll, emphatically suggests that the party has lost the confidence and need every possible endeavor, right from bribing and co-opting all strong candidates and leaders of the opposition parties, especially the Patidars lobby to win the election. Surely, these moves demonstrate confidence but diffidence.

Thus, disillusionment with the brand, Narendra Modi, and its omnipotent role and pervading influence, and almost its unshakable appeal, seems to be losing its impact and its appeal sounds shaky and could be effectively challenged, provided one finds an equally effective, competent opposition.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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