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LISA

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EDITORIAL

Indian Spy Arrested

The arrest of a serving Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Yadav (reportedly a senior Indian intelligence RAW operative) in the last week of March from Chaman near Quetta in Baluchistan by security agencies created unprecedented anger over Indian “role” in destabilizing Pakistan. This has apparently vindicated the Pakistani narrative that India is funding and directing terrorist and subversive activities in Pakistan. In a video purporting to be a confession by alleged RAW aired by many Pakistan TV channels Indian naval officer Yadav admitted that he was plotting to destabilize Balochistan, particularly a port at Gwadar that is the jewel of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor’s crown. He is reported to be allegedly involved in assassinations, murders and organizing terrorist activities throughout Pakistan.

Pakistani visit to Pathankot came at an inopportune time as India discovered their agent living in Pakistan had been arrested and shown on national TV. There are apprehensions that the Indian spy network in Pakistan may have been compromised. The timing was also embarrassing for the Iranian President who was visiting Pakistan as the Indian spy had lived in Chahbahar and entered Pakistan from Iran. Pakistan complained to Iran and Iran has now assured them that their soil shall not be used for any anti Pakistan activity.

The matters got further murkier when in Pathankot; the Pakistani investigation team was not allowed to meet a Sikh police officer who, allegedly, may have had insights into the investigation that NIA (National Investigation Agency) did not want to share. To compound the matters further the murder of a Muslim officer on the NIA team in mysterious circumstances exacerbates this feeling of secrecy and nondisclosure.

Pakistan-India peace process stands suspended

Pakistan’s High Commissioner in New Delhi, Abdul Basit Thursday 8 April 2016 said the peace process between India and Pakistan stands suspended.

“I think at present the peace process between India and Pakistan is suspended,” said Abdul Basit while addressing a press conference here at the Foreign

Correspondents club. Abdul Basit said the recent arrest of Kulbhushan Yadav in Pakistan irrefutably corroborates ‘what Pakistan has been saying all along’.

“We all are aware of those who seek to create unrest in Pakistan and destabilize the country. They are bound to fail as the people of Pakistan are united to effectively counter anti-Pakistan subversive activities.”

He termed the dispute of Indian held Kashmir as the root cause of mutual distrust between Pakistan and India and other bilateral issues.

He said Pakistan wants to have a normal and peaceful relationship with India on the basis of sovereign equality and mutual interest. “There is national consensus on this in Pakistan,” he added.

Reportedly Pakistan is considering raising this matter at international level including UN and it shall be interesting to see what will be the impact on the bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan. However, it remains to be seen how this will play out internationally

Terrorism in perspective

On March 27 – the Easter Sunday – a Jamaat ul-Ahrar (Pakistani Taliban affiliate) suicide bomber killed more than 70 people and injured around 300 – mostly women and children – at a public park in Lahore, which got some fleeting coverage in the Western media, may be because it was an Islamist terror attack on minority Christians in “godforsaken” Pakistan. However, after the fleeting coverage most main stream western media followed by no comments and elaborations.

For the first three days after the latest terror attacks in Brussels, seemingly there was a total information blackout in Western media outlets on any other news item other than the Attack. So much so that there was hardly any coverage of the U.S. Presidential Primary. Although Islamist or separatist terror groups bomb and kill hundreds of people in Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Turkey, or Afghanistan on a regular basis, yet they hardly make headlines in Western media; and the news about these attacks disappear from Western media in hours. This is, however, not the case with any terror attack in the West – in London or Boston, Copenhagen, Madrid, Paris, or Brussels. Unless people and media in the West equally empathise and sympathise with all terror victims, and do something positive to counter terrorism everywhere, there is little hope for durable peace and understanding in the world.

Taj Hashmi writing in Countercurrents.org argues that promoting “our terrorists” against “theirs”, demonizing “others” as terrorists by promoting Islamophobia or racism, and last but not least, portraying “ourselves” as innocent victims of terrorism by overstating terrorist threat as the West has been doing quite for sometime through blatant lies, deceptive wars and invasions, and the ubiquitous double standards will neither end terrorism, nor restore mutual trust and respect between the West and the Muslim World.

Systemic Corruption

Panama Papers release of information showing exactly who, how, and when a vast network of people stole and hoarded money. Joe Brewer writes, “Where we fail more easily is visualizing the system of shell companies, accounting tools, trade regimes, tax havens, and legislative changes that make up the system of wealth extraction all of these individuals are using in collaboration with their partners in crime.

From the family of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to film star Amitabh Bachchan, well over 600 figure in the list of South Asians. These papers have generated a political storm in Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif and his supporters have responded with denials and insist that use of secret offshore companies and accounts and properties in London do not indicate illegal activity at all. However the people and opposition parties are outraged promising a taking this disclosure to a logical conclusion. The Panama Papers and the following denials have exposed power of the rich, length of their hands, their tact in hiding their wealth, their liking of non-transparency, giant banks’ modus operandi, and fear of the rich. They don’t like to let people know the facts of their property and power.

There was a long history of colonialism and slavery that gave certain Western nations a huge amount of wealth that has since been used to rig global institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in a manner that keeps this historic trend going strong. In the mid-20th Century it was the banana republics, where US corporations benefited from the displacement of democratic leaders with despotic dictators throughout Latin America (with help from a network of financiers and government aid).- and now the trend is to displace dictators with selected corrupt leaders through a farce of democratic elections. Now in the name of democracy crimes against the

states and their people are committed with impunity and the imperialists' puppeteers control the world through such puppets.

When corrupt individuals get away with their bad deeds without being punished, this encourages other greedy people to go along with this new social norm (and for those who might prefer to cooperate who now feel the need to compete in the rigged system). A runaway pattern ensues whereby many people 'defect' from being good citizens and the corruption becomes systemic.

Luckily, there is a solution to this mess – and it comes out of research in evolutionary game theory. When corrupt individuals get away with their bad deeds without being punished, this encourages other greedy people to go along with this new social norm (and for those who might prefer to cooperate who now feel the need to compete in the rigged system). A runaway pattern ensues whereby many people 'defect' from being good citizens and the corruption becomes systemic. The way to deal with this situation is simply to add punishment as the 'countervailing system' and the defections will soon come to a halt in the context of the pro-social norms of cooperation that are now enforced by society."

Hindutva Radicalism –A threat to India and Humanity

The threat to India's pluralist ethos from the Hindutva radicalism fostered by the Sangh Parivar is growing. The Sangh has been using the cudgel of patriotism to crush dissent everywhere- from the universities to the media. History books are being re written and citizens are being coerced to shout "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" slogan. In fact the Indian society is facing its gravest threat in history. The time is now for people of conscience, whether progressive or religious, to find common ground in safeguarding the freedom of millions of Indians and of their future generations.

RSS is relentless in attempting to impose Hindu hegemony over the country under watch of Prime Minister Modi. We should be aware that the "soft Hindutva" fronts have the same objective of weakening the constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion, the only difference being that they pursue their goal through the "back door." The Muslim leadership is cognizant that their stand will help BJP in the elections but they feel that they have no choice but to resist this precedence setting move of the RSS to impose Hindu culture on the Indian polity.

India –Nepal- China

EU-India Summit meeting in Brussels on Wednesday, which was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seemed to be been at New Delhi's instance. The joint statement, inter alia, noted,

‘The EU and India... also agreed on the need for a lasting and inclusive constitutional settlement in Nepal that will address the remaining Constitutional issues in a time bound manner, and promote political stability and economic growth.’

Nepal Foreign Ministry issued a statement that the EU-India Joint Statement “not only hurts the sentiments of the people of Nepal but also defies the fundamental principle of non-interference in internal affairs of a country in breach of UN Charter and norms of international law. The Government of Nepal calls on all to fully respect the sovereign and democratic rights of the people of Nepal and refrain from making uncalled for statements. The Government and people of Nepal are fully capable of resolving their issues themselves within the framework of the constitution”.

India in her overconfidence tried to intimidate Nepal by ‘internationalizing’ the Madhesi issue but received a befitting rebuff. This is how Japan’s Nikkei Asian Review reported from New Delhi last week. ‘Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to bring South Asia into India’s sphere of influence... Modi, in addition to dangling the carrot of assistance, is also wielding the stick, punishing countries in the region that cozy up to China..’

India has persistently behaved like a bully in the region with all its neighbours. Make no mistake, no one likes a bully. Everyone understands that India is applying its variant of the Monroe Doctrine to its South Asian ‘backyard.

Kashmir Rejoices over India losing to West Indies

The defeat of India by the hands of West Indies in cricket brought disappointment to many Indian fans, but in Kashmir the situation remained different.

Kashmir is an internationally recognised disputed nation. Due to the harsh behaviour of Indian governance towards the people of Kashmir, Kashmiri’s have never supported India in any game or in any event. The people of Kashmir are likely to support any other nation who will be playing against India. It is

because of Indian occupation and oppression against the people of Kashmir, that it failed to win hearts of people and the effects are now obviously visible to everyone. The people of Kashmir always like to enjoy India's loss whether it is cricket or hockey. There is also a fact that Pakistan enjoys unconditional support from people of Kashmir that is why people of Kashmir went to each stadium where Pakistan played the 2016 T-20 world cup. If UN Plebiscite is held in accordance with Security Council Resolutions 47 and 49, we are not in doubt know which way the Kashmiris would go.

The Death of History

Suraj Kumar Thube

History has always been a contested terrain. The traditional definition of history as 'studying the past in order to understand the present' falls short in explaining the myriad diversities of a country like India. Looking at the present controversy regarding the removing of Mughals from textbooks, something that is wildly trending on social media, one cannot help but feel that the historicising of this diversity is under immense threat. Juxtapose this with the mindless hounding of eminent historian Sheldon Pollock for supposedly denigrating the Hindu civilisation in his monumental project under the Murty classical library of India; it is increasingly clear that an alternative interpretation of the ancient past is wantonly censured without giving a fair hearing to the same.

The primary reason for the obliteration of this diversity is the reliance of certain sections of our society in the banal ideology of 'one people, one nation and one culture'. This being the base of the Hindu supremacist worldview, propounded most vociferously by the Sangh parivar, categorically dismisses an interpretative style of historicising past events which is antithetical to the mainstream Hindutva narrative. Disciplining the people with a linear, monolithic, Brahminic centric history of India, the 'other' narratives are contemptuously consigned to the back pages of history. With a blinkered single minded agenda of striving toward one single, objective history of our past, this domineering and vitriolic narrative is doing a great disservice in belittling the other forms of historiography. A rich repertoire of knowledge has emerged over the years that have challenged the conventional notions of the manner in which history as a discipline has been studied in India. From a narrative that focussed on kings and dynastic rule to the one which looks at it more through the evolution of human settlements, occupations, technology, religious practices etcetera, the discipline has come a long way in highlighting the people rather than geography, territory and empires as its centre of learning. History has begun to be studied through the triangular axis of time, space and human relations in its truest sense. This is where it unsettles the Sangh narrative the most as it emphasises the role of 'counter traditions' since our ancient past that incorporate the struggles of multiple resistance movements and ideas.

Branding these historians as anti-nationals, the conservative elements are quick to ascertain their versions of history as the truth. This group feels increasingly endangered from the 'communist' historians who raise poignant questions about an issue that is very close to their hearts - religion. A vicious binary is then generated which sees themselves as the purveyors of a self declared authentic history and brushes the entire second half as that of inconsequential 'communist morons'. (without even acknowledging other schools of thought who have been equally vocal in condemning this historiography , namely the liberal, Cambridge and the Subaltern school of thought.) Trivialising the issue further is the attack on the supposed non religious nature of communist historians in general for which a simple rebut of there being a fundamental difference between mythology and history is enough for a rational thinking individual to come to a nuanced conclusion. However, even in the realm of religion, the valorisation of Brahmanism as opposed to the derogatory treatment meted out to the Shramanic traditions comprising of the Buddhists, Jains, Bhakti and Sufis is quite evident. At the same time, the bigger problem is the way these other histories are ridiculed and mocked as superstitions and primitive beliefs that invariably render the marginalised section as a group devoid of any meaningful history. (Something akin to Prof. Satish Deshpande's hypothesis of 'castelessness' that talks of the dominant group being free from the local and thereby communal and casteist tendencies of the lower castes.)

The need of the hour is to persistently engage with these alternative histories of our past even if it unintentionally offends the sentiments of a particular cultural group. As Salam Rushdie famously says, "nobody has a right of not to get offended". It is in this context that one should deal with the ocean of literature that is available on Indian past coming from world renowned historians like D Kosambi, D N Jha, Romila Thapar, Irfan Habib, Uma Chakravarti and others for a critical appraisal of our often glorified past. Be it Kosambi's bitter critique of the Bhagvat Gita of perpetuating social inequality; Romila Thapar's trenchant critique of 'Syndicated Hinduism' and why she calls the religion a 'conglomeration of sects'; D N Jha's highly researched work on beef eating practises in ancient India ; Irfan Habib's humane and societal touch in understanding the 'Muslim' medieval India and Chakravarti's complex narration of the feminine discourse of India's past, they should all be dealt with in an unbiased way for an informed critique of the past. Many more works have ruffled feathers like the one's by A K Ramanujan's Three hundred essays on the Ramayana to Wendy Doniger's Alternative history of Hinduism which need to

be perused in order to have a meaningful dialogue and discussion to appreciate the multifarious stories of our past.

The devil lies in the detail, they say. Only if the Sangh was not hell-bent in terming the entire Mughal period as the one of slavery, could we have a balanced perspective of how their lifestyles in particular still shape our present with our culinary habits, occupations, traditional attires, languages and so much more. Removing Mughals from our textbooks or for that matter a relentless onslaught against alternative histories surely hinders the process of forming an informed citizenry.

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Hate vs Harmony: Law and order under Saffrons

Subhash Gatade

Muslims were equated to “demons” and “descendants of Ravana”, and warned of a “final battle”, as the Sangh Parivar held a condolence meeting here for VHP worker Arun Mahaur, who was killed last week allegedly by some Muslim youths. Among those present on the dais were Union Minister of State, HRD, and BJP Agra MP Ram Shankar Katheria as well as the BJP’s Fatehpur Sikri MP Babu Lal, apart from other party local leaders, who joined in the threats to Muslims. Speaker after speaker urged Hindus to “corner Muslims and destroy the demons (rakshas)”, while declaring that “all preparations” had been made to effect “badla (revenge)” before the 13th-day death rituals for Mahaur.

What does someone do in the winter of one’s own life when you discover that the values you cherished, the principles for which you fought for have suddenly lost their meaning and the world before you is turning upside down?

Perhaps you express your anguish to your near and dear ones or write a letter about the deteriorating situation around you in your favourite newspaper or as a last resort appeal to the custodians of the constitution that how you are ‘forced to hang your head in shame’.

Admiral Ramdas, who has served Indian Military for more than four decades and has remained socially active since then, followed his voice of conscience. Deeply pained by the developments around the eighty plus year retired admiral wrote a letter to the President and Prime Minister of India few months back and had reminded them of their ‘bounden duty that the elected Government of this nation must honour the rights of every citizen of this land as amply spelled out in the Preamble of the Constitution and further elaborated in the Directive Principles of state policy.’)

One does not know whether the President and the Prime Minister found time to reply to his concerns or not.

And now comes the ‘Citizens Appeal’ signed by former judges and IPS officers, scientists and businessmen – a list which includes Justice PB Sawant, Justice Hosbet Suresh, Justice Sachar and Julio Ribeiro and others—reiterating similar concerns albeit addressed to the to the Chief Justice and all other Judges of the Supreme Court of India urging them to take suo moto constitutional action on the issue of alarming and threatening statements being made by persons currently in powerful constitutional positions within the Union government. The said appeal which provides shocking details of the speech made by Ram Shankar Katheriya in Agra, where he had gone to address a condolence meeting over the murder of a VHP activist, also includes *details of many such examples of hate speeches made earlier by other foot soldiers or leaders of Hindutva Brigade*. Underlining the fact that fundamental rights of the people under Article 14, 19, 21 and 25 of the Indian Constitution need to be protected it also urges that “[t]he minister, the MP, the MLA and all other culprits need to be punished for violating their constitutional duty under Article 51A (e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious diversities.”

As things stand while cases have been filed against other leaders of the Hindutva Brigade after much pressure who participated in the meeting and gave vent to their ideas, no such case has been filed against the minister. Thanks to the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh who dismissed Opposition demands to sack Katheria for his hate speech in Agra last week, as he did not find anything “objectionable” in the Agra MP’s remarks. One learns that he is being projected as a counter to Mayawati.

While it is for the highest judiciary to decide how it wants to react to ‘Citizens Appeal’ -specifically regarding suo motto action against hate speech is concerned, if one goes by Justice Ahmadi’s observations – who was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (1994-97) – made in a thought provoking presentation few years back it has been found to be wanting on that score.

It is not that provisions in law have been left unambiguous so that no action can be taken against such rabble-rousers.

Under Indian Law promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion is a recognized criminal offence. The Indian Penal Code (IPC) prescribes criminal prosecution for “wantonly giving provocation with intent to

cause riot” (section 153); “promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion” (section 153A); “imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration” (section 153B); “uttering words with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings of any person” (section 298); “statements conducing to public mischief” (section 505 (1), b and c); and “statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes (section 505(2)). Section 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in addition, allows an Executive Magistrate to initiate action against a person violating section 153A or 153B of the IPC.”

It is not difficult to understand why Mr Rajnath Singh did not object to Mr Katheria’s speech.

In fact, one is yet to hear from him about the alleged hate speech made by of one of his colleagues – who is a member of parliament – wherein he had called for ‘end of Islam’ which is followed by more than 170 million Indian citizens. Anant Kumar Hedge had told reporters in his constituency of Uttara Kannada :

“As long as we have Islam in the world, there will be no end to terrorism. If we are unable to end Islam, we won’t be able to end terrorism. If you media people have the freedom to report this, please report this,”

Talking to Huffington Post in Delhi he had further targeted Islam

“Is it a peaceful religion? Peace and then Islam are opposite words. Wherever Islam is, peace is not there. Wherever the peace is there, there is no Islam. These two words are totally opposite words” (-do-)

Commenting on his remarks Huff Post mentions it rightly that”Hedge’s offensive remark hasn’t received half as much as attention as Ram Shankar Katheria, BJP’s lawmaker from Agra, who compared Muslims to “demons” and warned of a “final battle.” (-do-)

Perhaps silence around Hedge’s speech or finding ‘nothing objectionable’ in Mr Katheria’s speech has either to do with one’s political compulsions or one’s own ability to see things as they are and speak about it. One needs to explore it a bit – which is beyond the scope of this brief note – what is the

interrelationship between one's worldview and one's understanding or comprehension of things...

And it was only last week that Mr Rajnath Singh similarly refused to look at the breakdown of law and order in neighbouring state Haryana during the Jat agitation for reservation which witnessed killing of thirty people, destruction of property worth billions of rupees, and alleged incidents of gang rapes on Delhi-Ambala highway by those involved in this agitation. As opposed to him, Sukhbir Badal, deputy chief minister of Punjab, whose party Akali Dal happens to be one of his party's closest allies had no qualms in comparing this spate of violence in Haryana during agitation for Jat reservation to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

Talking to reporters Rajnath Singh said that the BJP government there in Haryana handled the situation well during the Jat quota agitation. When he was specifically asked whether the Khattar government failed to control the violence he underlined,

‘Whatever the state government had to do, they did. They did well’

One was suddenly reminded of the then home minister's reaction to the carnage in Gujarat in the year 2002 when the then state government led by Narendra Modi was found to be wanting on many scores, a fact which had even compelled the then PM Vajpayee to remind him of Rajdharm. Union Home Minister L K Advani had praised the Gujarat government for ‘exemplary’ handling of the situation on the floor of the house.

It is to be expected that this inability or refusal to look at things as they are by someone in authority or her/his political compulsions to do that is leading to unforeseen consequences.

Anyone who has watched the actions of the Delhi Police since last one month – where it has received tremendous flak not only from civil society organisations but also from judiciary also for its handling of the JNU issue [Kanhaiya Kumar the current President of Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union also a leader of the All India Student Federation (AISF), the student wing of the Communist Party of India (CPI) was arrested and charged in 2016 with sedition for allegedly raising anti-India slogans in a student rally]. The way in which it

handled the attack by a section of self proclaimed Deshbhakt lawyers on teachers, journalists and students in the precincts of the Patiala court, the manner in which it abdicated its responsibility when there was a repeat attack two days later, the way in which it treated the accused involved in the case, have further impacted its image.

And it is evident that even after exit of its most controversial boss in recent times who happened to be (to quote Shekhar Gupta) ‘our most articulate and imaginative sleuth since Vividh Bharati’s Inspector Eagle’ the police is not yet ready to make a mid-course correction.

It is yet to file criminal cases against those channels which aired doctored videos about the JNU incident and helped create a frenzied atmosphere all over the country

Its reaction to inflammatory posters put up in Central Delhi which offered a reward of Rs 11 lakh to anyone who shoots Kanhaiya Kumar dead gives further indication of its growing intransigence. The posters in Hindi read, “Whoever shoots JNUSU president and traitor Kanhaiya Kumar will be rewarded Rs 11 lakh from the Purvanchal Sena.” The poster was signed by one Adarsh Sharma, ‘Son of Purvanchal, President, Purvanchal Sena’, and also included his mobile number.

Media tells us that police ‘promptly’ registered case against Sharma for defacing public property, remember not related to conspiracy and attempt to murder. And perhaps as an afterthought, when it received ridicule on social media, said that it is investigating the case further and other charges can be added later.

Subhash Gatade is the author of Pahad Se Uncha Aadmi (2010) Godse's Children: Hindutva Terror in India, (2011) and The Saffron Condition: The Politics of Repression and Exclusion in Neoliberal India (2011). He is also the Convener of New Socialist Initiative (NSI) Email: subhash.gatade@gmail.com

India's Pakistan Strategy

Munir Akram

Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval's speech has documented where he boastfully narrates how Indian agencies eroded the Kashmiri freedom struggle through corruption and intimidation; forecasting the separation of Balochistan; and expressing glee at the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan's beheading of Pakistani soldiers in Fata.

INDIA'S ambitions of achieving Great Power status cannot be fully realised unless Pakistan is strategically neutralised. A conventional military defeat of Pakistan has been a costly and unlikely option ever since the latter acquired a credible nuclear deterrence capability. Pakistan has also built a strategic relationship with China which provides it with the capacity to balance, to a considerable extent, India's larger military and economic capabilities.

India's need to bring Pakistan to heel has intensified in the context of the emerging Great Power contest in Asia. Pakistan's incorporation into an Indian sphere of influence would be a grave setback to China's future role in South, West and Central Asia and the western Indian Ocean. The prospect of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, while India has no land access to the west and Central Asia has added a new dimension to India's determination to neutralise Pakistan. India's strategic goals, if not its methods, are supported by the US and its allies.

India has adopted a complex strategy to wear down Pakistan's resistance. This strategy encompasses: military and political pressure; subversion; terrorism; diplomatic isolation; media and public defamation and cultural domination.

Some elements of India's comprehensive strategy and actions are now public knowledge, such as Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval's boastful speech recalling how Indian agencies eroded the Kashmiri freedom struggle through corruption and intimidation; forecasting the separation of Balochistan; and expressing glee at the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan's beheading of Pakistani soldiers in Fata.

India has adopted a complex strategy to wear down Pakistan's resistance.

India's strategy has a wide canvas.

One element of the strategy is the attempt, pursued in tandem with the West, to neutralise Pakistan's nuclear deterrence capabilities. Thus, the discriminatory Western restraints on equipment and technology transfers to Pakistan and the vigorous US opposition to Pakistan's deployment of theatre nuclear weapons and long-range missiles which are designed, respectively, to counter India's Cold Start doctrine and its second-strike capability.

Meanwhile, India maintains military pressure on Pakistan through deployment of advanced weapons systems (ballistic missiles, anti-ballistic missiles etc), expanded offensive deployments, military exercises to refine the capacity for a surprise attack (as envisaged in India's Cold Start doctrine) and frequent

Subversion, involving infiltration, sponsorship and support for dissident or disgruntled groups within Pakistan, is a third element of this strategy. The sponsorship of the Baloch Liberation Army and terrorism in Balochistan and Sindh has now been confirmed by the recent capture and confession of the Indian spy. Disaffected groups in Karachi, rural Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkwa have been encouraged for many years to disrupt peace and security.

Substantial proof has been gathered by Islamabad's agencies of Indian sponsorship of terrorism against Pakistan through the TTP, in collaboration with Kabul's National Directorate of Security and certain power brokers. Some of this evidence has been shared with the UN but has not evoked any action so far from the world organisation. An Indian link to the Lahore park atrocity, responsibility for which has claimed by an affiliate of the TTP, cannot be ruled out.

Pakistan's armed forces are one of the few organised institutions left in the country. Not surprisingly, because of their profession and training, their resistance to Indian domination is robust. Tarnishing the reputation and

credibility of the Pakistan Army is an important element of the Indian strategy. Through the Indian and Western media, the Pakistan Army is incessantly accused of doing today what it did yesterday — supporting the Afghan Taliban and the Kashmiri jihadi groups.

The reality is clouded by ‘fifty shades of grey’. Despite old relationships, Pakistan’s security establishment is either confronting some of these Jihadi groups or has little influence over them (the Afghan Taliban). The violent sectarian groups in Punjab are known to have enjoyed in recent years the protection of some politicians rather than the security establishment. Notwithstanding this, the Indian-inspired mantra against the army and the ISI is frequently echoed in by the Western media.

At the opposite end of India’s kinetic actions, is the wide and successful use of its “‘soft power’, epitomised by Bollywood. This song and dance culture has been warmly embraced by large segments of Pakistan’s young and moneyed elite. Over time, this can lead to greater acceptance in Pakistan of India’s political and strategic goals.

Since early days, India has attempted to co-opt Pakistani politicians, by fair means and foul. When out of office, some political leaders have had intimate contacts with the Indians. Shamefully, some of them — excluding the ruling party — are known to have expressed the desire for Indian and other foreign intervention in Pakistan’s internal affairs. Even today, the desire of some of Pakistan’s leaders to ‘normalise’ relations with India at any cost is inexplicable.

India has been able to play on the fears and predilections of Pakistan’s politicians to set the tone and pace of the bilateral relationship. Dialogue is held out as a favour to Pakistan. India’s positions on both substance and process keep hardening with each encounter. Concessions continue to be made by Pakistan on process and substance — to no avail or purpose.

It is high time for Pakistan’s National Defence Council, which includes both the civilian and military leadership, to undertake a frank and in-depth review of India’s objectives and policies towards Pakistan and evolve a coherent and consensual strategy to respond to each of the elements of India’s policies aimed against Pakistan.

To those Americans who disingenuously chide Pakistan for being paranoid about India, I would respond as Trotsky did shortly before being assassinated: “Just because I am paranoid, does not mean I am not persecuted.”

The writer is a former Pakistan ambassador to the UN.

Adivasis, Naxalite and Indian Democracy

Ramchandra Guha

On 13th December 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru moved the Objectives Resolution in the Constituent Assembly of India. This proclaimed that the soon-to-be-free nation would be an ‘Independent Sovereign Republic’. Its Constitution would guarantee citizens ‘justice, social, economic and political; equality of status; of opportunity, and before the law; freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action, subject to law and public morality.’

The resolution went on to say that ‘adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, backward and tribal areas, and depressed and other backward classes...’ In moving the resolution, Nehru invoked the spirit of Gandhi and the ‘great past of India’, as well as modern precedents such as the French, American, and Russian Revolutions.

The debate on the Objectives Resolution went on for a whole week. Among the speakers were the conservative Hindu Purushottomdas Tandon, the right-wing Hindu Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the Scheduled Caste leader B. R. Ambedkar, the liberal lawyer M. R. Jayakar, the socialist M. R. Masani, a leading woman activist, Hansa Mehta, and the communist Somnath Lahiri. After all these stalwarts had their say, a former hockey player and lapsed Christian named Jaipal Singh rose to speak. ‘As a jungli, as an Adibasi’, said Jaipal,

I am not expected to understand the legal intricacies of the Resolution. But my common sense tells me that every one of us should march in that road to freedom and fight together. Sir, if there is any group of Indian people that has been shabbily treated it is my people. They have been disgracefully treated, neglected for the last 6,000 years. The history of the Indus Valley civilization, a child of which I am, shows quite clearly that it is the newcomers—most of you here are intruders as far as I am concerned—it is the newcomers who have driven away my people from the Indus Valley to the jungle fastness....The whole history of my people is one of continuous exploitation and dispossession by the non-aboriginals of India punctuated by rebellions and disorder, and yet I take Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru at his word. I take you all at your word that now

we are going to start a new chapter, a new chapter of independent India where there is equality of opportunity, where no one would be neglected.

Sixty years have passed since Jaipal took Nehru and all the others at their word. What has been the fate of his people, the Adivasis, in this time? This essay will argue that, in many ways, the tribals of peninsular India are the unacknowledged victims of six decades of democratic development. In this period they have continued to be exploited and dispossessed by the wider economy and polity. (At the same time, the process of dispossession has been punctuated by rebellions and disorder.) Their relative and oftentimes absolute deprivation is the more striking when compared with that of other disadvantaged groups such as Dalits and Muslims. While Dalits and Muslims have had some impact in shaping the national discourse on democracy and governance, the tribals remain not just marginal but invisible.

Scheduled Tribes

There are some 85 million Indians who are officially classified as ‘Scheduled Tribes’. Of these, about 16 million live in the states of north-eastern India. This essay, however, focuses on the roughly 70 million tribals who live in the heart of India, in a more-or-less contiguous hill and forest belt that extends across the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, and West Bengal.

The tribes of the north-east differ from their counterparts in other parts of India in several crucial ways. First, they have, until the recent past, been more or less untouched by Hindu influence. Second, they have, in the recent past, been exposed rather substantially to modern (and especially English) education; as a consequence, their literacy rates, and hence their chances of being advantageously absorbed in the modern economy, are much higher than that of their counterparts elsewhere in India. Third, unlike the tribals of the mainland they have been largely exempt from the trauma caused by dispossession; till recently, their location in a corner of the country has inhibited dam builders and mine owners from venturing near them.

There are, of course, many different endogamous communities—more than five hundred, at last count—that come under the label ‘Scheduled Tribes’. However, despite this internal differentiation, taken as a whole the tribes of central and

eastern India share certain attributes—cultural, social, economic and political—that allow us to treat them as a single segment, distinct not only from north-eastern tribals but also from all other Indians. In everyday language, this commonality is conveyed in the term ‘Adivasis’. It is not a word that can be—or is—used to describe a Naga or a Mizo. However, it comes easily to one’s lips when speaking of a Gond or a Korku or a Bhil or an Oraon. For these (and other) individual tribes are nevertheless unified, in the Indian imagination, by some common characteristics. Usually, what they share is denoted in cultural or ecological terms—namely, that these ‘Adivasis’ generally inhabit upland or wooded areas, that they generally treat their women better than caste Hindus, that they have rich traditions of music and dance, and that while they might occasionally worship some manifestation of Vishnu or Siva, their rituals and religion centre around village gods and spirits.

The basis for these everyday understandings of the Adivasis lies in a series of ethnographic monographs written over the years. From the perspective of Indian democracy, however, what unites the Adivasis is not their cultural or ecological distinctiveness, but their economic and social disadvantage. As a recent book by the demographer Arup Maharatna demonstrates, when assessed by the conventional indicators of development, the Adivasis are even worse off than the Dalits. For example, the literacy rate of Adivasis is, at 23.8%, considerably lower than that of the Dalits, which stands at 30.1%. As many as 62.5% of Adivasis children who enter school drop out before they matriculate; whereas this happens only with 49.4% of Dalit children. While a shocking 41.5% of Dalits live under the official poverty line, the proportion of Adivasis who do so is even higher—49.5%.

With respect to health facilities, too, the Adivasis are even more poorly served than the Dalits. 28.9% of tribals have no access whatsoever to doctors and clinics; for Dalits the percentage is 15.6%. 42.2% of tribal children have been immunized; as compared to 57.6% of Dalit children. Again, 63.6% of Dalits have access to safe drinking water, as against 43.2% of tribals.

On the one hand, by not providing them with decent education and health care, the Government of India has dishonoured its Constitutional guarantee to provide the Adivasis equal opportunities for social and economic development. On the other hand, the policies of the government have more actively dispossessed very many Adivasis of their traditional means of life and

livelihood. For the tribals of the mainland live amidst India's best forests, alongside many of its fastest-flowing rivers, and on top of its richest mineral resources. Once, this closeness to nature's bounty provided them the means for subsistence and survival. However, as the pace of economic and industrial development picked up after Independence, the Adivasis have increasingly had to make way for commercial forestry, dams, and mines. Often, the Adivasis are displaced because of the pressures and imperatives of what passes as 'development'; sometimes, they are displaced because of the pressures and imperatives of developments equally modern other: namely, 'conservation'. Thus, apart from large dams and industrial townships, tribals have also been rendered homeless by national parks and sanctuaries.

How many Adivasis have lost their homes and lands as a result of conscious state policy? The estimates vary—they range from a few million to as many as twenty million. Even if we cannot come up with a precise, reliable number, to the question 'How many tribals have been involuntarily displaced by the policies of the Government of India', the answer must be: 'Too many'. The sociologist Walter Fernandes estimates that about 40% of all those displaced by government projects are of tribal origin. Since Adivasis constitute roughly 8% of India's population, this means that a tribal is five times as likely as a non-tribal to be forced to sacrifice his home and hearth by the claims and demands of development and/or conservation.

Adivasis were displaced from their lands and villages when the state occupied the commanding heights of the economy. And they continue to be displaced under the auspices of liberalization and globalization. The opening of the Indian economy has had benign outcomes in parts of the country where the availability of an educated workforce allows for the export of high-end products such as software. On the other hand, where it has led to an increasing exploitation of unprocessed raw materials, globalization has presented a more brutal face. Such is the case with the tribal districts of Orissa, where the largely non-tribal leadership of the state has signed a series of leases with mining companies, both Indian and foreign. These leases permit, in fact encourage, these companies to dispossess tribals of the land they own or cultivate, but under which lay rich veins of iron ore or bauxite.

The sufferings of the Adivasis

The sufferings of the Adivasis as a consequence of deliberate state policy have been underlined in a series of official reports down the decades. A decade after Independence, the Home Ministry constituted a committee headed by the anthropologist Verrier Elwin to enquire into the functioning of government schemes in tribal areas. It found that the officials in charge of these schemes 'were lacking in any intimate knowledge of their people [and] had very little idea of general policies for tribal development'. Worse, there was 'a tendency for officials to regard themselves as superior, as heaven-born missionaries of a higher culture. They boss the people about; their chaprasis abuse them; in order to "get things done" they do not hesitate to threaten and bully. Any failure is invariably placed at the tribal door; the Block officials blaming everything on the laziness, the improvidence, the suspiciousness, and the superstitions of the people'.

After studying twenty blocks spread across the country, the committee concluded that 'of the many tribal problems the greatest of all is poverty'. Much of the poverty and degradation they saw, said the committee, was the fault of us, the 'civilized' people. We have driven [the tribals] into the hills because we wanted their land and now we blame them for cultivating it in the only way we left to them. We have robbed them of their arts by sending them the cheap and tawdry products of a commercial economy. We have even taken away their food by stopping their hunting or by introducing new taboos which deprive them of the valuable protein elements in meat and fish. We sell them spirits which are far more injurious than the home-made beers and wines which are nourishing and familiar to them, and use the proceeds to uplift them with ideals. We look down on them and rob them of their self-confidence, and take away their freedom by laws which they do not understand.

Not long afterwards, the senior Congressman (and former Congress President) U. N. Dhebar was asked to chair a high-powered committee to look into the situation in tribal areas. Its members included six Members of Parliament (among them Jaipal Singh), and some senior social workers. The committee identified land alienation, the denial of forest rights, and the displacement by development projects as among the major problems facing the Adivasis. Sometimes, state policy had failed to come to rescue of the tribals; at other times, it had only worked to impoverish them further. The state machinery had

been unable to prevent the loss of land to outsiders, or to check the exploitative activities of moneylenders. Meanwhile, the major power projects and steel plants set in motion by the Five Year Plans had ‘resulted in a substantial displacement of the tribal people’. The Committee was concerned that this form of industrial development would ‘sweep [the tribals] off their feet... We have to see that the foundations of tribal life are not shaken and the house does not crash.’ Because of the dams and mills already built,

The tribals were dislodged from their traditional sources of livelihood and places of habitation. Not conversant with the details of acquisition proceedings they accepted whatever cash compensation was given to them and became emigrants. With cash in hand and many attractions in the nearby industrial towns, their funds were rapidly depleted and in course of time they were without money as well as without land. They joined the ranks of landless labourers but without any training, equipment or aptitude for any skilled or semi-skilled job.

The Dhebar Committee’s most eloquent passages concerned the suppression of tribal rights in the forest. As a consequence of the forest laws introduced by the British, and continued by the governments of independent India, ‘the tribal who formerly regarded himself as the lord of the forest, was through a deliberate process turned into a subject and placed under the Forest Department’. The officials and their urban conservationist supporters claimed that in order to protect the forests the Adivasis had to be kept out. The Dhebar Committee commented:

Tribal people and deforestation

There is constant propaganda that the tribal people are destroying the forest. We put this complaint to some unsophisticated tribals. They countered the complaint by asking how they could destroy the forest. They owned no trucks; they hardly had even a bullock-cart. The utmost that they could carry away was some wood to keep them warm in the winter months, to reconstruct or repair their huts and carry on their little cottage industries. Their fuel-needs for cooking, they said, were not much, because they had not much to cook. Having explained their own position they invariably turned to the amount of destruction that was taking place all around them. They reiterated how the ex-zamindars, in violation of their agreements, and the forest rules and laws, devastated vast

areas of forest land right in front of officials. They also related how the contractors stray outside the contracted coupes, carry loads in excess of their authorized capacity and otherwise exploit both the forests and the tribals.

There is a feeling amongst the tribals that all the arguments in favour of preservation and development of forests are intended to refuse them their demands. They argue that when it is a question of industry, township, development work or projects of rehabilitation, all these plausible arguments are forgotten and vast tracts are placed at the disposal of outsiders who mercilessly destroy the forest wealth with or without necessity.

Already, by the 1960s, reports commissioned by the Government of India were demonstrating the utter failure of the state in providing a life of dignity and honour to its tribal citizens. Nor was this a generalized critique; rather, the specific problems faced by the Adivasis were identified—namely, callous and corrupt officials, the loss of land, indebtedness, restrictions on the use of the forest, and large-scale displacement. The evidence offered in these (and other reports) should have called for a course correction, for the formation and implementation of policies that ensured that India's industrial and economic development was not to be at the cost of its Adivasis citizens.

That these reports and their recommendations would be met with a deafening silence had not been unanticipated. As the Elwin Committee noted, past reports on tribal problems had been 'ignored in practice'. It 'is extraordinary', it commented, 'how often... a recommendation sinks into the soulless obscurity of an official file and is heard of no more'. Or at least not for another twenty or thirty years. Major problems faced by tribals were still land alienation, restrictions on their use of forests, and displacement by dams and other large projects. He pointed out that 'the tribal people are at a critical point in their history...' They were 'losing command over resources at a very fast rate but are also facing social disorganization which is unprecedented in their history'. And yet the 'tales of woes from tribal areas are hardly heard outside, and when they come they are not taken seriously...' What was worse, 'the State itself sometimes tends to adopt a partisan role and become a privy even for actions not quite legal simply because the matter concerns voiceless small communities'.

Death during Life – From Jinnah to Zardari-Nawaz

Humayun Gauhar

“In any case, Pakistan is not going to be a theocratic State to be ruled by priests with a divine mission” – Jinnah

Capture of a colonel-level Indian spy from its premier intelligence agency RAW and his candid confession on television was an eye opener for Pakistanis and shock for Indians. He admitted that he repeatedly entered Pakistan through Iran (were our border checks disabled?), was tasked to destabilize Balochistan and Karachi particularly and assist in many a terrorist outrage here. How many more such Indian spies are there is anyone's guess. But finally we have proof that calling India a state sponsor of terrorism was not only correct, it is much more: a terrorist state. But will the world listen? Of course not: many a western country is a state terrorist itself. It will be business as usual. That shouldn't stop us from making a big a song and dance of it on the diplomatic front. But we don't even have a proper foreign minister: the prime minister holds the foreign affairs portfolio and he cannot hide his soft corner for India because of a conflict of interest with his businesses.

It took a press conference by the DG ISPR, Lt. Gen. Asim Bajwa to expose the Indian spy on media, with the information minister sitting by, near mute and looking decidedly shifty and uncomfortable and finally running away. The childish idea was to show that he is the boss and the army and what passes for our civilian government are “on the same page”.

So let me deviate again for another week from my articles on life after death to ‘Death during Life’. That is where we as a state have nearly arrived. It is there before all to see. Total loss of governance; total loss of control; total lack of common sense; total economic degradation, bankrupt with our souls mortgaged to the Devil; growing wretchedness, rationed gas and electricity, uncertain air travel, no jobs, no education, no healthcare, no security, no hope... The only thing we have in full measure is corruption, nepotism and obscurant extremists

running amok, terrorists of various hues stalking the land, India sponsoring state terrorism all over, the Grim Reaper everywhere.

But for the Pakistan army the state would have come to a standstill by now. The army's job is to protect our borders and fight enemies within and without. But because of total government failure the army and its paramilitary Rangers dragged into and are forced to do much more otherwise there will be nothing left for them to protect. Just consider. The army-Rangers have to:

1. Fight corruption.
2. Fight terrorism everywhere because it is everywhere, with terrorist sympathizers sitting in the federal and provincial governments and in many political parties.
3. Maintain peace in Sindh, Karachi, Lahore, the Punjab, Quetta and Balochistan, Peshawar and KPK especially Swat and Waziristan and everywhere I have forgotten.
4. Protect Islamabad and its obscene 'Red Zone' that Sheikh Rashid mistakenly called the 'Red Light Area' that houses so-called VIPs and state buildings.
5. Protect the Paralyzed Puppet Parliament.
6. Hold elections, even bye-elections, anywhere and everywhere because of civilian incompetence, danger of politics-engendered violence and the political propensity to rig the ballot.
7. Conduct the much-delayed population census. We don't even know how many people we are, what sex we are, what ages and where we live, and they talk about development and representation?
8. Take care of natural calamities like floods and earthquakes.
9. Take care of unnatural, manmade calamities.

10. Maintaining law and order during Muharram, Shab-e-Baraat and on any occasion during which violence could ensue.

11. Implement the National Action Plan against militant terrorism and economic terrorism.

12. Provide security to the CPEC and to the Chinese workers involved.

13. Provide justice through military courts.

And so much more that the ‘democratic’ civilian dispensation is unable to do: this is over and above the military’s routine duties, beyond the call of duty. Any wonder that the people are looking to the army again to pull them out of the democratic hellfire? But the army shouldn’t fall for it because in the end it will earn only opprobrium. We rejoice when a bad civilian ruler falls then hanker after him or her and rejoice when they return. They deserve not the government that they get but the government that they want and elect. Let them learn. Meantime, the army is doing well to work behind a civilian facade. It happens in other ‘democratic’ countries too. Read ‘Pentagon’s Brain’.

There was carnage in a Lahore park killing 75. Why? Because it was Easter so terrorists went on a Christian-killing spree but ended up killing more Muslims. Reminds one of Roman times when they used to throw Christians to the lions just for entertainment. There was the demented sit-in by extremists before Islamabad’s parliament paralyzing government and business for four days. Why? To demand that a self-confessed executed murderer be officially declared a martyr can you believe? What a joke they have made of the concepts of martyrdom and Jihad. They are not Muslims. They know nothing of God’s Islam that means Peace. Their minds were full of cleric-spewed garbage. Silence. Then the prime minister finally spoke.

It won’t go down as one of the great speeches in history. Far from it, he gave us his usual meaningless drivel full of well-worn clichés. It was a study of a beleaguered man in his mental bunker with total loss of control, lost look on his face, living in acute denial. He had nothing new to say so he said nothing. The truth is that there is no government in this country. We are living because we are still breathing; else we are as good as dead. What a fall in just eight years of tyranny in democracy’s clothing my fellow countrymen and women.

Somewhere along the way our dream turned not just sour but into a nightmare. When the nightmare will be over is anyone's guess. Is the Pakistan Project morphing again like it did a quarter of a century ago? Will the nightmare be over then? What a nightmare – millions dead, millions more refugees going hither and yon with no one willing to accept them – shades of Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine... God forgive us our sins and save us. As I said last week, only Divine intervention can save us now. We are in over our heads.

The prime minister needs to put his own house in order first and I'm talking primarily of the House of Sharif and their henchmen in cabinet. Many are not even on speaking terms. The finance minister seems to be the de facto deputy prime minister. There is talk of a rift between the brothers Sharif and their families, both apparently vying for their political inheritance to establish the Sharif Dynasty of Kashmir. The loot has apparently already having been divided. Does this rift, if it is indeed there, have anything to do with the Punjab government headed by the younger Sharif permitting a huge congregation of extremist exterminators in Rawalpindi's Liaquat Park that lies in the jurisdiction of the Punjab government? How was the congregation allowed to march unhindered from Rawalpindi to Islamabad 7-10 kilometres distance? Once in Islamabad, where was the federal government? Has it misunderstood the acronym of the National Action Plan – NAP – literally and gone for a long nap? Was the Punjab government trying to embarrass the federal government? Or are they just stupid? Never rule that out.

The result is that the federal government is still there but the army has increased the intensity of its anti-terrorism operation in the Punjab that could net many a corrupt, criminal big wig of the ruling party.

All is not lost, though. Question is: how long does it take for an honest, competent, patriotic, courageous, educated, clearheaded leadership to emerge? It can take a very short time. Maybe never. I believe it can emerge because good men and women in this country, especially amongst the youth, are in abundance both educated and those without formal education but who have learnt reality from the School of Hard Knocks that life give us all. Hard knocks are a great source of learning, for unfortunate is the man who knows no failure, according to Hazrat Ali, for he doesn't get a chance to know himself and God.

Some good things come out of bad. Having finally launched a belated cleanup operation in the Punjab, *the army must go ahead with full speed and vigour without fear or favour. It may not like to take the reins of the country again, but the 'elected' government's incompetence, hypocrisy and the self-interest of politicians are sucking the army in whether it likes it or not.* When everyone is double-faced, speaks with forked tongues and promises what he knows he cannot deliver, what chance is there? So it would be wise for the army to prepare a status quo changing plan instead of waiting to dust down the same old and failed standard operating procedure manual.

Finally, the lie of the army and civilian government being “on the same page” is over. The army has launched an operation in Punjab against terrorism, economic terrorism and aiders and abettors of terrorism without seeking the permission of the government. The illusion is over. Nawaz Sharif, Shahbaz Sharif and their henchmen and toadies are beside themselves with worry. If the operation goes to its logical conclusion it will reach their doorsteps. To create the illusion of a pro-active government in control Nawaz Sharif has formed a committee (yet another?) headed by – wait for it – the Punjab Law Minister Rana Sanaullah to oversee the army operation. Jesus wept. What a joke. He could be one of the prime targets of the cleanup operation. Who are they trying to fool? There may not even be an army-civilian Apex Committee like there is in Sindh. No point: it only creates hurdles, delays and protects the corrupt. We can no longer afford such farcical pretences.

To be sure Pakistan too is caught in the throes of the Great Global Change that is taking place, but it is like a rabbit caught in the headlights of the oncoming car because its leaders don't have the mental capacity to understand what is going on. In America you see fascism raising its ugly head as the Republican Party tears itself apart. The Democrats are not presenting any new sweet smelling rose, with apologies to the pretty lady. The American political system is imploding. Many fear another big economic downturn, bigger than in October 2008.

The European Project may be taking its last gasps. With it will go its fatherless currency the Euro. If there is Brexit it could hasten the end. Whether it damages a bankrupt United Kingdom further or not remains to be seen. The Phoenix that will rise again from the ashes is European fascism, but this time it could be joined by America if Trump or Cruz are elected. As World War II was triggered

by the rise of German fascism targeting Jews, the new European fascism will target Muslims triggered off by millions of refugees and migrants driven out of their lands by the bombings of NATO and their own tyrants desperately clinging on to power. Of course the West will never accept that these migrants are of their own making, triggered by their meddling, creating militant groups as false flags and bombing many Arab lands. Their demented misdeeds are coming home to roost. Their propaganda is and will be that it is all the fault of Islam and its 'Jihadism'. It is not happening for the first time: it has happened before as it has in other lands earlier when Europeans were living in caves so to speak and America was not even an idea. These woes are the result of hegemony run amok, alpha males gone awry.

As I've said many times, maps are being redrawn as they were after every World War. It is happening in Muslims countries but there is no gainsaying that Europe's boundaries will not be redrawn again too, as they were after the two World Wars, the Cold War and now after the War on Terror.

Lights out, good night, God be with you.

Humayun Gauhar is a well known veteran columnist in Pakistan and editor of Blue Chip magazine.

Forever caste in Stone

Latha Jishnu

On India's Republic Day last month, the customary wall-to-wall coverage of the celebrations was practically wiped off TV screens by a protest taking place in a small town in Maharashtra state. A band of women was making a spirited attempt to get into the sanctum sanctorum of a popular temple that deifies the planet Saturn as the god Shani, whom the Hindus propitiate with oil to ward off evil. The group, led by an upper caste woman, was hailed as a champion of women's rights and portrayed like the suffragettes who chained themselves to the railings in London to get voting rights for women in the last century. It made for an interesting spectacle.

It also reflected the mindset of the ruling media stars and other pundits engaging in the inflamed discussions on this episode that not one person taking part in the futile debate referred to a more egregious exclusion. Today, 67 years after India adopted its progressive and liberal constitution, the underclass is still not allowed to enter temples. The Dalits or Untouchables, who fall outside the rigid Varna or caste system still cannot come near most temples much less invade the sanctum sanctorum. Horrific acts of barbarity are inflicted on this segment which accounts for 17pc of the population. As recently as October 2015, a 90-year-old Dalit man was attacked with a pick-axe and then set on fire by an upper-caste man for trying to enter a temple in Uttar Pradesh.

In the panel discussions on the agitation, spokespersons for the ruling BJP and its ideological parent, the Hindu supremacist RSS, dilated at great length on the importance of tradition and the reason why women are kept out of certain Hindu shrines. Among these worthies were young women professionals turned politicians who were the loudest in decrying the protest.

The Dalits, who fall outside the rigid caste system, still cannot come near most temples

For many Indians the campaign to break religious taboos is clearly of no import and irrelevant to the current nature of the struggle against the politics of fascism that is stifling freedom of opinion and open debate. But it is critical to remember that the creed that drives the ruling saffron regime is rooted in Hindu orthodoxy and its many prejudices, primarily that against women and the lower castes. Since it came to power in 2014, the BJP has played an extraordinary shrewd hand in trying to diffuse the upper-caste image of the party and RSS. Much as it may hate Dalit icon Bhimrao Ambedkar for his scathing indictment of the Hindu religion, the party has neatly appropriated him just as they have now claimed Mahatma Gandhi who ironically was assassinated by an RSS member.

Ambedkar drafted India's constitution and became the country's first law minister but Hindu chauvinists remember him for this unequivocal denunciation of a religion that consigns Dalits to the abused fringes of society. "Though I was born a Hindu, I solemnly assure you that I will not die as a Hindu," he said when he found that his cherished constitution could not free the country from casteism and along with over a 100,000 followers converted to Buddhism. So, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi now goes about garlanding the statue of Ambedkar, the RSS and its organisations continue to attack Dalits. Admittedly, it is a bias that cuts across party lines and is practised socially, too.

Nowhere is the conflict as clearly defined as on the campuses of prestigious universities. Hyderabad, in particular, has seen violent clashes between Dalit students and ABVP, the student wing of RSS, on such issues as beef festivals that were organised by Dalit and left-wing organisations to highlight an alternative viewpoint to the mainstream discourse on what the nation should be eating. Many Dalit groups along with other Hindu communities reject the Hindu proscription on eating beef that is now being pushed aggressively.

A tragic outcome of the simmering tensions between Dalit students and the saffron brigade was the suicide of PhD scholar Rohit Vemula — one of several in recent years — at Hyderabad Central University last month. While it is not always possible to ascribe clear reasons for an individual act of desperation the fact is Rohit, leader of the Ambedkar Students' Association, had been hounded by ABVP and suspended at the goading of BJP politicians. The death of this gifted, sensitive youth was a wrenching moment for the nation to once again

reflect on the ills of a society that persists with harassment and persecution of Dalits.

For the BJP, however, it was yet another occasion to play its trump card: branding any discourse that it disapproves of as anti-national if not seditious. Thus Rohit, says a BJP party leader, was “indulging in anti-national activities” because the ASA had organised a protest against the ABVP attack on the showing of a documentary on the Muzaffarnagar communal riots of 2013. He was also “a supporter of terrorism” because ASA organised a meeting on capital punishment in the wake of the hanging of Yakub Memon. Recently, the hub of liberal thought, Jawaharlal Nehru University, erupted as the president of the students union was arrested on charges of sedition after some students shouted anti-national slogans. The attack on JNU has long been in the making since the ABVP has never been able to take control of its students’ union.

As the ABVP flexes political muscle across universities to rein in students and faculty who it terms anti-national, they could do well by brushing up on what Ambedkar wrote decades ago: “You cannot build anything on the foundations of caste. You cannot build a nation; you cannot build up a morality.” But then, they seem to draw inspiration from a much older work, Manusmriti, the ancient Hindu law book which RSS’s most influential ideologue Guru Golwalkar held up as the ideal. That 2nd-century divine code says the killing of a woman, a low-caste person or an atheist is no sin.

It would appear that this primitive code continues to permeate the thinking of 21st-century India. All three categories continue to be at high risk.

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Settle Siachen

A.G. Noorani

TRAGEDIES invite attention to the human follies which led to them. On Feb 3, an avalanche hurtled down the Siachen glacier wiping out an Indian military post and killing 10 Indian soldiers. In its wake not a few urged the settlement of the Siachen dispute with Pakistan.

Similar pleas were heard in Pakistan a few years ago when an avalanche exacted a toll of human lives on Pakistan's side.

However, India's Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar said that India would not vacate Siachen. "If we vacate the position, the enemy can occupy the position and they would have the strategic advantage. Then we will have to lose many more lives. We know the experience of 1984. I know we have to pay the price and I salute our armed forces personnel, but we have to maintain this position. ... The position is very important from the strategic point."

Avalanches and deaths have failed to move the politicians.

The record establishes that the ground of distrust he cited is groundless as, indeed, is the oft-cited demand for authentication of the existing position held by Pakistan. That is marked by two aborted agreements, fitful efforts to renew them and declarations of resolve to stay put even if the concerns on those two points, are met; as, indeed, they were in the two accords.

In June 1989, after talks between the defence secretaries of India and Pakistan, a joint statement was issued. It said: "There was agreement by both sides ... on redeployment of forces ... the future positions on the ground so as to conform to

the Shimla Agreement ... the army authorities of both sides will determine these positions.”

Pakistan’s foreign secretary at the time said the accord envisaged relocation of forces “to positions occupied at the time of the Shimla agreement”. India’s foreign secretary stated he would “endorse everything” his Pakistani counterpart said. India’s army chief wanted the existing positions identified. There was an attempt during prime minister Rajiv Gandhi’s Pakistan visit in 1989, to break the impasse by extending the LoC northwards, India’s offer was that the line “should run due north, that is, up to the Chinese border in a ruler-straight line,” dividing the zone between the two countries. Nothing came of it.

Pakistan claimed the area from NJ9842, where the LoC ended, to the Karakoram Pass in the east; India from that point to Indira Col in the west which it had occupied in 1984.

There was a breakthrough in talks in New Delhi in November 1992. The drafts of both sides spelt a deadlock. To resolve it, Pakistan presented an amendment which conceded authentication of the existing positions. It read thus: “The armed forces of the two sides shall vacate areas and redeploy as indicated in the annexure. The positions vacated would not, for either side, constitute a basis for a legal claim or justify a political or moral right to the area indicated. The delineation of the Line of Control from point NJ9842 to the Karakoram Pass will form part of the comprehensive settlement to follow the redeployment of troops.” Pakistan dropped its reference to the pass later.

The Hindu published the full texts of the drafts as also an interview by N.N. Vohra, now governor of Indian Kashmir, who led the Indian delegation. He revealed: “We had finalized the text of an agreement at Hyderabad House by around 10pm on the last day. Signing was set for 10am. But later that night, instructions were given to me not to go ahead the next day but to conclude matters in our next round of talks in Islamabad in January 1993. That day never came.”

In a non-paper India gave Pakistan in January 1994, it accepted that in 1992 “on Siachen a broad understanding had been reached on disengagement and redeployment, monitoring, maintenance of peace and implementation schedule”. Nothing was left out from the elements of the accord which it spelt

out. It included disengagement “from authenticated positions”. If either side violated the terms the other would be “free to respond through any means, including military”. Thus the excuses, authentication and distrust, are groundless.

In July 1998, then defence minister George Fernandes wiped out the agreed basis for talks since 1986 — mutual withdrawal. He said: “India needs to hold on to Siachen both for strategic reasons and wider security in the region” (read: border with China).

It had been agreed that India would withdraw to Dzingrulma and Pakistan to Goma and surveillance of the area was to be by helicopter. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh spoke of the ‘mountain of peace’ when he visited Siachen in 2005. The then army chief mounted a campaign against it. He demanded authentication and monitoring, both of which were settled in November 1992. Most Indian experts agree that a settlement is in India’s interests.

The writer is an author and a lawyer based in Mumbai. This article was first written for Dawn

Khalistan 2020

Waqar K Kauravi

The second night of 2016 witnessed a strange sequence of events around Pathankot in Indian Punjab. Reportedly an official SUV belonging to the SP of Pathankot was hijacked by terrorists, who managed to throw out the SP and head towards the air force base of Pathankot, one of the most strongly guarded airbases in India.

The hijackers easily penetrated the heavily guarded airbase. Incidentally the entrance barriers of the airbase were removed exclusively for the vehicle to enter. The attackers then went on a terrorising spree for almost a full day, right under media glare.

Early morning the Indian media had already traced the origin of these gunmen to Bahawalpur (Pakistan). There was also talk of telephone calls between the gunmen and their so-called Pakistani handlers.

Was this a repeat of the Dinanagar False Flag operation to hit Pakistan in a classic three-in-one strategy? Or is this part of a larger game by Indian intelligence to pre-empt the Khalistan 2020 referendum being built up by the Sikh Diaspora at the international level. In my opinion, the attack was aimed at four major objectives. One, *show the world that, despite Modi's Lahore yatra, Pakistan has continued to support terror in India.* Two, *create a wedge between Pakistani political and military leadership.* Three, *put terrorism (read: Pakistan sponsored) as the main agenda for any negotiations between India and Pakistan;* and four, *convince the Sikhs supporting the Khalistan cause of Khalistan at home and abroad that Pakistan was destabilizing the peaceful environment in Indian Punjab.*

Khalistan 2020 is becoming a major movement in Canada, US, Europe, South East Asia and Australia. The Sikh Federation UK has already presented their manifesto. The three major objectives include:

- Independent public inquiry into the actions of the UK government in the lead up to and after the June and November 1984 Sikh genocide, including restrictions imposed on British Sikhs following pressure by India.
- Call for the UK government to recognise the events of June and November 1984 as a Sikh genocide, and backing for a UN-led inquiry into the atrocities committed by the Indian authorities.
- Call for the UK government to recognise and support the application for self-determination to the Sikhs for an Independent Khalistan.

Similarly, a major US-based Sikh organisation, Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), has been lobbying for an independent Khalistan, and for the RSS to be declared a terrorist organisation. Last year, Modi was confronted by mostly Sikh protesters calling on Modi to answer for his human rights record. As reported by NBC News on September 27 last year, local activists led by the Sikh community, protested outside San Jose's SAP Center during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Silicon Valley tour to draw attention to Modi's record on India's religious minorities. Almost 3,000 people gathered outside San Jose's SAP Center ahead of Modi's speech, accusing him of implementing "regressive" policies in India that hamper the freedoms and human rights of Indian communities.

In Canada Sikhs, under the leadership of the legal adviser of SFJ, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, intend to submit the 'Punjab Referendum Petition' to the prime minister of Canada, this is widely supported by management committees of Gurudawaras across Canada.

Dr Amarjit Singh of SuchOSuch programme of TV 84 is a Sikh TV personality based in the US. In his programme on July 27, 2015, Dr Amarjit Singh spoke about 'who masterminded the Dinanagar terrorist attack'. Dr Amarjit was very critical of Indian intelligence and of state-sponsored terrorism in Kashmir and Indian Punjab. He quoted Sikh sources within Indian Punjab that there was unanimity of the view that Dinanagar was conducted by Indian intelligence agencies to drive a wedge between the Kashmiri and Sikh communities.

Apparently the Indian security establishment, led by Doval, is finding it increasingly difficult to stem the tide of Khalistan 2020. An international

referendum by the Sikh Diaspora could trigger a wave of independence movements across India and jolt the very foundation of the Indian Union. It could also scuttle India's strategic manoeuvres to get a permanent foothold in the UN Security Council and tarnish India's secular image, which it has painstakingly built over the last six decades.

Indian Punjab is India's jugular vein; it not only connects it geographically with Indian Occupied Kashmir but also forms a pillar of secular India. An independent Khalistan is a death warrant for the Indian Union, so the stakes are too high for all the heads residing in South Block and North Block. The resurrection of the spirit of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his larger message in the shape of Khalistan is the last thing India would want to see; but it is happening.

Sikhs have also been demanding repeal of an ambiguous clause in the Indian constitution of 1949 – Article 25(2)(b) which states that 'reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly.' This clause, according to the Sikh community, has denied them their identity as a separate religious community.

Unfortunately, the Indian response to legitimate aspirations of minority communities like Sikhs and Muslims has been coercive and deceitful; Indian Punjab is likely to become the new battleground between the Sikh community and the Hindutva Nazis. Pakistan, as the favourite whipping boy of the Indian security establishment, will have to remain in the eye of the storm blowing across the River Ravi and should expect more false flag operations like Dinanagar and Pathankot.

Unfortunately, there is little debate in Pakistani think tanks and media on issues related to India's internal politics, especially the conflicts within the Indian Union. Immersed in Shining India and the cultural onslaught of Bollywood, Pakistanis keep flocking to the cinemas for the next box office hit. We hardly find any India chairs in our academia where a serious debate on Indian polity and internal dynamics could take place.

The writer is a defence analyst and a keen watcher of South Asia

A view from Kabul: Obstacle to Afghan peace process

Imtiaz Gul

The intra-Afghan peace talks are up against multiple internal and external challenges. There has been a surge in Taliban attacks alongside increasingly conflicting views on the peace process within Afghanistan's National Unity Government – reflected in the pro-Karzai and pro-Ghani camps.

Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG), have intensified their efforts for getting Taliban leaders on board. The visit of the Chief of the Peoples' Liberation Army, General Fang Fenghui also underscores the increasing Chinese interest in Afghanistan's peace.

The NUG itself appears optimistic about the peace process, hoping that sooner than later, influential Taliban, amenable to renouncing violence, will step forward to join the talks in the larger interests of the embattled country.

But if the media reports of the last few days were any guide, the intra-Afghan peace talks are up against multiple internal and external challenges. There has been a surge in Taliban attacks — as many as 17 strikes across Pakistan that have killed about 80 people since early January, including members of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) — alongside increasingly conflicting views on the peace process within the National Unity Government – reflected in the pro-Karzai and pro-Ghani camps.

The Karzai camp still looms large over the Afghan political scene; the former president is revered by the majority as the 'Rahbar' – supreme leader — and politically, he is looked up to as a national leader.

Pakistan seems to be caught up in a Shakespearean dilemma of 'to do or not to do'. It is damned if it helps in persuading the Taliban to join the talks, and it is damned if it doesn't.

One difficulty comes from the ‘reformed’ Taliban leaders such as Mullah Zaeef, former ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Wakeel Muttawakil, former foreign minister, Mulla Habib Fauzi, Said, Akbar Agha, Abdul Salam Raketi. Zaeef, who abhors Pakistan for the treatment meted out to him after the demise of Taliban regime, for instance, sits in Kabul, interacts with media but has no kind words about the QCG efforts. His recipe for the reconciliation process is direct contacts between Kabul and the Taliban’s Doha office. He distrusts China, Pakistan and the US for their ‘vested interests’.

An irony of this is that while these Taliban leaders shunned the path of violence, most of them remain in politically marginalized and distrusted.

Another big political obstacle is Pakistan’s image in Afghanistan; most people in Afghanistan still view Pakistan with extreme scepticism for its ‘leverage’ with the ‘Quetta and Peshawar’ Shura. They believe Pakistan wields enough clout to deliver, and even neutralize the Taliban insurgency.

Pakistan’s image in the public is another potential hurdle. Dislike of Pakistan runs so deep that the majority of Afghans refrain from mentioning its name, even for the physical infrastructure such as hospitals or educational institutions in Kabul, Jallalabad or Mazar-e-Sharif. A number of initiatives have been completed with Pakistani funding but Afghan politicians and commentators choose not to mention this at all.

Pakistan seems to be caught up in a Shakespearean dilemma of ‘to do or not to do’. It is damned if it helps in persuading the Taliban to join the talks, and it is damned if it doesn’t.

The Murray talks simply exposed Pakistan’s contacts with the Taliban, but the Afghan media and politicians only used it to further malign Islamabad for this very fact. This should have helped in improving the narrative on Pakistan but it worked to the contrary – with the systematic exclusion of its viewpoint from public discourse. Often, comments supportive or sympathetic to Pakistan are treated as seditious.

Some observers therefore wonder if a key member of the QCG maligned and ostracized publicly, can really be helpful in the peace process. Quite obvious

that if the NUG and other important stakeholders mean well, the Afghan narrative on Pakistan can change.

Last but not least, observers point out that the disunity within the NUG represents another big challenge. An editorial of in the Afghanistan Times on February 29, offered valuable insight.

“The important question which begs an answer is: how can the leaders negotiate and reconcile with the Taliban when they cannot overcome internal differences? Talking to the militant groups and convincing them to renounce violence is far too difficult a task than settling internal disputes”, opined the paper.

The paper listed rampant corruption, growing insecurity, capital flight, water and energy crises, food insecurity differences among NUG leaders, and desertions in police (36,000 in 2015), as some of the pressing problems the country is facing. All this offers little for the hyped-up peace process.

Imtiaz Gul is the Executive Director of Center for Research and Security Studies. He has been contributing to international and National print media.

India wages war on its own people

Press Statement by Coordination of Democratic Rights Organisation
(CDRO)

The new wave Of State Terror being unleashed On the People of Chhattisgarh

Reports from Nendra and Pedda Jojer in Bijapur and Kunna in Sukma reveal a new and brutal wave of systematic violence being carried out by security forces in South Chhattisgarh. On the one hand Chhattisgarh police proudly announces the launch of new operations and tactics, boasting of better coordination among forces and improvement in training. On the other, we have the bold but lesser heard voices of people who inhabit the lands to which the police are “laying siege” - revealing the bitter truth of the war the State continues to wage on its people.

The Coordination of Democratic Rights Organization (CDRO), a nation-wide platform of rights organizations, together with Women against Sexual Violence and State Repression (WSS) and CPDR (Tamil Nadu) conducted a fact-finding in these areas between the 15th and 17th of January. Here are some of our findings.

In a chilling repeat of the violence we saw in Peddagellur and around, forces in large numbers entered Bellam Nendra, in the Basaguda thana area on the 12th of January 2016. They stayed for two nights – looted homes, used up food and rations, beat up several women and sexually assaulted several others. A young woman was covered with a mosquito net and gang-raped, another mother and her young daughter were forced into their homes and simultaneously raped by 5 security personnel. They hurled abuses and issued threats of extreme violence. There were also two rounds of blind firing into the forests surrounding the village.

At the same time, further away in Sukma district, forces in large numbers entered Kunna and surrounding villages between the 12th and 14th of January. Fearing the inevitable and baseless violence inflicted upon them by paramilitary forces, most of the men of the village fled into the forest. Once again, in what

seems to be a part of the ethos of combing operations, those who remained were beaten up brutally and women were sexually assaulted. 5 women and 22 men were rounded up and taken to a camp in the area. After the intervention of human rights activists, the 22 men arrested were released. The five women who were picked up were stripped and brutally sexually assaulted. Besides these 27 persons, two of the women who were also assaulted in the village are now in hospital for medical care. Lalu Sodhi, from the village Kormagondi was brutally beaten up by the forces on the 13th of January who succumbed to his injuries the next day on the 14th January. Joga Sodi, who too was brutally tortured, is unable to walk now.

During their visit to the area, the team also learned of an encounter that had occurred in Chinna Jojer, Gangalur thana, Bijapur through local newspapers. On visiting the area, we found that what was reported to be an 'encounter' in which four Maoists were killed was in fact a cold-blooded murder of villagers, including a 13 year old child.

Six young people from around Pedda Jojer were on their way to the market at Reddi early on 15th morning to purchase their daily needs, when they were fired at by paramilitary forces hiding in the forest. Majji Badram aged 20, Oyam Munna (24), Oyam Tulasi (13) of Pedda Jojer village accompanied by Madkam Pandu (20) from Akuwa Village and two other children aged 9 and 12 were among those who were fired at. Four of them were killed instantly, while two young girls managed to escape. The team also found that the bodies had bullet wounds behind the ears and forehead indicating that the group were shot at from close range. There was no Panchama conducted at the site of the crime, and the troops did not inform the families of the deceased. Instead, they had to make their way to the Thana and demand the release of the bodies. District administration and police are yet to come out with any response to the incident.

The remarkable similarity in scale, magnitude and nature of these operations which have been conducted in places distanced not only by several kilometres but also in varied topographical locations marks the beginning of a new wave of State-sponsored violence. Rampant looting, blind firing, brutal beating, cold-blooded murder and sexual assault seem to have become a part of the fabric of routine combing and search operations, revealing the ways in which extreme forms of violence have been institutionalized by the State and its security forces.

In light of this new wave of terror being unleashed by the State, we demand:

- Stop 'Operation Green Hunt' at once.
- Immediate action against the gross atrocities committed by the security forces of the State under Sections 294, 302, 323, 354 (B), 376, 395 of the Indian Penal Code, POCSO (2012) and the SC/ST Atrocities Act (1989).
- Immediate provision of fair compensation to those affected by State violence.
- Immediate withdrawal of all paramilitary troops from the Bastar region.

Sexual Violence and State Repression in India

Rape, loot and plunder seem to define the grammar of combing operations carried out by security forces in South Chhattisgarh. In a chillingly similar repeat of what we saw in Peddagellur some months ago and in Sukma as recently as last week where seven women were brutally sexually assaulted, the people of Nendra village, Veerapur Panchayat, Basaguda thana were subjected to this cruel form of violence between the 11th and 14th of January, 2016. Several cases of rape, sexual assault, the loot of poultry and rations causing extensive loss, beating and constant verbal abuse were reported by people of the village.

Sixteen villagers including 8 rape survivors travelled to the district headquarters to lodge their complaint and file an FIR with the Collector and the Superintendent of Police on the 18th of January. It is now the third day since they have been here, giving testimony after testimony to the administration and negotiating with the Kotwali police that refuses to lodge an FIR in the absence of the SP.

Section 154 of the CrPC makes it mandatory for a police officer to file an FIR on receipt of any information of a cognizable offense such as rape, molestation, or disrobing. Further, no preliminary inquiry is permissible in such a case. By refusing to file an FIR, any public servant, is himself culpable under the IPC.

The team met with the Collector, who ordered testimonies to be noted and asked the villagers and human rights activists to trust him, saying that he would make sure that an FIR would be filed as soon as the SP returned from the field,

and that latest by the morning of 20th of January, the women would be able to return to their village, having filed and FIR. Similarly, the TI Bijapur Kotwali and DSP also maintained that after the SP returned, it would be done.

Accordingly, detailed statements of the affected women were recorded by the police on the first day and then again with the SDM. The statements clearly describe rape, sexual assault and looting. Despite this, the police have not lodged an FIR against their own functionaries who have committed such heinous crimes while on official search and combing operations.

As we wait for senior people in the authorities to respond, three children accompanying the women have fallen seriously ill. Others, who have left children at home, fear for their safety given the possibility of further repression and attack by security forces. The women are not only exhausted from having to repeat their experiences of violence, but also bewildered at the apathy of the State. How can it be so difficult to lodge an FIR and so easy to blatantly disregard the law? As they recall the horrors of the Salwa Judum, when their homes were burnt, women raped and family members killed, they are determined that they will not allow their lives to be destroyed again and again. The state has to be accountable to its people.

Ashish Gupta, Chilaka Chandrashekhar – Convenors of Coordination of Democratic Rights Organisation CDRO

Stop Surveillance and Harassment of Kashmiri Students!

By Peoples Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR)

Peoples Union for Democratic Rights expresses its outrage at the harassment and arrest of Kashmiri students in Mewar University, Rajasthan, and other educational institutions, amidst an intensifying surveillance of Kashmiris across the country.

On 14th March, 2016, a rumour was spread on WhatsApp that “Kashmiri students are cooking beef”, in their hostel room in Mewar University, following which a 200 strong mob comprising of Bajrang Dal activists and Vande Matram Sangathan gathered outside the hostel. The four students who were allegedly cooking beef, fled from fear. The mob beat up some other Kashmiri students. The police, not finding the students who were allegedly cooking beef, arrested four other Kashmiri students who lived in the room opposite. They were detained in the police station overnight. On Tuesday 15th March, the four Kashmiri students who had actually been cooking meat – Saqib Ashraf, Mohammad Maqbool, Shaukat Ali Butt and Hilal Ahmed turned themselves in. They acknowledged that they had broken the rule of vegetarianism in the hostel by cooking meat. But it was buffalo meat, not beef.

The police rationalised the initial, wrongful arrest as an attempt to protect the Kashmiri students, and as preventive action to prevent the situation from escalating as the police feared that the mob would start pelting stones. Revealingly, it didn't strike the police to control the mob using other means. Rather it chose to satisfy dominant sentiment and the mob's demands by arbitrarily picking up four, uninvolved Kashmiri students. For the police, one Kashmiri is as good as another. The four boys who had been cooking meat too have committed no criminal offence; they have only broken a hostel rule. Nevertheless they were charged under Sec 151 CrPC for disrupting the peace, kept in the PS overnight and produced before the magistrate on the 16th. They have alleged that they were made to sign a good conduct undertaking, before being released on bail. Significantly, the police have taken no criminal action against the mob that beat up the boys, despite activists of the Bajrang Dal

openly declaring that they had led the mob .The only action taken by the police was to register a case against one person under Sec 108 CrPC for circulating a false message. The police have also raised concerns with the University that several incidents of violation of law and order have been reported from the University.

The University authorities have attributed the incident to a prevailing rivalry between two groups of students, one from Jammu, and the other from Kashmir-something that these students have denied. The University has over 800 Kashmiri students, out of total student strength of about 3000. These students are studying here under the Prime Minister's Scholarship scheme for Kashmiri students. The inciting of anti-Kashmiri student feeling through false rumours on social media, the involvement of right wing Hindu groups, the police's action based on Kashmiri identity rather than the facts, and the University authorities generalising that the Kashmiri students are a part of conflicts, taken collectively, suggest an attempt to project the Kashmiri students as responsible for vitiating life in the institution. It however defies logic that bright students who have come here to study, far from home, will jeopardise their careers by engaging in such activities.

This incident follows close on the heels of developments in Kolkata, where the Central Government has directly initiated a formal policy of surveillance and harassment of Kashmiri students. At the end of February, a directive was issued by police's intelligence wing to Kolkata colleges to prepare a list of all students with residential addresses in Jammu and Kashmir. This dossier is to be sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi. The alleged purpose is to 'sensitise' campuses against events such as at JNU and the subsequent protests at Jadavpur University, but as per the Indian Express senior police officials have indicated that this information will be used for monitoring the Kashmiri students' activities. As per newspaper reports, a general advisory has been issued by the Home Ministry to all states.

In March, the Goa Chief Minister Laxmikant Parsekar told the State Assembly that the ATS has been instructed to conduct door-to-door checks of tenements where Kashmiris stay, and collect information, in order to check crime. These are blatant instances of ethnic profiling which violate the most fundamental of rights of freedom and equality. The upshot is that Kashmiris, students who have come to educational institutions to study (quite often on government

programmes), or in search of work, are being systematically hounded and made to live in a climate of fear and insecurity. PUDR demands that such a witch-hunt of Kashmiri students and workers be stopped immediately.

Moushumi Basu and Deepika Tandon

Secretaries, PUDR (pudr@pudr.org)

Why are India's Dalit students taking their lives?

Soutik Biswas

"My birth is my fatal accident...I always was rushing. Desperate to start a life... I am not sad. I am just empty. Unconcerned about myself. That's pathetic. And that's why I am doing this."

These are excerpts from the last letter - "this kind of letter for the first time" - that Rohith Vemula, a PhD student at the Hyderabad Central University wrote before he killed himself on Sunday.

It is, at once, an eloquent and chilling suicide note: a young man who loved "science, stars, nature and people", and aspired to become a science writer like Carl Sagan, ended up defeated and crushed by discrimination and apathy.

Steadily isolated

Mr Vemula, 26, was one of five Dalit - formerly known as untouchables - students who were protesting against their expulsion from the university's housing facility. India's 180 million Dalits are among its most wretched citizens, because of an unforgiving and cruel caste hierarchy that condemns them to the bottom of the heap.

Mr Vemula and the four other students faced allegations last August that they attacked a member of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) - the student wing of the governing Hindu nationalist BJP - on the campus. Some reports say an investigation had found no "conclusive evidence" of the assault.

Last year the students had also protested against the execution of Yakub Memon, the man convicted of financing the deadly 1993 Mumbai bombings and the right-wing ABVP's stalling of a documentary film on the Muzaffarnagar riots in Delhi University.

One newspaper said the sequence of events leading to Mr Vemula's death

shows how he was "steadily isolated by campus authorities and his appeals went largely unheard".

The university stopped paying his monthly stipend of 25,000 rupees (\$369; £258) allegedly because he raised issues under the campus's Dalit-led students union.

It also began an investigation into his -and his friends - conduct. In August federal minister Bandaru Dattatreya, a BJP junior minister, wrote a letter to the federal education ministry complaining that the university had become a "den of casteist, extremist and anti-national politics".

In September, Mr Vemula and four other students were suspended - although the minister denies this was linked to his missive, which he says was not about the Dalit students, but a general comment on the restive campus.

Mr Vemula's death has sparked off a firestorm of protest across India.

Poet and writer Meena Kandasamy says the student's suicide was "not just an individual exit strategy, it is a shaming of society that has failed him or her". She wrote "education has now become a disciplining enterprise working against Dalit students: they are constantly under threat of rustication, expulsion, defamation, and discontinuation".

Mr Vemula's is not an exceptional story of caste discrimination on India's campuses. One report said eight Dalit students had taken their lives at the Hyderabad University in the past decade. Between 2007 and 2011 alone, 18 Dalit students ended their lives in some of India's premier educational institutes, according to one estimate.

Shocking abuse

Some eight years ago, Apoorvanand, who teaches at the Delhi University, had gone to Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences, India's leading medical school, to investigate a case of discrimination against a Dalit student.

He says he found vile abuses written on the doors and walls of hostel rooms where Dalit students lived. (There was no name calling, because direct abuse

would lead to prosecution under tough anti-discrimination laws.) When he went to the director of the institute to lodge a complaint, the latter flatly denied that there was caste discrimination on the campus.

This is a school which produces India's best doctors. This is also the school where a federal investigation into complaints of caste-based harassment and discrimination against Dalit and tribal students uncovered a shocking picture of abuse.

The probe found most of the Dalit and tribal students complaining that they "did not receive the kind of support other students received from their teachers". Examiners asked about their caste backgrounds. The students said teachers did not give them the marks they deserved in exams, and their papers were not evaluated properly. More than 90% of the students said they were routinely humiliated by examiners in practical and oral examinations.

"There is systemic persecution of Dalit students in Indian universities. They are often failed by their teachers deliberately," Apoorvanand told me.

Many Dalit students who get into colleges and universities through affirmative action quotas - restorative justice for centuries of historical wrongs against the community - come to campuses with deficiencies in education, including a feeble command over the English language. Most of them are first generation graduates, come from poor families - like Mr Vemula, born of a father who works as a security guard and a mother who's a tailor - and often struggle to fit in.

Fierce competition

India's colleges and universities are theatres of fierce competition and confrontation: only a privileged few manage to get a limited number of seats through fiercely contested exams.

Upper caste students, say many, have a "natural hatred and antagonism" for the Dalits and tribals who avail the seats reserved for them. "There is a lot of anger against affirmative action and their beneficiaries, but then there is little the upper castes can do about it because the quotas are constitutionally mandated," says Apoorvanand.

So the students are shamed and mocked at as "quota students", and their abilities mocked. In absence of effective student support groups or university structures, warning meltdown signals among suffering students are ignored.

Fed up with the way things were going, Mr Vemula wrote to the university authorities in December to allow him to die and even spoke about how they could help him and his Dalit friends end his life. The authorities evidently did nothing.

Politicians have not confronted this appalling discrimination with the zeal it deserves.

Instead, Dalit and tribals have also become pawns in India's hideous vote bank politics. In modern-day India, the segregation of Dalits begins early: they are separated by markers and coloured wrist bands in classrooms; and forced to clean school toilets. Upper caste school children routinely boycott school lunches cooked by Dalit cooks.

Mr Vemula is just the latest victim of India's scourge of untouchability.

Soutik Biswas is the BBC News online correspondent in India, based in Delhi. He has also worked with various newspapers and magazines in India

Myth of India's Medieval Muslim 'Villains'

Audrey Truschke

It is High Time to Discard the Pernicious Myth of India's Medieval Muslim 'Villains'

Whatever happened in the past, religious-based violence is real in modern India, and Muslims are frequent targets. It is thus disingenuous to single out Indian Muslim rulers for condemnation without owning up to the modern valences of that focus.

The idea that medieval Muslim rulers wreaked havoc on Indian culture and society – deliberately and due to religious bigotry – is a ubiquitous notion in 21st century India. Few people seem to realise that the historical basis for such claims is shaky to non-existent. Fewer openly recognise the threat that such a misreading of the past poses for modern India.

Aurangzeb, the sixth Moghul Emperor (r. 1658-1707), is perhaps the most despised of India's medieval Muslim rulers. People cite various alleged "facts" about Aurangzeb's reign to support their contemporary condemnation, few of which are true. For instance, contrary to widespread belief, Aurangzeb did not destroy thousands of Hindu temples. He did not perpetrate anything approximating genocide of Hindus. He did not instigate a large-scale conversion program that offered millions of Hindu the choice of Islam or the sword.

In short, Aurangzeb was not the Hindu-hating, Islamist tyrant that many today imagine him to have been. And yet the myth of malevolent Aurangzeb is seemingly irresistible and has captured politicians, everyday people, and even scholars in its net. The damage that this idea has done is significant. It is time to break this mythologized caricature of the past wide open and lay bare the modern biases, politics, and interests that have fuelled such a misguided interpretation of India's Islamic history.

A recent article on this website cites a series of inflammatory claims about Indo-Muslim kings destroying pre modern India's Hindu culture and

population. The article admits that “these figures are drawn from the air” and historians give them no credence. After acknowledging that the relevant “facts” are false, however, the article nonetheless posits that pre colonial India was populated by “religious chauvinists,” like Aurangzeb, who perpetrated religiously-motivated violence and thus instigated “historical injustices” to which Hindus can rightly object today. This illogical leap from a confessed lack of reliable information to maligning specific rulers is the antithesis of proper history, which is based on facts and analysis rather than unfounded assumptions about the endemic, unchanging nature of a society.

A core aspect of the historian’s craft is precisely that we cannot assume things about the past. Historians aim to recover the past and to understand historical figures and events on their own terms, as products of their time and place. That does not mean that historians sanitise prior events. Rather we refrain from judging the past by the standards of the present, at least long enough to allow ourselves to glimpse the logic and dynamics of a historical period that may be radically different from our own.

Going back more than a millennium earlier, Hindu rulers were the first to come up with the idea of sacking one another’s temples, before Muslims even entered the Indian subcontinent. But one hears little about these “historical wrongs” In the case of Indian Muslim history, a core notion that is hard for modern people to wrap our heads around is as follows: It was not all about religion.

Aurangzeb, for instance, acted in ways that are rarely adequately explained by religious bigotry. For example, he ordered the destruction of select Hindu temples (perhaps a few dozen, at most, over his 49-year reign) but not because he despised Hindus. Rather, Aurangzeb generally ordered temples demolished in the aftermath of political rebellions or to forestall future uprisings. Highlighting this causality does not serve to vindicate Aurangzeb or justify his actions but rather to explain why he targeted select temples while leaving most untouched. Moreover, Aurangzeb also issued numerous orders protecting Hindu temples and communities from harassment, and he incorporated more Hindus into his imperial administration than any Moghul ruler before him by a fair margin. These actions collectively make sense if we understand Aurangzeb’s actions within the context of state interests, rather than by ascribing suspiciously modern-sounding religious biases to him.

For many people, condemnations of Aurangzeb and other medieval Indian rulers stem not from a serious assessment of the past but rather from anxieties over India's present and future, especially vis-à-vis its Muslim minority population. After all, one might ask: If we are recognising injustices in Indian history, why are we not also talking about Hindu rulers? When judged according to modern standards, medieval rulers the world over measure up poorly and Hindu kings are no exception. Medieval Hindu political leaders destroyed mosques periodically, for instance, including in Aurangzeb's India. Going back more than a millennium earlier, Hindu rulers were the first to come up with the idea of sacking one another's temples, before Muslims even entered the Indian subcontinent. But one hears little about these "historical wrongs" for one reason: They were perpetrated by Hindus rather than Muslims.

Religious bigotry may not have been an overarching problem in India's medieval past, but it is a crucial dynamic in India's present. Religious-based violence is real in modern India, and Muslims are frequent targets. Non-lethal forms of discrimination and harassment are common. Fear is part of everyday life for many Indian Muslims. Thus, when scholars compare medieval Islamic rulers like Aurangzeb to South Africa's twentieth-century apartheid leaders, for example, they not only display a surprising lack of commitment to the historical method but also provide fodder for modern communal fires.

It is high time we discarded the pernicious myth of India's medieval Muslim villains. This poisonous notion imperils the tolerant foundations of modern India by erroneously positing religious-based conflict and Islamic extremism as constant features of life on the subcontinent. Moreover, it is simply bad history. India has a complicated and messy past, and we do it and ourselves no justice by flattening its nuances to reflect the religious tensions of the present.

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Pakistan-Iran Sensibilities

Asif Haroon

Iran is a brotherly Muslim country with which Pakistan has enjoyed geographical, cultural, religious and historical ties. Both had best of ties during the rule of Reza Shah Pehlavi. Iran supported us during the 1965 and 1971 wars with India and provided helicopters in 1974 to defeat Baloch insurgency. Pakistan also has extended all sorts of help. The biggest was when it let Iran to retain its fleet of tanks sent there for up gradation after Iran was declared a pariah by the US, UN and west after 1979 Islamic revolution led by Imam Khomeini.

Throughout the period when Iran remained under the black star, Pakistan has remained on friendly terms and never carried out anti-Iran propaganda or any hostile act. 1979 revolution was welcomed and eulogised in Pakistan. Many in Pakistan still say that Pakistan need a leader like Khomeini to sort out the mess. Pakistan never drummed up Iran's proxy war in support of Shias, although it is a fact that from 1980 onward, both Iran and Saudi Arabia have been involved in fomenting sectarianism in Pakistan and this problem had peaked in mid nineties.

Pakistan also didn't complain when Iran began to veer towards India in early nineties when Taliban gained power in Afghanistan; and Northern Alliance soldiers were trained and equipped by Indian military trainers in Iran. Pakistan also didn't object when India in its bid to encircle Pakistan started building North-South Corridor, linking Mumbai port with Bandar Abbas port and developing Chahbahar port and linking it with Afghanistan and Central Asia by rail and road. This is being done to undermine Gwadar Port, which is an eyesore for Iran as well.

Whenever Iran had any complaint against Pakistan, Pak govt, public and media took serious note of it and tried to allay it to the best of their abilities. Jundullah group was used by CIA from Balochistan (Shamsi airbase) against Iran. ISI handed over Jundullah chief Abdul Malik Regi to Iran, who was then executed. Dr AQ Khan helped Iran in its covert nuclear program and Pakistan to this day has been suffering for it since Iran handed over the proofs of Pakistan's

complicity to IAEA in 2004. Pakistan has been denied civil nuclear technology by USA owing to this lapse, which was not at the state level. Pakistan didn't jump into the Yemen war in which Iran is supporting the Houthis, merely not to antagonise Iran, but earned the resentment of GCC states. Pakistan has helped in defusing tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The latter is wary of expanding Shia arc around it and Iran's ambition to dominate Middle East.

Pakistan has been subjected to a massive covert war together with propaganda since 2003 and is still not come out of it despite losing 60,000 people and sustaining economic loss of \$107 billion besides immense social trauma. Afghan soil has been in use by RAW and other agencies to destabilise and denuclearise Pakistan.

It has now come as a rude shock to learn that RAW has also been using Iranian soil to support Baloch separatist movement and to make Karachi lawless. Arrest of RAW officer Kal Bhushan Yadav and his detailed confession has left no doubt in this regard that he has been operating a network from Chahbahar since 2003. Indian consulates in Zaidan, Mashad and Embassy in Tehran are also involved in covert operations against Pakistan. Mekran coast has been used for supplying arms and funds to terrorists. Several naval facilities and seaports along the coast were marked as targets. Sectarianism was instigated in Balochistan under the guidance of Yadav as disclosed by him.

This development is alarming and has added to the woes of Pakistan. It was rightful on part of Pakistan to raise this issue before the President of Iran Rouhani, since arrest of Yadav coincided with his visit to Islamabad. It is not altogether correct on part of Iran's Ambassador in Islamabad to complain that a segment in Pakistan is wilfully trying to spoil Pak-Iran relations by undermining Rouhani visit under the garb of Yadav's issue. It is India, which is adept in creating misgivings among friends of Pakistan. It has been quite successful in Afghanistan, and is now working hard to mar the relations of Gulf States and Iran with Pakistan.

We must not forget that Iran has been lodging strong protests against Pakistan alleging that its border of Siestan province was violated by terrorists and that if Pakistan didn't take any action, it will be forced to send its troops across to chase and kill them. Moreover, it is surprising that Iranian media has never uttered a word in favour of Pakistan, but has given bad press to it off and on.

Notwithstanding Chahbahar/Gwadar clash of economic interests, Iran must be made to realise that the two ports instead of becoming rivals should complement each other geo-economically with the help of CPEC. It must also be told that India is a Hindu country where Hindutva fever is on the rise, and it is not the neighbour of Iran and cannot guard the vital flank of Persian Gulf as Pakistan does by virtue of its location. Iran's strategic relationship with India must not be at the cost of Pakistan. Iran must help in dismantling RAW infrastructure on its soil and hand over Rakesh as demanded by Pakistan.

In conclusion, I will say that it is geo-strategic necessity and compulsion for Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan to remain friendly since the security of the trio is interlinked. It is however unfortunate that the leadership of three countries consider India a friend and harmless and want to promote ties ignoring its track record. While closeness of Iran and Afghanistan with India is understandable, what is not comprehensible is infatuation of Pakistan's leaders with India which halved Pakistan in 1971 and then inflicted thousands of cuts on the body of Pakistan. It is high time for Pakistan policy makers to expose the ugly face of India which is bent upon fragmenting Pakistan.

At the same time, relations with Iran to be deepened and construction/operation of Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project expedited. It must be taken into account that the real power rests in the hands of Walayat Faqih and associated clergy and not Rouhani.

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Dalit, Adivasis and Liberalization

Anindya Sekhar Purakayastha, Saswat Samay Das

BOOK REVIEW

The book under review is '*Homo Heirarchicus and Liberalisation*' - a remarkable compendium of empirical research and painstaking analysis of India's post-liberalised matrix of social stratification and political economy. It comes as a sequel to Barbara Harris White's earlier work *India Working*, and "makes amends," by the author's own admission, of her previous thesis on Dalit corporatism. The present work investigates the impact of liberalisation on India's Dalits and Adivasis in order to find out whether laissez-faire has socio-economically empowered these subaltern classes. *The outcome of such explorations reveals that the ideology of the market "has done little to break down India's caste based social order, and in some ways even reinforces it" (p 7), as it is manipulated by the upper class to serve their own interests.* Drawing on data provided by governmental agencies, the book looks into questions of inclusive growth and citizenship vis-à-vis Dalits and Adivasis. It reiterates that even after six decades of independence, a quarter of India's population is still victim to poverty and social discrimination on the basis of caste, which continues to constitute the structure of Indian society.

The recent controversy over Arundhati Roy's book-length introduction to Ambedkar's *Annihilation of Caste* brings to the fore the issue of caste and class in Indian society, and shows how annihilation of the caste system still looks improbable. Ambedkar's forebodings about the impossibility of social revolution in India because of its rigid caste stratifications have proved to be absolutely true and appears more relevant today than ever. *This book comes as a great eye-opener, and ably debunks the hegemonic narratives of India's progress.* It demonstrates how the paradigm of Homo Hierarchicus perfectly converges with the ethos of Homo Economicus or to rephrase it, how the market mandarins (read the upper castes), instead of abolishing caste hierarchy in the operation of the market in particular, and in Indian society in general, have actually bolstered it in multiple ways.

The claim of universal development as unleashed by global capital looks completely fallacious in the light of Harriss-White et al's findings on caste and liberalisation in India. The market due to upper caste manipulation has not only failed to penetrate the stratified logic of Indian society, but has also worked in tandem with the caste system in direct and/or indirect ways. These findings have tremendous ramifications for future policy framing, and for further social research. The book is a product of Three Essays Collective and appears in the form of three essays on the theme of liberalisation and the Dalits and Adivasis. The essays are densely packed with rigorous data analysis or case studies that substantiate the thesis of capital's failure to abolish caste.

Identity Economics

The first segment of the book “explores how and why caste prejudices reign in the modern market place and how and why it is so difficult to eradicate” (p 10). While the book dwells on the status of both Dalits and Adivasis vis-à-vis the policy of liberalisation, the first essay is dedicated to the Dalit question, while taking up the issues of institutional economics which demonstrates how institutions such as caste and ethnicity affect the economy, a phenomena the book names “identity economics.”

In this regard the book refers to the findings of Sukhdeo Thorat and team, of the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, which show that Dalits are being incorporated in the new liberalised economic ensemble on adverse terms — as agricultural labour, sanitation workers, carcass cleaners, etc. Consequently, Dalits continue to face oppression and discrimination in transactions of land, labour, capital, credit, inputs and so on, and are “conspicuous by their relative paucity in the corporate sector” (p 10).

The authors investigate caste conditions in the post-1990s liberalisation phase and find that though elements of the caste system were found to have been rearranged to suit market exchange, its discriminatory principles remained intact. In fact, caste networks have been found “to bind the state's authority and to restrict the state's developmental activity in ways that work to the competitive advantage of middle and UC [upper caste] men” (p 10).

The 2002 Bhopal Declaration of the Dalit movement asked for state support for Dalits to explore Dalit capital, but the state failed to deliver in effective ways to

generate opportunities and a level playing field in the emerging market for Dalits. Empirical data available in 2006 shows that business activities were dominated by caste and caste-related occupations. Business activities done by 30% of Dalits were in occupations historically associated with Dalits (sanitary ware, clothes washing, leather, barbering, etc) and a further 40% of firms were in lines of accumulation “historically practiced by a wide range of castes (wood, grocery, mines...)... only eleven percent had broken into former taboo activity (education, food, rice trading...” (p 12).

In other words, Dalits in the market system are mainly working as wage labourers and obstacles to entry to other better professions are still maintained in various ways. The gruelling roadblocks also operate in credit distribution:

"two third of the firms [set up by Dalits] had experienced rejection by formal banks and financial agencies. This financial exclusion is explained first by the fact that Dalits live in easily identifiable ghettos. The revelation of an address reveals caste; and it is their caste rather than creditworthiness ... that determine their prospects for loans (p 13)."

This is a bleak picture so far as the economic emancipation of Dalits is concerned, and in the absence of financial help, Dalits often resort to informal credit obtained through social networks that are premised on caste hierarchy. Dalits are often forced to go for “forced partnerships” with the upper castes (UC) and in such understandings, the UC partners

"contribute more than simply their capital — they also invest in their relations within the state. Thus the Dalit partner is reduced to being a manager or even to quasi wage labour. These arrangements confine Dalits to the lower end of the increasingly unequal assets distributions — and may even force their exit (p 14)."

Dalits, therefore, continue to be excluded from social networks and Dalit businesses are hard to find and even if there are some enterprises, those are small and continue to face hostility in renting premises and in obtaining sites outside Dalit localities. Given that, the book endorses the need of the Bhopal

Declaration and the claims of the Bahujan Samaj Party for greater state intervention in ensuring a level playing field for Dalits.

The state must regulate the market as a generalised market economy requires some form of state-regulative infrastructure such as rights to private property, elimination of extra-economic coercion, enforcement of terms and conditions for wage laws, financial and banking systems, etc, and in all these fields, according to the book, the Indian state has so far failed to prevent the reproduction of existing social hierarchies. Studies show that in almost all cases, the state in India represented by its governmental machinery, such as police, tax departments, electricity board, etc — institutions which Dalits have to encounter for their businesses — are not governed by “a Weberian or secular impersonal rationality” but are pro-casteist in various ways.

For Dalits, the state is a set of departments which are “individual domains of patronage and competitive rent seeking.” This socially stratified and departmentally segmented state is impossible without costly intermediation through kin and sub-castes (p 15). The state therefore discriminates against Dalit capitalists and includes them on adverse terms and the relations of exclusions are routinely, passively reproduced at all levels.

Has the caste system undergone any changes under the impact of the market economy? In answer to this, the book observes,

"there is no denying that caste has changed in its social and economic roles. Those aspects which have been in conflict with the capitalist mode of production have withered; and caste has been secularised in a corporatist way...Organised social identity is expressed through a range of collective actions without which competition in the market is impossible. It is the elaboration of three kinds of duality in India's political culture. The first duality involves positive discrimination and the search for backward status in the eyes and categories of the state, versus a social advance that requires Sanskritisation. The second involves capital's wooing the state for concessions versus its repelling the state's attempts to regulate. The third dualism is embodied in the contradiction between capital and labour, a relation of conflict that is regulated politically by corporatist caste trade associations (pp 16-17)."

But in spite of such changes and because of such dualities, Dalits in business still do not have enough economic identity to organise collectively. Dalit

organisers are not funded well enough to “create, cultivate and sustain relations with officials.” Here, the book engages with social theorists like Andre Beteille who believe that caste has stopped “reproducing inequality at the middle and top levels of Indian society,” but the fact remains that “caste is being selectively reworked” and caste endogamy remains intact and sits in harmony with modern capitalism and endogamy ensures that the resources and “social networks of family business are not available to Dalits. Dalits are also forced to be endogamous and [D]alit endogamy constricts Dalits to a servile role vis-à-vis UCs” (p 17). The book rightly concludes,

"So, pace Beteille, social institutions may be destroyed at the apex of the civil service but not in the marketplace. For Dalits, the way the relations between civil society, state and market operate means that even ‘the state’ we have described here is more progressive for Dalits than is ‘the market’ (p 18)."

And further,

"The caste construction of India’s capitalism suppresses competition by protecting market shares, selectively creating adverse prices, and thus profits, for Dalit transaction Which nonetheless maintain unequal status (p 18)."

Although officially the Indian state takes an anti-casteist stance, in practice it remains vulnerable to forces that deny equal citizenship. Caste still operates as a “civil social institution of capitalist accumulation.” It functions as ideology, as “institutional structure and as a set of political-economic relationships which blur the distinction between economy and society” (p 19). In short,

"caste is an instrument of hegemony. The experience of successful Dalit businesses reveals incontrovertibly that India’s liberalised economy is far from depoliticised; it is far from being disembodied in politics (p 19)."

Reformulation of Caste

The second chapter examines, through a case study, the roles and contributions of the lower castes in this social and political space. The authors surveyed social regulation of the economy through a case study of Arni, a south Indian town, a place known for its industrial and business activities. The survey investigates how social “institutions co-evolve in order to sustain the process of

accumulation,” and this institutional matrix or the “social structure of accumulation” decides the dynamics of economy (p 22). Through the use of micro-level studies of business associations, this chapter identifies the social structure of accumulation in this small town of south India. It investigates “within the set of institutions underpinning capitalist accumulation, what is the role played by caste? How has caste sustained or sabotaged the dynamic process of capital transformation?” (p 22).

What are the roles played by Dalits and lower castes in this process? In this context the authors bring in the Gramscian paradigm of hegemony and civil society to understand the transformation of Indian society under liberalisation. According to the authors “two aspects of Indian development — rapid social and economic change and an increasing social complexity — reinforce the relevance of a Gramscian approach to civil society” (p 22).

If modernisation has reworked the Indian caste system, then the question remains, what kind of political society is emerging through the transformation of the caste system? The survey shows that instead of dissolving caste, liberalisation has revealed a deeply segmented social structure in which caste is connected to networks of other various civil institutions that govern social and economic life.

The interplay between caste and the economy in this town may be differentiated, but it is consistent with corporatism. Caste plays a triple role, firstly it provides “an ideological backcloth for the corporatist project and then secondly it generates and is consistent with the formalization of the institutional structure on the back of which corporatist organizations have evolved” (p 40). And, as the authors make evident in this essay, it was the very inevitability of the caste regulation of the economy that contested the claims made by Indian sociologist Panini that with modernisation caste had shown signs of erosion and brought about a confluence between economy, ideology, culture, and politics. The small town societal corporatist regime of accumulation analysed here, “accords with Gramsci’s concept of civil society (p 40).

The capitalist class exerts its hegemony through a strong ideology based on transformations to caste. Due to the reinforcement of caste, patriarchy, and the rhetoric of town unity, economic interests and ideology overlap in the manner Gramsci thought to be the essence of civil society. The institutional framework

of civil society is the outcome of its social contradictions and conflicts, and the ideological framework generates consent for the hegemonic project of the local capitalist class (p 41).

Cartography of Discrimination

The third chapter of the book grapples with the question of socio-economic discrimination and examines whether unevenness of economic opportunities would be annihilated through liberalisation. Significantly, the book investigates the trends and trajectories of inclusion of Dalits and Adivasis in the business economic machinery of India not as labour, but as farm owners. Half of the book after the end of this penultimate chapter contains more than hundred pages of colourful atlas that maps the uneven statistical patterns of incorporation of these subjugated sections of the population in business and developmental activities such as enterprise, education, consumption, demographic density, employment, etc, in different districts and states of India from 1990 to 2005. These cartographic profiles of social and economic discrimination provide a reality check for policy framing.

Citing Gopal Guru, the renowned social scientist, the authors note that Dalit capital takes a clientist form and the spectacle of success of a few Dalits hides the plight of the majority. The UCs is still discriminatorily predisposed towards Dalits and the book mentions Bikhu Parekh's observation that the victim-tormentor behaviour characterises the upper-caste-lower-caste relation in India till today.

The reaction of the Indian state has been ambivalent. Initially its policies of positive discrimination and affirmative action were really helpful for Dalits and Adivasis, but then the Indian state has proved to be "Janus faced." It has failed to de-stigmatise Dalit identity and Adivasis otherness and this has been so because the state policy of social incorporation has accommodated Dalits only in sectors that cater to lowly works. Hence, the book rightly observes,

"the state is a set of departments and each walled-off department is experienced as individual domains of patronage and of competitive seeking in which Dalits must engage in time consuming relationships of multiple clientages (p 46)."

According to the Chair of the Tamil Nadu Commission for Scheduled Castes (SCs)/Scheduled Tribes (STs), “the caste system is an economic order” and the veracity of such an observation can be easily ascertained in the light of what the book finds through its case studies. Referring to Sukhdeo Thorat and his research, the book finds the regulative social structure of caste operating in two ways in India, namely, unfavourable exclusion and unfavourable inclusion. Under the former system, although officially the caste system does not have a palpable existence, but discriminations and persecution of Dalits and Adivasis continue. Citing econometric analysis, the authors conclude that:

“for SCs the poverty effects of this exclusion operates through social constraints on mobility and the diversification of opportunities in the labour market while the relative poverty of the STs is reproduced through locational remoteness and disadvantage as well (p 48)”.

Unfavourable inclusion of Dalits and Adivasis is executed through caste-specific, covert discriminations, and behavioural variations on day-to-day activities as well as on business exchanges. “Despite the achievements of reservations, in the rural economy as well as in towns, India has an appalling record of recruitment to the organised sector and of under-representation in the informal economy” (p48).

In the concluding chapter, there are more than hundred pages of excellent cartographic analysis of data. The findings show that the proportion of SCs to total population is the greatest in the north and south-east, and lowest in the far west, some parts across the centre, in the north-east, and Kerala in the south of India. The growth rates of the SCs are the fastest where “they are least densely distributed” (p 50). As evident from the statistical atlas, SCs are consistently prevented from entering domains like transport, food, hospitality, finance, trade, and service sectors — the service sector, we all know, has been crucial in driving India’s growth story.

The study finds the growth rates of the STs are fastest in south and central India, although the authors maintain that in a crude form of generalisation it can safely be said that forestry still remains the dominant occupation among STs in the western part of India, where their numbers are the highest (20 million in Maharashtra alone). While some data do corroborate the fact that the share of

general caste (GC) ownership of firms in urban areas has declined in the first decade of liberalisation, it hides another important fact

"That GC ownership has become more concentrated in larger farms employing more than 6 workers. Thus while the proportion of GCs among business owners has declined, (seemingly making way for SC business owners). GC employers of labour are now more concentrated in the largest sizes of farms. The main inroad made by the SCs into the structure of India's business economy is limited to small farms employing fewer than six workers (p 55)."

This is a clear indication of sectoral unevenness and discriminations against Dalits and Adivasis so far as India's business economy is concerned. The atlas enables us "to comment on both the time trends and the spatiality of economic and social incorporation and exclusion, and on their implications for the uneven regional effort" that would be needed for the Government of India's socially inclusive development (p 56). The authors admit at the end that though their "attempts to explain the spatial phenomena [they] have discovered have generated more questions than they have answered" (p 65).

The book ends by offering six areas of future research, firstly, investigations can be made on the processes and roadblocks that confront the subjugated sections in owning farms and other business enterprises in an upper-caste dominated sector. Further research may try to discover the knowhow to equip the Dalits and Adivasis to participate in the differentiated capitalist economy, more focus can be given on the role of education in this regard. Attention is drawn to examining the individual-level challenges confronted by the Dalit entrepreneur while defying the social hierarchy. Regional variations of incorporations of Dalits and gender discriminations within the caste system also call for serious analysis. As the Dalits and Adivasis are mostly involved in informal sectors which are beyond the reach of banks and state-sponsored developmental agencies, governmental plans for inclusive development must also keep that into consideration in future policy formulations. The final statement of the book is worth quoting:

"Given the absence of any beckoning alternative to India's capitalist economy, a new movement of research on contemporary history of regional and local processes and regimes of economic discrimination against — and of the economic incorporation, accumulation trajectories and achievements of —

people still labelled and identified as Dalits and Adivasis, Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes, is only to be welcomed (p 68)."

Courtesy Economic and political Weekly