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Journal of National Development

Aims and Scope

The Journal of National Development (JND) is an interdisciplinary bi-annual peer reviewed & refereed international journal committed to the ideals of a 'world community' and 'universal brotherhood'. The Journal is a joint effort of like-minded scholars in the field of social research. Its specific aims are to identify, to understand and to help the process of nation-building within the framework of a 'world community' and enhance research across the social sciences (Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, Psychology, History, Geography, Education, Economics, Law, Communication, Linguistics) and related disciplines like all streams of Home Science, Management, Computer Science, Commerce as well as others like Food Technology, Agricultural Technology, Information Technology, Environmental Science, Dairy Science etc. having social focus/implications. It focuses on issues that are global and on local problems and policies that have international implications. By providing a forum for discussion on important issues with a global perspective, the *JND* is a part of unfolding world wide struggle for establishing a just and peaceful world order. Thus, the *JND* becomes a point of confluence for the rivulets from various disciplines to form a mighty mainstream gushing towards the formulation and propagation of a humanistic world- view.

Publication Schedule

The Journal of National Development is published in volumes of approximately 250-300 pages, divided into two bi-annual issues–summer and winter. Besides, a special issue in Hindi is also published every year to meet the demand of social scientists, both research scholars and teachers of Hindi speaking states of India.

Subscription and Business Correspondence

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Press Council of India as a Self-regulatory Body

Rajendra Kumar Sharma*

Autonomy in journalism signifies, firstly, freedom of expression, i.e., the freedom to hold opinion and their circulation through printed words and secondly, evaluation and regulation of journalist' performance only by professional peers. Self-regulatory body is an important attribute for achieving autonomy in a profession. To achieve professional autonomy in any profession, the best way would be to let peers of the profession regulate it through a properly constituted impartial body. In journalism the task of regulator has been assigned to the Press Council of India. In the present endeavor an attempt has been made to evaluate the role of the PCI as a self-regulatory body. In view of the definition of self-regulatory body like Medical Council of India and Bar Council of India, the self-regulatory bodies in medical and legal professions respectively, in the present analysis it was found that PCI cannot be described as a self-regulatory body of journalism and the press. Moreover, due to its limited powers it has not been very effective in enforcing a code of conduct in journalism. It has been called a 'paper tiger with rubber teeth'. Even journalists are not in favour of making PCI more powerful.

[**Keywords :** Professional autonomy, Code of conduct, Press Council of India]

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1.   Professional Autonomy in Journalism

Autonomy of the press relates to their freedom of selection and treatment of news and their expression without any intervention from anyone including, Government, proprietor of the newspaper organization or any other outside agency/force. Their professional behavior, therefore, must be examined by their fellow journalists. Autonomy in journalism signifies, firstly, freedom of expression, i.e., the freedom to hold opinion and their circulation through printed words and secondly, evaluation and regulation of journalist' performance only by professional peers. The rational for professional autonomy in any profession, in the views of Freidson and Rhea (1965), is technical competence, and in the opinion of Larson (1977), norm of altruism. Journalists claim that they should be given full freedom to impart their duties and serve the public interest. Professional autonomy is the core attribute of a profession (Hughes, 1971). Journalists have talked a lot about the autonomy of journalists (Ayyanger, 1970; Noorani, 1971; Mankekar, 1978; Sarkar, 1984).

The Constitution of India does not directly provide for the freedom of the press. The freedom of the press/mass media is derived from the fundamental rights. Article 19 of the Constitution guarantees the freedom of speech and expression to all citizens of India. Freedom of the press is included in it, without any specific mention for the press. However, it has been widely debated whether it is desirable to make specific mention of the freedom of the press in the Constitution.

2.   Code of Conduct

Developing a code of conduct has been described as one of the major steps in the development of a profession by advocates of processual approach in the studies of profession (Wilensky, 1964; Caplow, 1970; Ritzer, 1972). It is through a properly evolved and strictly enforced code of conduct, that a profession will be self-regulated. Section 13 (2) (b) of the Press Council Act 1978, assigns the Press Council the task to 'build up' a code of conduct for the press, in accordance with the high professional standards, to guide the journalists and the press. In 1992, PCI issued 'A Guide to Journalistic Ethics' providing, in details, the professional ethics to journalists and the press. The Press Council evolved a very exhaustive Professional Ethics for journalists in 1996, entitled 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct'.

The ethic was subsequently revised in the edition of 2010 and in the recent edition of 2019 (https://press council,nic,in).

The Press Council has evolved a code of ethics for journalists, case by case, providing guidelines on the following :

1. Communal Writings.
2. Defamation.
3. Investigative Reporting.
4. Obscenity and Bad Taste.
5. Right to Privacy.
6. Right to Reply.
7. Pre-publication Verification.
8. Threats to Press Freedom.
9. Advertisement and Press Freedom.
10. Impropriety and Press Freedom.

Recently, The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has issued new code of ethics for digital media on the lines of code of conduct evolved by the PCI, known as 'Information Technology Rules 2021'.

However, the empirical studies (Sharma, 1990; Verma, 2009) have indicated that most of the journalists in the press even do not know about theses ethics. Due to limited powers of the PCI, the enforcement of the code of conduct has not been very effective.

3. The Press Council of India

Self-regulatory body is a crucial attribute for achieving autonomy. To achieve professional autonomy in any profession, the best way would be to let peers of the profession regulate it through a properly constituted impartial body. Professions like Medical and Legal professions have self-regulatory body to enforce professional code of conduct and discipline among its members like Medical Council of India and Bar Council of India, respectively. As these Councils have members only from their own profession, these are defined as self-regulatory bodies of the profession. In journalism the task of regulator has been assigned to the Press Council of India. The Press Council Act was promulgated on 4th July 1966 with the first objective of protecting freedom of the press. The Council functioned till 1st January 1976, when during emergency it was abolished by the

Press Council Repeal Act 1976. The Council was reinstated in March 1977, when emergency was lifted. Every year on 16th November, National Press Day is celebrated to commemorate the establishment of the Press Council of India. National Press Day is perceived as the symbol of a free and responsible press in India.

4.   Objectives/Aims of the Press Council of India

The Press Council aimed 'to encourage the growth of a sense of responsibility and public service among all those engaged in the profession of journalism'. The Press Council of India was established with twin purposes, firstly, preserving the freedom of the press and secondly, maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers and journalism in India.

The Aims of the Press Council of India may be summed-up as follows :

1. To preserve the freedom of the press.
2. To maintain and improve the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India.
3. To help the newspapers in maintaining their independence.
4. To build a code of conduct for journalists and news agencies.
5. To work for maintaining a high standard of public taste and foster a sense of responsible reporting among citizens.
6. To review and assure the free flow of news and information.

5.   Composition of The Press Council of India

The Press Council of India has been constituted under the PCI Act of 1978. Under the Act, The Council consists of 28 members, besides Chairman. The first chairman of PCI was a judge of the Supreme Court, Justice J. R. Mudholkar.

The membership of the Council is as follows :

1. Chairman.
2. Two members from the Rajya Sabha.
3. Three members from the Lok Sabha.
4. Seven members from the working journalists.
5. Six members from the editors of newspapers.
6. Three members with specializes knowledge on public life.

7. One member from news agency.

8. Six members from newspapers management.

It is important to note here that, unlike Medical Council of India and Bar Council of India, the Press Council is not constituted by the members of journalism profession only. Under section 5 of the Act, the Council consists of a chairperson who is always a judge of the supreme court. Out of the total 28 members only 13 (7 working journalists and 6 editors of newspapers) are journalists i.e., the members from the profession. Remaining members include representatives of the newspapers' management, news agencies, and members of parliament.

Since members of the Council are nominated, on various occasions allegations of partiality in selection of the members have been made. Therefore, its true representativeness is questionable. The three members with specialized knowledge on public life are now selected from Bar Council of India, UGC and Sahitya Academy. The nominating committee is empowered to review any objection raised in nomination of members. A totally non-subjective procedure has been now evolved, leaving no room for Government interference for selection/nomination of members.

In view of the above-mentioned membership structure, the Press Council of India cannot be defined as a self-regulatory body of the profession of journalism as it is comprised of a majority of the members from outside the profession. It may be submitted that journalists are governed not only by professionals/journalists but by non-journalists also.

6. Powers of the Press Council of India

The Press Council of India accepts complaints from the public and the press, in matters relating to the breach of code of conduct by journalists or newspaper organizations. The Council can investigate and issue a notice for the same. The Council may issue summon to witness and take evidence under oath. It may demand the copies of public records. The Council can 'warn, admonish, censure or disapprove' those it finds guilty. However, neither, it has the powers to enforce its rulings, nor impose any penalty on journalists and publications. The decisions of the Council are final and cannot be challenged in court of law. But at the same time, they are also not binding on the guilty, and, therefore, PCI acts as a moral watchdog for the press.

Besides, examining the complaints, PCI has conducted a number of studies on matters concerning the press and issues of social importance like, Ayodhya Report (1990), Report on Aids and the Media (1993), Defence Report (1993), J & K Report (1994), Portrayal of Women in Media (1996), Problems of Small and Medium Newspapers (1996) etc.

7. Limitations of the Powers of the Press Council of India

It is important to note, that The Press Council has extremely limited powers in enforcing its decisions. It has no right to penalize journalists and newspapers and news agencies for neglecting and violating the prescribed code of ethics. Under the section 14 of the Press Council Act 1978, the Council has been authorized to hold an enquiry on receipt of a complaint against an editor or journalist for offending against the standards of journalistic ethics or any professional misconduct. The decision of the council under subsection (1) or (2), as the case may be, shall be final and shall not be questioned in any court of law. However, the decisions of the council are not judicial pronouncements, and therefore, cannot impose any punishment on offending journalist. The judgement of the council is important only in exposing the offender.

The powers of the Council, therefore, are insufficient in strictly enforcing professional ethics. Its effectiveness depends on its moral authority rather than on any statutory sanctions (Ghosh, 1973). The Press Council of India has been therefore, called as 'Paper Tiger with rubber teeth' as a vague and powerless body (Sarkar, 1984). Most of the journalists are not in favour of increasing the powers of the Council. "The Press Council is not a court of law and should not be converted into one. It is a court of honor and should exert its moral authority" (Sarkar, 1984 : 200). From the above views, it may be submitted that the Press Council has extremely limited role in enforcing the declared code of conduct and norm of altruism in journalism.

Despite, its limited powers, PCI has been continuously making efforts to ensure free and fair flow of news. In 2010, the Press Council of India conducted a study of the widespread practice of 'paid news' in Indian press. The report of the study published in July 2010,

confirmed that paid news is a pervasive, structured and highly organized practice in Indian newspapers. It is a frequent practice that news space and favourable coverage is exchanged for money. Council observed, "paid news is a complex phenomenon and has acquired different forms over the last six decades (1950 - 2010). It ranges from accepting gifts on various occasions, foreign and domestic junkets (trips), various monetary and non-monetary benefits, besides direct payment of money". Another form of paid news that has been brought to the notice of the Press Council of India by the Security and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), is in the form of 'private treaties' between media companies and corporate entities. Private treaty is a formal agreement between the media company and another non-media company in which the latter transfers certain shares of the company to the former in lieu of advertisement space and favourable coverage. The study found substantial evidence of corrupt practices and collusion between the Indian media, various politicians, and political parties. PCI stated that newspapers should not carry articles that report "enmity or hatred between people on the ground of religion, race, caste, community or language", and refrain from critical statements on "personal character and conduct of a political candidate", refuse financial or indirect forms of compensation for political coverage among other voluntary guidelines (https://en. wikipedia.org).

Surubhi (2015), in her article entitled, 'Press Council of India : A Critical Analyses', observed that "Things would not get better until and unless PCI is entrusted with the power to levy fines. Mere censuring is too adject and hopeless." Like BCI and MCI, PCI may be given power to issue licenses to journalists. The license of journalists found guilty, may be confiscated. If this is done "proper journalistic code of conduct would be maintained" (http://docs.manupatra.in). Noorani (2009) has also analyzed the effectiveness of the PCI in his article, entitled 'The Press Council: An Expensive Irrelevance' (https://jstor.org).

Recently, on 28 August 2020, the Press Council of India issued an advisory to the press. It stated, "Press Council of India advises the media to adhere to the norms of journalistic conduct in covering cases under investigation" in reference to the coverage of Sushant Singh Rajput's death. The Council also advised press, not to carry out its own 'parallel trial'. The Council held that, "The media should not

narrate the story in a manner so as to induce the general public to believe in the complicity of the person indicted. Publishing information based on gossip about the line of investigation by the official agencies on the crime committed is not desirable. It is not advisable to vigorously report crime related issues on a day-to-day basis and comment on the evidence without ascertaining the factual matrix. Such reporting brings under pressure in the course of fair investigation and trial". The Press Council also advised the press to refrain from giving, "excessive publicity" to the "victim, witness, suspects and accused" (https://www.newindianexpress.com). The prescribed code of conduct for journalists, prohibits publication of stories of suicide. The press has been advised to not to make frequent repetitions of such stories in the public interest.

A citizen is entirely dependent on the press for the quality, proportion and extent of his news. If the newspaper industry is concentrated in a few hands, the chance of an idea antagonistic to the idea of the owners getting access to the market becomes very remote. Neha (2020) in her article entitled, 'The Legal Environment for the Media in India-Note on the Press Council of India', submits that, "The assumption in a democratic set-up is that the freedom of the press will produce a sufficiently diverse Press not only to satisfy the public interest by throwing up a broad spectrum of views but also to fulfil the individual interest by enabling virtually everyone with a distinctive opinion to find some place to express it" (https:/sol por. org).

8.   Conclusion

From the above analysis, it may be concluded that the Press Council of India cannot be defined as a self-regulatory body of journalism profession, as representation of journalists is in minority (13) and majority (15) of its members are non-journalists. A self-regulatory body of a profession is constituted by the members of the profession only as is the case of Medical Council of India and Bar Council of India. Besides, the PCI has extremely limited powers for enforcing a code of conduct, evolved for the press and in ensuring a free and fair flow of news. It has been called 'Paper tiger with rubber teeth'. Journalists themselves are not in favour of increasing the powers of the Council. However, PCI has been continuously playing the role of a moral watchdog, for protecting the interests of the press

and the public by updating the professional code of conduct, examining the complaints received against the press and conducting studies of the important social and national issues, reported in the press.

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Harsh Reality of Chauvinistic Biased Society : Marginalisation of Women

Mamta Sharma*

The present paper throws light on the treatment of women by the society. Women possess a unique and divine quality of giving birth to a baby. Thus, being the pivot of the society she should be given equal rights just as are given to men. However, the paper presents how unjustfully women are treated by this male dominated biased chauvinistic world. It also highlights the struggle of a woman fighting for her rights but in the end she gives up all hope and surrenders herself to her husband.

[**Keywords :** Equal rights, Chauvinistic world, Biased society, Unjust treatment, Male dominance]

The play 'Kamala' written by Vijay Tendulkar is a very famous play which highlights a very deep thought. This is a two act play and the main theme of the play is flesh trade. Dr. Pramod Pawar in his research article comments, "In Kamala, Vijay Tendulkar presents a complex relationship between Jadhav and Sarita, his wife. It is a

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gyno-centric play because the character, Sarita, becomes an aggressive and a mature wife from being a domestic one earlier" (Pawar, 2015).

In this play, story of two women have been presented. One is Kamala who is sold in human flesh market and other is Sarita who is wife of Jaisingh Jadav. Jaisingh Jadhav is a journalist who is very daring. He is afraid of nothing and can go to any limit to get fame and success. Outwardly, he pretends to be working for the social cause however, in his mind, he keeps on making plans how to use others for his success. To get name, money and success in career and to increase his popularity, he buys a tribal lady, Kamala, from the human flesh market to prove to the world that he exposed human trafficking so that he can gain fame. But in his blind race of success, he forgets the emotions of a human being.

Vijay Kumar Sinha rightly comments in his article about Jaisingh Jadhav's nature. He says, "This sensational Journalist, claiming himself to be the champion of Adivasi woman's rights and posing to bring about a revolution in the outlook of society through his articles, is utterly selfish, cruel and insensitive to the feelings of his wife. Jaisingh treats his wife as a slave, puts her on duty as his P. A. to receive phone calls. He doesn't care for her pain and pleasures; insults and distrusts her. Jaisingh represents male egoism and domination causing exploitation and mistreatment of woman" (Sinha, 2008 : 177).

We can say, he is devoid of all human emotions. He is very selfish person. He orders his wife, Sarita, as if she is his slave and not a wife. This is clearly reflected in his words when he orders his wife Sarita :

JAISINGH : Oh, and bring me some tea. And that suitcase has four days of dirty clothes in it. Take them out and give them for a wash. But hold your nose while you do it. They must be stinking. Don't tell me I didn't warn you (8).

Sarita obeys all his orders as a dumb cattle follows his master's order. The play throws light on the behaviour of Jaisingh towards his wife whom he treats like a mere object.

Later, in the play when he presents Kamala in front of all people in the press conference and people ask her cheap questions and pass dirty comments, he does not feel ashamed of his act and feels proud as if he had done some wonderful task. Kamala and his wife, Sarita,

both are mere objects for him. Shibu Simon quotes rightly, "The play 'Kamala' deals with the problem of women being treated as a commodity in the modern world. Both Kamala and Sarita are commodities that can be sold off" (Simon, 190). Jaisingh Jadhav is so inhumane that he does not even think about Kamala's respect and dignity. After the press conference is over and his work was done, he not even cared once for what will happen to Kamala now. This is very clearly visible in his statement :

JAISINGH : […] She hadn't understood a thing. And I didn't expect her to. I just wanted to present her as an evidence. And that was done (30).

Beena Agarwal aptly comments in her article, "The cruelty implicit in this statement is so intense in the innocent laughter of Kamala and violent move of Jaisingh, the image of seduction symbolized through Eve and serpent becomes alive" (Agarwal, 2012 : 55).

In this context, Arundhati Banerjee observes, "Like Kamala, Sarita is also an object in Jadhav's life, an object that provides physical enjoyment, social companionship and domestic comfort" (Banerjee, 2004 : 59).

It would not be wrong to call him a cheat, a fraud person because he lied to Kamala. His purpose was to present Kamala before all people in press conference but for innocent Kamala, Jaisingh Jadhav was like her husband. Vijay Kumar Sinha in his article quotes, "A critic says, he duped Kamala who had come prepared to become his bonded keep with all the associated feelings of sex, motherhood and living" (Sinha, 2008 : 177). 'Kamala' is a realistic play, in which Kamala and Sarita have to face gender discrimination. Though, both are fully devoted towards Jaisingh Jadhav, yet he makes fool of both by playing with their emotions and feelings.

When Sarita comes to know about Kamala, she feels pity on her condition and torn saree that she was wearing. When Jaisingh was taking Kamala to the press conference, then Sarita suggests Jaisingh to let her change her torn saree. But Jaisingh did not even allow Kamala to take bath because he wants to present Kamala in the press conference in the most miserable condition so that all feel pity for Kamala and praise him to save Kamala's life. This is clear in these statements :

JAISINGH : That's exactly what I am telling you. She will come to the press conference in the same clothes she is wearing now.

SARITA : She's a woman, after all. And her saree is torn.

JAISINGH : I know, I know, you don't have to tell me, understand? (22).

This shows Jaisingh's dominant nature towards her loving wife, Sarita and inhumane, shameless nature towards a woman Kamala. In the press conference, people ask Kamala many vulgar questions and he listened to them without objecting. This attitude of Jaisingh Jadhav shows that he has no respect for women in his heart and mind.

Shailaja Wadikar says, "He accepts such a dangerous task not with a view to reforming Kamala's life but as a part of his professional commitment. Kamala for him, is a means by which he can get a promotion in his job and win reputation in his professional career. He never stops to think what will happen to Kamala after this expose" (Wadikar, 2008 : 24).

Later on, in the play when very innocently Kamala asks a question to Sarita, the single question of Kamala that how much money did Jaisingh Jadhav pay to buy Sarita just turns the table and play takes a new turn.

KAMALA : Can I ask you something? You can't be angry?

SARITA : No, go on.

KAMALA : How much did he buy you for?

At this question of 'Kamala' Sarita is stunned at present, thinking what Kamala is asking, but when she deeply ponders over the question, she is forced to think about her position in the house where she came after marriage. She realizes that she is a free of cost servant of her husband Jaisingh, in fact, her father paid to Jaisingh the dowry to marry Sarita. At this point, Sarita is blank for few moments. She is confused, sad and angry at the same time for being used by her husband like a commodity since marriage. Shibu Simon rightly says in his article, "In a country like India, the fate of a woman- whether tribal or urban or educated - is basically the same" (Simon, 2008 : 190).

This is the time when Sarita realizes her importance and decides to ask Jaisingh about her importance and her position in his

life. When, in the play; Jaisingh asks Sarita to come to the party for his success Sarita denies bravely and questions Jaisingh. This can be seen clearly in the conversation of Sarita with Jaisingh Jadhav.

JAISINGH : You don't want to come? Why?

SARITA : That is my will.

JAISINGH : (Rather surprised) Your will ?

SARITA : Aren't I allowed to have a will of my own?

JAISINGH : (Sarcastically) Never noticed any signs of it before. If you didn't want to come, you could at least have told me earlier. Then I wouldn't have accepted for both of us.

KAKASAHEB : […] Is your head aching?

SARITA : If I had one, it would.

KAKASAHEB : You don't have a head? Then who does ?

SARITA : The gentleman who just left.

Sarita refers Jaisingh as a gentleman in the above conversation. This is a clear sign that Sarita is very much hurt and she does not want to keep any contact with her husband, who just utilized Sarita for his own comforts and used her as a dumb puppet who is expected to follow the orders of the master without complaining and without questioning.

She is wounded mentally. She also tells Kakasaheb that she will keep a press conference where she will tell everyone about Jaisingh's behaviour with her.

SARITA : I am going to present a man who in the year 1982 still keeps a slave, right here in Delhi. Jaisingh Jadhav. I am going to say, this man's a great advocate of freedom. And he brings home a slave and exploits her. He doesn't consider a slave a human being- just a useful object. One you can use and throw away. He gets people to call him a sworn enemy of tyranny. But he tyrannizes his own slave as much as he likes, and doesn't think anything of it - nothing at all. Listen to the story of how he bought the slave Kamala and made use of her. The other slave he got free - not just free - the slave's father shelled out the money - a big sum. Ask him what he did with it [An uncontrollable sob bursts from her. She controls it] (190).

A woman is always discouraged, whenever she tries to take her life's decision by her ownself. She is criticized and taunted. If by luck she decides something then, her upbringing comes in her way. In

India, a woman is never left free, at home before marriage she is taught to obey her father, after her marriage, woman is expected to follow her husband and obey him, at her old age, she is in a state that she is forced to follow her son. This same thing happens with Sarita in the play at this crucial moment of taking own decision. She comes to know about her husband that he is fired from his job and will be arrested. This time all her childhood teachings and values become obstacles in her path and she decides not to leave her husband in this serious situation when he needs Sarita the most. Finally, she decides to punish her husband some other time in future…that future which is never going to come until and unless a woman becomes selfish and thinks of her own happiness first.

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Factors contributing to the Success and Failure of Self-help Groups in India : A detailed SWOT Analysis

Arnab Chakraborty* and Chinmayee Chaturvedi**

The Government of India along with various state governments have invested quite an effort in the formation and growth of self-help groups, realizing their potential in economic development. The success of self-help groups as a business organization generating employment opportunities is crucial for making the efforts justified. For a formal and large organization, it is easy to source the required skill set by hiring resources, marketing their products, and reaching out to their customers in a profitable manner, but the same may not be true for micro-enterprises like SHGs, who don't have sufficient funds and expertise in management practices. Self-help groups rely on the capabilities of its members and the support of various Government agencies and NGOs for carrying out its operations. A careful SWOT analysis of these groups can help building their strengths, overcoming the weaknesses, tapping on to the market opportunities and avoiding the potential threats to their business operations. If the analysis is done

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successfully and implemented carefully there is a huge potential for these micro-organizations to excel in their business operations. The present study focuses on doing an extensive SWOT analysis on Self-Help groups in India and tries to recommend the right set of actions that can be used by various agencies to help these SHGs.

1.   Introduction

Since 1980s, the government of India has invested quite a time, energy and money on the formation and uplift of Self-help groups across the country. The success of the SHGs model in China and Bangladesh has paved way for engaging the poor and unemployed (especially women) into productive activities and thus, generating employment in the country. The Self-Help groups are formed by bringing together 10-20 members from the society who contribute themselves in terms of time and money and get registered with any banking organization. They get involved into productive activities and help the members achieving financial and social security. SHGs can contribute a lot in women empowerment in country and uplift of standard of living among urban and rural poor.

Over the years, the government has left no stone unturned to assist these SHGs by instructing banks and micro-finance institutions to provide them easy loans. As capital is no longer an issue for the SHGs, they need to channelize their energy into management of operations of the group effectively. As per NABARD Report (2011), in India, 53.4 percent of deprived rural families are covered under SHG - bank linkage program. Government and NGOs also provide various marketing support to some extent to the self-help groups to market their products. The success of a group and its sustainability is vital not only for the members but also for the agencies involved in the nurturing of the SHGs.

Unfortunately, very few of the self-help groups have been successful in making a mark in the market. There is no problem with the intention of the government agencies as they see SHGs an engine for rural development. Also, there is no lack of intention among SHG members as most of them want to distinguish themselves in the family and society. So, it is important to carefully identify and analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats available to these self-help groups.

2.   Need and Scope of the Study

As the Indian economy and employment opportunities are already affected due to the global pandemic situation, self-help groups are a ray of hope in generating income at grass root. Financially and socially independent women are strength of any society and can contribute to increase the HDI and per-capita of the country. Although at smaller scale, SHGs are also doing business operations and the rules of the business applies to them as well. Be it arranging the finance, conceptualizing and producing market worthy products, managing the workforce, training the workforce, building a brand and trademark and promoting them, and distributing the final products to the potential market, SHGs need to do every step without any error to attain sustainability and success.

India is home to almost 136 crore population (https://data. worldbank.org/). With huge number of its residents living in rural areas and dependent on primary sector for employment, it makes a worrisome situation for policy makers to generate gainful employment opportunities to them. The social structure especially the male dominated society and many orthodox beliefs make the situation of women vulnerable. The caste system also contributes to disparity and unequal distribution of wealth among the population of the country. Self-help groups engage the poor and vulnerable section of society and give them opportunities for gainful employment. Also, SHGs contribute in financial inclusion and improvement of standard of living in the society. The most important outcome of self-help groups is women empowerment by engaging them into productive work and increase in their savings.

SHGs contribute considerably in increasing the employment opportunities to the poor population and providing financial and social security to the vulnerable section of the society, especially women. So, the sustainability of self-help groups is vital for rural development. A careful SWOT analysis can pave ways for corrective measures and guidelines for many government agencies and NGOs who are working hard to nurture self-help groups in the country in better manner. A SWOT analysis is the subjective assessment of internal and external environmental situation for an organization. The internal or controllable environmental factors are classified into strengths and weakness, whereas the external uncontrollable factors are classified into opportunities and threats.

In the era of cut-throat competition, the success and sustainability of any economic activity depends on effective use of knowledge and taking the right steps at the right time. Market information based on SWOT analysis can be very useful for organization to achieve success. With the kind of growth India has seen in the last three decades, consumer markets have become large and attractive but the same time it has become too much competitive for business houses. Implementing proper managerial tools & techniques increases the chance of any business venture to attain success.

3.   Review of Literature

Subramanium (2001) suggested in his study that the self - help groups who got assistance from NGOs, performed better in terms of sustainability and profitability in comparison to those who did not get that support. Although, he pointed out the government agencies at times doubt the role of NGOs in SHG development. In most occasions, NGOs don't get importance and support from government agencies. He also pointed out the success of Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SJGSY) in formation and growth of SHGs in country. The groups although lacked marketing support and were having poor infrastructure to fight with the existing organized players (Purushotham, 2004). The SHGs should emphasis on watchful approach before planning, producing, market targeting and positioning their produce in the marketplace. To compete successfully with the organized sector, they must devise the price strategies of the product before launching it in the market (Subashini Muthukrishnan, 2005).

A most important and heartening outcome of self-help group operations in the country is 'women empowerment' (Chiranjeevulu, 2003). Self-help group contributed to the confidence building of women in society and made them stronger in terms of savings. Ganapathi and Sannasi (2008) did a study identifying the factors that influence and motive the women to get associated with the group. The similar social and financial status of women influenced them to cooperate with one another and work in a group. The study also shows the challenges faced by these women entrepreneur. The final analysis of their study suggests motivation to get social acceptance and recognition is the most important factor for self-help groups.

Self-help groups helped a lot to the village women in the production of homemade *papad, achar, Agarbattis*, pottery and vermicompost, fur toys, coir products, mattresses etc. (Kumararaja 2009). The groups also worked on social issues like alcoholism, open defecation, child abuse, domestic violence, nutrition and family planning and helped improve the situation of women in the society. Dhiman and Rani (2014) showed the importance of marketing for SHGs in taking their products to the market. Kapoor Shikha (2019) also pointed out in her study about the role of SHGs in increasing the economic activities among poor women in Nithari village of Noida.

4. Research Gap

A lot of studies happened on self-help groups to find out the role of micro-finance, savings, marketing and other things in the sustainability of the group. Also, many studies are available on the contribution of self-help groups on women empowerment and uplift of the social status of women in society. Studies are also available to analyse the self-help groups' role in improving standard of living, per capita income, and overall improvement in the socio-economic status of its members. Thus, their success and sustainability are crucial. If all the variables affecting SHGs - controllable and un-controllable factors, which affect them in positive manner or negative manner, are studied minutely, and their actions augmented accordingly, it will be a huge benefit for all the stake holders involved in the process.

There is a definite research gap to find out the various factors contributing to strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to these groups and their business operations in recent times. In the post-Covid era, market dynamics seem to have undergone some changes and offering a changed set of opportunities and challenges to the business enterprises. A detailed SWOT analysis is much required to throw some light on it, so that policy makers and other agencies involved in the formation and nurturing self-help groups can utilize the findings of the study.

5. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is as follows :

1. To do a detailed SWOT analysis on the self-help groups operating in India.

6. Research Methodology

This research is done as per descriptive research design. Before the statement of the problem and laying out the research objectives, extensive review of literature was done to identify the research gap. Based on that, secondary data from journal, books and through various websites has been collected by the researcher and to develop the model of a SWOT analysis of self-help groups operating in India.

7. Findings and Discussion

Self-help groups get affected by many factors. Some are controllable (strengths and weaknesses) and some are uncontrollable (opportunities and threats). The SWOT analysis acts as an instrument to support the Self-Help Groups for aiding their decision-making in critical business situations and to take the right set of decisions. Also, to understand positive and negative implications of any event in internal as well as external dimensions. There is a dire need to support the self-help groups in capitalizing the strengths associated to each group. The group should also understand their limitations and weaknesses and try to overcome them as quickly as possible. Considering the dynamic condition of the market, opportunities need to be tracked and captured well in time to excel. Also, there is a great need to prepare for the any threat that can affect their businesses. SWOT analysis from time to time hovers a business towards success.

The careful SWOT analysis model developed through careful analysis of secondary data gives the following results :

7·1 Strengths of Self-help Groups

1. Motivated workforce who come together voluntarily and want to prove themselves to their family members and society.
2. Production of homemade items and knowledge of recipes that are unavailable with organized multinational companies.
3. Self-reliance by accumulation of money by member for credit related uses when in need.

4. Capital formation by group contribution.

5. Staunch support from Government agencies through implementation of various schemes targeted to SHGs from time to time.

6. Easy availability of credit due to SHG - bank linkage programs.

7. Seen as an engine for moving towards rural development and women empowerment.

8. Having a strong bond among members.

9. Having a competitive spirit among members regarding performance and status.

10. Self-help group members have a tend to do the of self-consumption of their products that reduces dependability of the group on market conditions.

11. Scope of regular meetings among members and an environment where every member can keep forward his/her views.

12. Faster decision-making process than formal organizations.

13. No cost as salary expenses to members.

7·2 Weaknesses of Self-help Groups

1. Improper management of finances.

2. Members come from poor and marginalized section of society that has very low savings.

3. Diversion of SHG funds from business activities to the personal and domestic use.

4. Default by members in repayment of funds due to their grim economic conditions.

5. Lack of education and managerial competence of members.

6. Lack of knowledge about management practices.

7. Lack of technological knowledge of SHG members.

8. Quality of product especially in terms of packaging and labelling.

9. No established distribution channels to market the finished goods.

10. Very poor implementation of marketing strategies by the groups.

11. Lack of proper training of SHG members.

12. Social hurdles related to engagement of women in productive activities.

13. Absence of able leaders to lead the group. Also, there is an absence in rotation of leadership position.

14. Incidences of demand of collateral security for loan extensions due to default in payments.

7·3　Opportunities available to Self-help Groups

1. Due to the dynamic business conditions and frequent disruptions, SHGs can cash in the opportunity by developing new product ideas, augmenting their business modules.

2. Government focus towards the credit linkage program to the primary sector is a great opportunity to the self-help groups.

3. Changed socio-cultural set up is an opportunity for the group members to engage themselves in productive activities.

4. Increased per capita and disposable income of the population has increased the market potential of the group.

5. Increased literacy rate, and participation of in socio-economic development.

6. Schemes like *Beti Bachao* changed the pre-established thought of the society towards women.

7. Various agencies and NGOs keep launching schemes for fostering self-help groups in the county.

8. The setup of village, block, district, and state level distribution support agencies in few states help in taking the products to a larger market.

9. Growth of a health-conscious market having keen inclination towards homemade, natural and organic products.

7·4　Threats to the Self-help Groups

1. Organized players manipulate market demand by offering relevant products in low cost.

2. Lack of trust by financial institutions towards women SHGs because of high rate of defaulters.

3. High interest rate of the credit.

4. Dynamic market conditions due to events like outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic.

5. Other institutions like MSMEs and Cooperatives can get more government attention and support in future.

6. The challenge to getting constant interest and priority by the administration.

7. Migration of population towards industrial cities can cause lack of human capital.

8. Changes in political leadership leading to changed viewpoints towards economic development schemes and so on SHGs.

9. Social and political differences can be a threat in long run.

A Model on SWOT Analysis of SHGs developed by the authors.

8.   Conclusion

Self-help groups are driving force behind rural development and women empowerment. Although, a lot of efforts have been made to foster them in our country, but very few self-help groups are able to sustain their operations profitably for longer period of time. For the success of any enterprise, accurate and timely information is the key. There are many points in which the SHGs are doing excellent job, but there are certain aspects where they need to work on their weaknesses and convert them into their strengths. There is not lack of support from government and various agencies, but identification of opportunities as mentioned and taking proper steps to tap them will enhance the chances of success of these micro-enterprises. Business

markets are full of cutthroat competition, and timely identification and fortification against threats are the key to success.

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4

Land Reforms in South Africa since 1994 : A Social Policy

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Land is the most important resource for not only South African government but also for its citizens since the country is predominantly agricultural. It is universal fact that the rich people try to acquire the most of land and the poor people always suffer. The article will stress on the intervention of government for this universal problem. The present research paper aims to produce the wider impacts of land reforms on the mass in South Africa. It is interesting to note the uniqueness of land reforms of South Africa since it aimed to develop a sustainable society. The country wanted to give access to land to the majority of poor citizens for improvement in their standard of life. We can note significant growth on this line by the government of South Africa after 1994 through providing access to land, electricity, water and sanitation to a significant number of citizens.

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1.   Introduction

The land is an important and sensitive issue to all South Africans. In 1913, The Native Land Act was passed and limited the area of land for lawful African occupation. 'The Land Acts of 1936' and the 'Group Areas Act of 1950' racially regions segregated concerning residence and business and controlled interracial property actions. The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 allowed the government to establish resettlement camps for the surplus of people being evicted from white farms. The first relocation camp attempted to remove and contain displaced labor tenants, unwanted farm workers, and unemployed urban people in the early 1960s. The apartheid government strengthened the power of traditional chiefs beyond what they had historically enjoyed, thereby giving them a vested interest in the continuance of separate development. The National Department of Agriculture (NDA) inherited ways of thinking, institutional structure, and links to white agriculture from the apartheid past (Lipton, 1996 : 99).

2.   Tenure Reform

South African tenure reform has two diverse purposes. *First*, the tenancy reform focused on land administration in the common areas of the former homelands and colored reserves. *Second*, the occupancy reforms provided more security to farm dwellers and also protected their tenure. Most of these farm dwellers owned only residential land. Few farm labors were permitted to use some portion of land for grazing and cultivation purposes in exchange of their unpaid labor to the landlord (Fraser, 2000 : 18).

3.   Land Redistribution

The objective of the land distribution in South Africa was to the distribution of 87% land which was occupied by the whites. In February 1994, the National Land Committee (NLC) convened a Community Land Conference (CLC), which brought together more than 700 representatives of 357 Blocks Rural Communities. The CLC adopted a land charter, which demanded that the state confiscate land and deliver it to dispossessed communities. It called for women to have equal rights in land with men in Cape, Mpumalanga and Free State and had completed several non-pilot projects.

4.   Land Restitution

The restitution provides the effect through the constitutional provisions the households to be represented in equal manner in community decision making bodies (National Land Committee, 1994). The DLA called a National Conference on Land Policy in 1995 as reflected in the DLA's Draft Land Policy Principles. 'The Restitution Land Rights Act 22 of 1994 established a commission on the Restitution of Land Rights Act (RLRA) solicited and investigated claims for land compensation and prepared them for settlement, and a land claims court adjudicated allegations and make orders on the form of restitution or redress provided to claimants' (Department of Land Affairs, 1995).

Table-1 : Highlights on the National Statistics Claims Settled Till 31ˢᵗ of March 2002

Settled Restitution	No. of Claims Settled
Number of Claims	29,877
Household involved	62,245
Beneficiaries	332,243
Land restored [hectares]	427,337

Source : DLA, 2002.

Table-2 : Indicates the Financial Resources Diverted by the Government in Restituting the Land

Land Compensation	R951,442,392.16
Financial compensation	R119,919,000.00
Restitution discretionary grant	R39,709,482.01
Settlement and planning grant	R6, 155, 000.00
Solatium	R1,494,342976.35

Source : DLA Sources, Pretoria, 2002.

Table-3 : Highlights on the Provincial Statistics Claims Settled on 31ˢᵗ March 2002

Provinces	No. of Claims Settled
Eastern Cape	9222
Free State	1147
Gauteng	5497

KwaZulu Natal	7233
Mpumalanga	254
Northern Cape	410
North West	1050
Limpopo	508
Western Cape	4556

Source : DLA, 2002, South Africa.

Although a large number of claims have been settled in such a short duration, the government still has to divert a significant amount of resources and time in restitution programme. Since 33,578 cases always remained with the restitution department as 63,455 claims have been made until 31 March 2002.

5. Commitment to Sustainable Land Reform

The LRAD policy of 2002 focuses on redistribution of lands but limits development in several ways. The policy aims to limit the access and utilization of land resources to a small number of black businessmen. These businessmen often do not contribute their surplus profit in the development of rural economy. In this case, the poor majority will be dependent on ongoing agricultural labor and patriarchal society. In this way, the social impacts of land reform become limited with a small number of beneficiaries. Economically, the poor becomes poorer since they are not in a position to take economic risks due to the lack of assets (DLA, 2002).

South African government adopted market-based approach for the land redistribution and became dependent on the factors of market and willing buyers-sellers. The land reform programme proceeded rapidly and succeeded having some challenges and constraints have to be confronted and overcome. The primary problem is that of entrenched vested interests, in both commercial and communal land spaces and the fundamental limitation is the reduced capacity of organs of state to deliver on mandates. Undoing the social and cultural effects of centuries of discrimination and exclusion, by race, will take time (DLA, 2002).

The ANC-led government focused on social issues that were neglected during apartheid eras such as unemployment, housing shortage, and crime. Calculating the achievements of ANC since 1994, it is observed that :

"Over two and a half million houses have been built for the poor giving shelter to over ten million people. In 1994 only 62% of a household had access to clean water, today 93% do. Supply of potable water to nearby every people of South Africa is a significant contribution to poverty relief. In 1994 only 50% of households had access to decent sanitation, today 77% do. In 1994, only 36% of South African had access to electricity, but today 84% do. Today the majority of South Africans are provided free essential services in water and electricity" (Fraser, 2002 : 87).

6. Impact on Households and Economic Growth

Due to HIV/AIDS the economic growth rate is reducing by 0.3-0.4% p.a. which minimizes the progress in economic development mainly through the decline of life expectancy (BER, 2000 : 14).In South African life expectancy has been the decline from 68.2 in 2003 to 48 years in 2010. The economic indicators of 2012 show the reality of the South African financial development :

Table-4 : Economic Indicators

GNI per capita 2015, US$	6050
GNI per capita 2015, PPP US$	12389.96
GDP per capita average annual growth rate (%), 1993-2015	2.97
GDP per capita average annual growth rate (%), 1990-2012	1.4
Average annual rate of inflation (%) 1990-2012	8.1
Population below international poverty line of US$1.25 per day (%) 2007-2011*	13.8
Public spending as a % of GDP (2007-2011*) allocated to health	4.1
Federal spending as a % of GDP (2008-2010*) allocated to education	6
Public spending as a % of GDP (2008-2010*) allocated to military	1.3
ODA inflow in millions US$ 2010	1397.5
ODA inflow as a % of recipient GNI 2010	0.4
Debt service as a % of exports of goods and services 2010	4.8

Share of household income (%, 2007-2011*), most deprived 40%	8
Percentage of household income (%, 2007-2011*), most productive 20%	68

Source : http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/southafrica_statistics.html

The micro-economic impact in the context of HIV/AIDS depends on the capacity to replace the lost human resources, the response by management and the effectiveness of government interventions. Employees are not regular, so additional costs to the company. There was sudden increase in absenteeism from work due to care giving needs in the family or funeral attendances, loss of labor and productivity due to associated illness, emotional and job stress, the lower morale of infected and affected workers. The economy burdened with increased costs of medical schemes of workers and pension benefits. The increased loss of skilled human resources led to disruption in production, lower company performance, increased earnings of inadequate skilled men, and increased cost of training and recruitment (Fraser, 2002 : 88).However, it should be noted by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) sector that 'SMEs have not adequately shown a better understanding of businesses role and accountability to prevent HIV/AIDS and to alleviate the impact of the disease. Due to lack of leadership and funds corresponds to a lack of action. Surveys have indicated that SMEs are not ready to contribute limited time for HIV alleviation activities unless they start to see real effects of the epidemic on their business. Most mitigation activities tend to be one of informal attempts at education or awareness training (Fraser, 2002: 89). However, "considering the difficulties to reach out to and to change the mindset of SME entrepreneurs the condition becomes even more challenging when one looks at the familiar sector which according to 2001 estimates might at present employ 3.2 to 3.7 people" (Altmann, 2003 : 15). The previous government of South Africa claimed that programme regarding HIV/AIDS had been started since 1982, but due to awareness and campaign, the profit of the policies could not reach to the victims.

7.   Conclusion

After examining carefully, the different social programmes carried out by the post-apartheid South African government to

enhance the living conditions of the masses. Prior to 1994, the role of the South African government was limited to resolve the issue concerned to the households and government policy, if any, was inadequate. Since 1994, the states have achieved a lot within a short duration and have been able to redistribute land, generate employment, provide basic needs (Bread, shelter, and clothes) and essential amenities to its people such as electricity, telephone, potable water, etc. But it is too early to assess the actual success of these programmes since a large chunk of the population in South Africa is still grappling with appalling poverty and lack of employment opportunities. Thus the government should implement its social policies more efficiently so that employment and essential amenities are provided to everyone in South Africa diversifies their livelihood sources.

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5

NABARD : The Apex Institution of Rural Credit in India

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Since the beginning of planned development, the Government has made significant strides in developing rural India through Five Years Plans. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) was set up in July 1982. It became the apex institution to play a pivotal role in the sphere of policy planning and providing refinance facilities to rural financial institutions and for augmenting their resource base for socio-economic transformation in India. This paper examines the role of NABARD in socio-economic transformation of rural India as an apex institution in rural credit. It has been emphasized that NABARD is not just a bank, it is an all important institution primarily intended to develop agriculture/small scale industries, cottage and village industries, handicrafts/rural crafts and other allied economic activities to transform rural India by promoting integrated development for employment and income generation to reduce rural poverty.

[**Keywords :** NABARD, Apex Institution, Agriculture sector, Rural Credit, Rural poverty, Socio-economic transformation]

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1.   Introduction

Finance has been recognized as the life blood of all economic activities. Like all other producers, agriculturists also need credit. According to an old proverb "credit supports the farmers as the hangman's rope supports the hanged". For stimulating the tempo of agricultural production, and non-farm rural income generation, an adequate and timely credit is most essential. Not only this, the Indian rural sector is an important segment of the economy and the basic reason for the slow economic development in our country is due to the neglect of this sector. The rural or agricultural credit through institutional channel is the only way to break production stagnation. Private or non-institutional funding agencies play a limited role keeping in view the larger public interest. Realizing this fact, the Indian government gave top priority to agriculture and rural development.

In India the institutional credit sources for rural sector includes government, Regional Rural Banks, Co-operative credit societies, Commercial banks and NABARD. The National Banks for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is the apex institution at the national level for agriculture credit and provide refinance assistance to the agencies mentioned above. The Reserve Bank of India as the central bank of the country plays a crucial role in this sphere by giving overall direction to rural credit and financial support to NABARD for its operations.

The setting up NABARD in July 1982 is the landmark in the evolution of agricultural and rural credit in India. Designed specifically as an organizational device for providing undivided attention, forceful direction and pointed focus to the problems of the agriculture and rural sector, NABARD is now the apex bank for rural and agricultural credit in India.

As stated above NABARD is an apex institution in the field of agricultural and rural credit, therefore, it does not directly deal with farmers and other rural people. It provides short term credit to State Co-operative Banks, RRBs and other financial institutions repayable over a period of not exceeding 18 months for agricultural operations, marketing of crops, production and marketing of products in small, cottage and village industries. NABARD also gives medium term loan for period not less than 18 months and not exceeding 7 years to

SCBs and RRBs for agriculture and rural development. It gives long term loans and advances by way of refinance to Land Development Banks, RRBs, scheduled commercial banks, state co-operative banks and other financial institutions.

2.   Evolution of NABARD

At the instance of the Government of India, to review/examine, *inter alia*, the structure and operation of ARDC in the context of an increasing need for term loans for agriculture and feasibility of integrating short term and medium term credit structure with long-term credit structure at national, state, district and village level, the Committee to Review Arrangements for Institutional Credit for Agriculture and Rural Development (CRAFICARD) was appointed by the RBI in March 1979. It submitted the report in January 1981.

The NABARD has been conceived by CRAFICARD as an exercise in decentralization of central bank's function of providing all types of production and investment credit to agriculture, small-scale industries, artisans, Khadi and village industries handicrafts and other crafts and other allied economic activities in an integrated manner, with undivided attention, pointed focus and forceful direction.

NABARD is also charged by CRAFICARD with the responsibility of promoting integrated rural development and matters concerned therewith incidental thereto. The new organization was expected to work in close unison with the RBI. The proposed bank should have organic links with the RBI.

The Government of India and the RBI approved the proposal of CRAFICARD. The Parliament through the Act of 1981 approved its setting up. The NABARD Act was passed by the Parliament on December 1, 1981. It came into existence on July 12, 1982 and started functioning with effect from July 15, 1982. The bank was dedicated to the service of the nation by Prime Minister on Nov. 5, 1982.

3.   Objectives of NABARD

The main objectives, which guide the functioning of NABARD are :

1. The provide refinance to eligible institutions viz, state land development banks, state co-operative banks, scheduled

commercial banks and RRBs for supporting production and investment credit for development activities in rural areas.

2. To improve the absorptive capacity of the credit delivery system through institution building by monitoring, formulation of rehabilitation schemes, restructuring of credit institutions, training of personnel etc.

3. To coordinate the activities of different agencies engaged in development work at the field level and to keep liaison with Government of India, state governments and RBI and other national level institutions connected with policy formulation.

4. To undertake monitoring and evaluation of project refinanced by it.

4.   NABARD : Organization and Structure

It is a harsh fact that organizational set up, administration and management forms the basis of operational efficiency of any financing or refinancing institution. Realizing the importance of good organization, P. F. Drucker has very rightly remarked, "a poor organization structure makes good performance impossible no matter how good the individual may be".

4·1   Board of Directors

Direction, management and general supervision of the affairs and business of the NABARD is rested in a Board of Directors, who are appointed by the Government of India in consonance with NABARD Act. Board of Directors consists of 15 members which include a Chairman, with this breakup : (i) Chairman, (ii) Two directors from amongst experts in rural economics, rural development, handicrafts and other rural crafts and village & cottage industries, (iii) Three directors from cooperative banks, (iv) One from commercial banks, (v) Three director from RBI, (vi) Three directors nominated by Government of India out of its officials, (vii) Two directors from officials of state government and (viii) A Managing Director who is assisted by Chief General Manager, General Manager, Deputy General Managers and others staff.

The Chairman and Managing Director are appointed for a term not exceeding five years and may be sacked by central government before the expiry of their terms. The directors are appointed for a

three years term. They may be removed before the expiry of their term also.

4·2 Executive Committee

The Board of the NABARD may constitute an Executive Committee consisting of such number of directors as may be prescribed by Board. The Executive Committee shall consists of the Chairman, the Managing Director and other directors nominated by the Chairman from amongst the directors appointed under clause (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v) of 4·1 and one of the whole time directors.

The Executive Committee shall have all the powers of the board to transact the usual business of the NABARD except powers in relation to matters which are specifically reserved by the Act to the Board.

4·3 Advisory Council

The board shall constitute on advisory council consisting of such number of directors and such other persons who, in the opinion of Board, have special knowledge of agriculture credit, co-operative and rural economics, small scale industries, village and cottage industries or have special knowledge and appreciation of the country's overall development policies and in particular monetary and credit policies, which is considered by the board as useful to NABARD.

The advisory council shall advise the NABARD in such a matter as may be referred to the advisory council by the NABARD. A member of the advisory council shall hold the office for such terms not exceeding five years as the NABARD may fix.

4·4 Other Committees

The board may constitute such other committees either consisting wholly of directors or wholly of other persons or partly of directors and partly of other persons as it thinks fit to discharge such functions as may be delegated to it by the board.

5. Functions of NABARD for Socio-Economic Transformation

The role of NABARD in socio-economic transformation is quite evident from its functions, which may be classified under following broad categories :

(A) **Credit Functions :** NABARD facilitates central government, state governments and RBI in policy decision regarding credit flow to the agriculture and rural development. For this purpose it prepares Potential Linked Credit Plan (PLCP) annually for each district of the country, taking into account the long term physical potential, availability of infrastructure, extension services, marketing support and the strengths and weaknesses of the Rural Financial Institutions.

Credit functions of NABARD may be sub-grouped in three categories as follows :

1. **Production and Marketing Credit :** In order to ensure availability of timely credit to farmers, NABARD refinances by way of credit limits for seasonal agricultural operations at concessional rates of interest to the State Co-operative Banks, Regional Rural Banks, and Scheduled Commercial Banks for the these purposes : (i) Ensuring timely supply of agri-inputs like fertilizers, pesticides, seeds etc. to the farmers, (ii) Improving the flow of marketing credit to the cultivators for augmenting their holding capacity and checking incidence of distress sale of their production and (iii) Financing production and marketing activities of village and cottage industries, handicrafts artisans, farmers engaged in pisci-culture and other rural non-farm enterprises

   When crop loans on account of natural calamities is substantial, affecting the production activities of farm and non-farm sector to repay their production credit dues to banks, refinance by way of medium term loans is granted to commercial banks and RBRs to enable them to convert or reschedule the short term loans of farmers and artisans into medium term loans.

2. **Investment Credit :** To induce technological up-gradation resulting in increased production and productivity thereby incremental income to the farmers, investment credit is provided by NABARD through asset creation and construction and development of infra-structural facilities in rural and agriculture sector.

   NABARD provides refinance support to approved financial institutions for following major purposes viz. farm mechanization, minor irrigation, land development and soil

conservation, afforestation, horticulture, cattle rearing, poultry, piggery, fishery, sericulture, food-processing etc. and recently introduced solar pumps for irrigation. Non-farm sector includes artisans, small and village-cottage industries, handicrafts handlooms – power looms, diesel generator sets and LPG kits etc.

3. **Direct Credit :** Apart from refinance activities, NABARD also provides direct finance to state governments to contribute to the share capital of co-operative credit institutions and hereby improving their financial strength. To ensure and maintain substantial credit flow to agriculture and rural sector for financing high-tech/export oriented agriculture projects involving large outlays, NABARD supports credit risks of commercial banks. It works for progressive rural credit and ensures that the demand of credit for new and upcoming areas like floriculture, tissue culture, bio-fertilizers, drip and sprinkler-irrigation, milk processing, ethanol production, solar energy system agro-food processing etc. are met.

To meet the credit demand for completion of on going rural infrastructure projects, RIDF was setup with NABARD in 1995-96 with the contributions from commercial banks by way of deposits, resulting from short fall in their agriculture lending targets. The infrastructure projects refer to irrigation projects, watershed management, cold-storage, market yard/godowns, rural roads and bridges etc. However the disbursement in relation to the sanction under RIDF has been around 60% which is an area of concern.

(B) Development & Promotion Functions

1. **Institutional Development :** Various initiatives have been taken to strengthen the rural financial institution to deliver adequate and timely credit to the sector by adopting the these measures : (i) **MOU-DAP :** By signing MOU with state governments and other rural credit institutions to undertake a critical review of their operations and come up with Development Action Plan (DAP) for themselves, (ii) By amalgamation and merger of RRBs so that RRBs with poor track record can be vanished away, (iii) NABARD had created a

Co-operative Development Fund to improve their quality of project formulation computerization, purchase of vehicles for recovery work, HRD, publicity of Kisan Credit Card (KCC) schemes etc. and (iv) It provides Organization Development Intervention through training institutes like Bankers Institute for Rural Development (BIRD) Lucknow, National Bank Staff College, Lucknow, College of Agricultural Bankers (CAB) Pune to the staff of RRBs, CO-operative Banks, NABARD and selected staff of NGOs, working in the field of agriculture and rural development.

2. **Research & Development Fund :** NABARD maintains a Research and Development find to : (i) Formulate and design the area specific projects, (ii) Upgrade and transfer the technology from labs to land, (iii) Conduct research activities of topical interest in rural banking and economics, (iv) Organize national and international seminars, conferences, symposia etc. on the topics related to rural development and banking, (v) Conduct programmes for upgrading skills of prospective borrowers, and (vi) Provide grants to selected NGOs, research institutes, agriculture universities, KVK etc. to conduct study in the field of agriculture.

3. **Micro Finance through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) :** The success story of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and such experience of other countries in involving participatory approach to the micro-credit programmes for poverty alleviation provided ground for this type of action in India. Micro finance is a novel approach to the 'banking with poor' as they attempt to combine lower transaction costs and high degree of repayments. Major thrust of these micro-finance initiatives is through the setting up of Self Help Groups, started by NABARD in 1992 with a objective of extending formal banking services to the unreached rural poor by evolving a supplementing credit delivery system in a cost effective manner.

4. **Agriculture Insurance :** In 1999-2000, the Government of India announced National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (NAIS) or Rashtriya Krishi Bima Yojana envisaging coverage of all food crops, oil, seeds, horticulture and commercial crops against

natural calamities both area specific and individual basis. To implement NAIS, Agriculture, Insurance Company of India was established in Dec. 2002 with special participation of NABARD, General Insurance Corporation of India and its four subsidiaries.

5. **Kisan Credit Card :** As a pioneering credit delivery system, Kisan Credit Card Scheme was launched in 1998-99 with the help of NABARD, aims at provision of adequate and timely support from banking system to the farmers for their farming needs in a flexible and cost effective manner.

6. **Watershed Development Programmes :** NABARD has been actively supporting Watershed Development Programme as a comprehensive approach to enhance productivity of dry land through conserving soil, rainwater and vegetation.

7. **Women Development :** In order to give focus to women in various developmental activities and to increase their access to institutional credit, NABARD has formulated these programmes : (i) Gender sensitization, (ii) Women Development Cells in co-operative Banks and RRBs, (iii) Assistance to Rural Women in Non-farm Development (ARWIND) for entrepreneurial development among rural women, (iv) Assistance for Marketing of Non-Farm Products of Rural Women (MAHIMA) and (v) Development of Women through Area Programme (DEWTA)

8. **Development of Weaker Section of Society :** NABARD has introduced special programmes for the uplift of weaker sections of the society like small and marginal farmers, SCs/STs and people below poverty line.

(C) **Regulatory or Supervisory Function :** Apart from the role of a development bank, NABARD under takes supervisory and regulatory functions in respect of co-operative banks and RRBs under the Banking Regulation Act.

(D) **Other Functions :** With vast experience in rural and agriculture finance and data pool at its command, NABARD provides consultancy service for various agencies both at national and international level. Rural non-farm sector (RNFs) is a thrust area of NABARD because of its employment generation potential in rural areas. NABARD provides refinance as well as promotional support for development of this sector.

6.   Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be said that NABARD has carved for itself a special place in the unfolding story of India's socio-economic development. A journey of this kind has no end. Every mile that we travel throws up new challenges and new opportunities. It is the combination to pause or stop and never to band or yield. NABARD is not just a bank, it is an institution primarily intended to develop agriculture. Hope and trust that NABARD make a world class rural banking a possibility in the country.   ★

6

Fasting in the Midst of Prosperity : The Hunger among Urban Workers

Neena Shireesh* and Sitaram Kumbhar**

The workers of urban areas suffer due to sudden lockdowns which has become a common phenomenon due to pandemic. They mostly constitute migrants who are deprived of all sorts of state support. In such a scenario it is hard for them to meet even the bare necessities of daily life. However, most of the national dailies and electronic media have started to broadcast debates about the condition of the Indian economy and how that can be revived. The economy of the nations is dominating the imagination of the authorities. The economic health of the country is linked to welfare. However, the lost income sources and chronic hunger due to pandemic among the urban poor have not received adequate attention. Urban hunger is often overlooked. Hunger is largely construed as an urban phenomenon despite increasing poverty in urban areas. It was in the post-liberalization period the rural-urban migration gained momentum. The urban-rural migration pulled rural poor to urban areas in expectation of better livelihood. For many, a pandemic is very scary whereas hunger threatens the poor urban workers during the pandemic induced lockdowns.

[**Keywords :** Prosperity, Poverty, Hunger, Lockdown, Urban workers]

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1. Introduction

The urban migrant populations' contribution to the building of bustling cities is well recognized internationally (World Economic Forum, 2017). But migrant social-welfare is a negligible area in the social sciences research in India. They contribute to the overall development of urban areas and everyday living of the urban households. The complete household is said to be the one in possession of a housemaid who are overwhelmingly women. The insecurity of their employment is a major contributor to their sufferings. Such workers once deprived of employment faint for themselves due to conspicuous absence of state social security. The proposal of the Central Government regarding 'One Nation One Card' may contribute a great deal in reducing hunger among such populations.

The government interventions to promote welfare of informal sector labourers are inadequate and existing interventions have failed to make a serious dent on hunger and poverty. This sector of society deserves serious attention to reversing the severity of the problems, reluctant and political abulia in responding to it will prove to be acarpous. They work in small and big business farms but with job loss all their dashing hopes of a better life abruptly came crashing down. Accumulated marginalization of the poor in India earns opprobrious epithet internationally and absolute deprivation of many internally. Disappearance of public debate on hunger and poverty does not signify the absence of the same.

2. Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger

It is a time of increase in poverty and hunger on an unprecedented scale due to the devastating economic impacts of the lockdown as the economy has been put into hibernation. Countries around the world are putting human lives ahead of the economy. However, all countries must ensure that the "health pandemic" does not transform into a "hunger pandemic". The massive increase in global poverty and hunger has renewed academic interest on the subject and why the countries around the globe must take them seriously. Food is the most basic necessity. It would not be iconoclastic to say that hunger in India is a perennial juggernaut. India has the unenviable record of being home to a third of the world's poor. India must act to stop the health crisis turning into a

food crisis by prioritizing access to food and aid to the poor. India is in an advantageous position because there is still plenty of food available under the public food stock of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and in the open market. Food prices invariably fluctuate at the best of time making it harder for some to afford them.

The whole of human development "has been a bitter struggle against scarcity", asserts Jean-Paul Sartre. Food is the important ingredient without which the human nerve stops functioning. Famines have ravaged human civilizations in different periods of time in the past. Food has shaped the world's civilization. The food, economics, agriculture, and human empires are all strands of the same narratives. When many live hand-to-mouth without saving any disruption to the sources of income bound to have deleterious effects on their livelihood. The income-based households move above the poverty line until they continue to earn an income but in case of disruption shocks, they fall below poverty line (Krishna, 2003).

Hunger, poverty estimation, and approaches to attack them are debatable subjects in India. These debates are happening around certain pertinent issues but in Indian cases these debates have unique facets. They are governed by empirically-robust, sometimes ideologically matured and overloaded enriching skirmishes represented by towering economists on each side. The civil society groups and non-party political processes in India stand at a distance from most of these debates on Indian poverty and hunger. Many scholars blame the state withdrawal from the social sector, neo-liberal economic policies, free trade and subservient agriculture, to be the main culprit behind hunger, poverty and privation in India (Swaminathan, 2000; Patnaik, 2007). Narrow nature of the ruling alliance prioritizes economic growth over social sector development giving rise to an alarming rate of inequality and limited impact of economic growth on poverty alleviation and hunger (Kohli, 2012).

Pervasive hunger is a gigantic issue, recognition of the problems and its diagnosis can help India overcome the former because India possesses capabilities at present to solve its gigantic hunger problem. Many decades of democratic intervention have not made any serious dent on ending poverty and hunger. In India poverty and hunger are closely embedded with Indian social reality. The first Backward Classes Commission in 1953 acknowledged that low position in the caste hierarchy is the key determinant of social

and economic backwardness (Guru and Chakravarty, 2009 : 135-160). Policies to remove poverty and hunger like other problems arise from fundamental beliefs embedded in culture rather than from economic conditions. The child labour, for instance, is not due to economic conditions rather it depends on how wider society at large value them (Weiner, 1991).

Another theoretically and methodologically seminal work argues that the eradication of poverty in a democratic framework can be accomplished by a well organized and left-of-centre regime (Kohli, 1987 : 9). Most of the scholars with a staunch faith in pro-capitalist and neo-liberal economic systems argue that economic growth will gradually percolate down to the poorest sections and help in hunger and poverty alleviation. It supports a development model which believes that "economic development must precede alleviation of hunger and poverty". Over two and half decades of higher rate of economic growth in India has not been able to make any serious dent on poverty and hunger. It has been beneficial for some and disadvantageous for many. The benefits of economic liberalization and higher rate of economic growth in India is centered in and around urban cities and unevenly distributed across the country. Indian problem and hunger is a problem amid plenty and not due to paucity of resources.

Social welfare is achievable with low levels of economic development as had happened in most countries of South-East Asia where social sector developments preceded economic development and economic liberalization, particularly in areas such as literacy, hunger, and poverty. India has the capabilities now to alleviate hunger and poverty. What it lacks is a collective endeavor, political will and commitments. In some Indian states, welfare activities have become synonymous with interest aggrandizement of political parties or political leaders. Decoupling welfare and populism in India is an arduous task because whatever welfare has been achieved in the past in India has mostly been achieved through the route of populism. South Indian states have remarkable expansion of welfare activities and have achieved comparatively commendable social welfare than the north Indian states. What matters most in welfare promotion is political focus and leadership with allocation of adequate resources. The ultimate prerequisite for welfare promotion is to spend more to achieve more welfare.

The empowerment of deprived sections depends on the welfare spending of different governments on their overall human development. According to some studies politics play an important role in reducing human suffering i.e. inputs in the health system, and output in the form of reduction of human misery and shows what happens when groups and segments of the population have little political power. In Indian policy making circle income poverty undermines other multifaceted nature of human deprivation. While addressing the problem of poverty and hunger we must acknowledge and accommodate the understanding of other major sources of human misery. If there is widespread illiteracy, the poor will become politically powerless.

The effective "community participation" and "associational network of discrete groups" are empirically verifiable contributors to effective policy implementation (Putnam, et al, 1993). The richness of "civic culture" contributes to having strong bonds among individuals, promoting the sense of collective well-being, and widening faith in the institutions of the democratic state, enriching democratic consolidation. Similarly, the correlation between "the culture and public action" is well-recognized.

The roles of the community or what a community thinks create decisive impacts on the policies and programmes implementation. Success of public policy implementation during public health emergencies like the present one requires resilient community participation without which the state agencies will be handicapped in combating pandemic. Previously the health care system was focused around health care staff and infrastructure. The focus has shifted to the communities at present. The success of health services is bound together with a complex web of interdependence of state agencies, bureaucracy, communities, civil societies etc. Information communication technology (ICT) are playing a paramount role in current public service delivery mechanisms leaving lesser scope for siphoning-off public funds meant for intended beneficiaries. Hence, pumping money and policy interventions can succeed in targeting problems and in solving them. New generations of bureaucrats are comfortable to work with innovative ICT and respond to emergency situations like the present one. Bureaucratic culture changes and changes in the long run but what directions it follows matters to all of us.

Sufficient empirical experiences are available to suggest that habitually state agencies do not even accept that individuals can die due to starvation as had happened in the case of Jharkhand and Odisha in the past. Lackadaisical attitudes of state agencies and bureaucracy in particular in responding to disaster like situations are not new. The colonial administration had synonymous attitudes in responding to emergency situations like famine and hunger caused by droughts and shortage of food grains in many cases (Currie, 2000).

Whether Indian government can alleviate hunger and poverty has many things to do with how Indian society at large values the concept of hunger and poverty. India has enough capability to deal with the problems of hunger but has to amass inspiration, political will and commitment to do so. Despite decades of accumulated electoral fatigue among Indian citizens they vote and elect those political leaders who promise 'removing poverty' and 'corruption' from Indian soil. Nonetheless capturing political power with such promises has become a routine thing in Indian politics. In India the approach of 'inequality aiming as income inequality' will not hold ground because the roots of hunger and poverty in India are mired in both eternity and ephemerality.

The pandemic lockdown has created hunger which is ephemeral in nature but it is linked to multiple external sources of deprivation. Today's hunger is linked to asset dispossession, lack of productive wealth, lack of savings, uncertain income and expenses particularly among the urban poor. In the last few weeks millions of labourers have been rendered jobless even in advanced capitalist democracies. Even in the strong and developed economies in the world not many families have emergency savings to stave off a situation like the one we are confronting worldwide.

Most live hand-to-mouth and sudden disruptions to existing sources of living aggravate their fragile and uncertain incomes. In the present scenario, any deterioration to their sufferings would be inhumane and will question the moral claims and very legitimacy of our democratic system about which we boast internationally. Most of the manual workers in Indian rural villages work in agriculture where their living conditions are invariably connected to developments in rural economy and local social power structure. They lack agenda setting power because they are the least unionized workers in the world. The population of small, marginal farmers and landless

constitute a significant majority in rural India. Years of stagnation in agriculture, monsoon dependent-single crop, negligence in the ascendance of neo-liberal policies which meant cutting subsidies and chronic low wage forced many of them to migrate seasonally, cyclically as well as permanently to urban cities in search of a fertile living. They work as casual labourers in a precarious state of hunger and poverty. Their chronic indefatigable efforts at improving their living standards without state support for long must be complemented through quick intervention as a responsibility of the state at this time of their livelihood's peripety.

3.   Lockdowns and Ghettoisation of Hungry Workers

Intolerable conditions aggravated further in lockdown and they were treated by different agencies as if they were the pandemic. What is startling and egregious is the manner in which the stranded labourers were treated as they could not go to their native places due to sudden imposition of lockdown creating gargantuan discombo-bulation about their future. Due to abrupt closure of all means of commutation many took to foot slogging, some cycled over thousand kilometers to reach their native places. Some reportedly died on the way after walking for many days with family and media is reporting about the starvation deaths due to lockdown. It is an everyday struggle for these workers in the informal sector. Their contributions to the cities are highly underestimated and blamed for all sorts of evil-happening. Many consider them synonymous with all urban problems due to lack of their knowledge about labourers. For some the disheveled appearances of labourers annoy them.

Migrant labourers are invariable victims of different forms of jingoism, hatred and violence. They are attacked in different cities due to regional chauvinistic politics in the name of protecting opportunities for the so-called "locals". The quarantine is not a new concept in the urban living culture in many ways. The "gated communities" have expanded and attracted the middle class which practice quarantine in everyday living. The "gated communities" with security guards at the gate have become a matter of prestige for the middle and upper middle classes. It separates the "quarantined" from the "other fearsome". The new form of exclusionary spaces has expanded which prefer quarantine living and maintain distance from "dangerous others". The gated community and quarantine

living have aggravated the plight of the daily wagers and domestic maids in particular. The "quarantined" lack understanding about the so-called "dangerous others" because of the real "social distancing" they practice every day. The "social distancing" is embedded with "gated community" unlike the "physical distancing" the COVID-19 has encouraged. The gated communities have become a hallmark of urban and modern living. Unlike rural caste-clustered living they are socially plural but economically somewhat synonymous and new forms of socially exclusionary practices have blatantly expanded which dehumanizes the "dangerous others". Besides the exploitation by market forces the labourers suffer from multitude of dis-advantages in everyday life (Breman, 2010). The self-esteem of the informal sector workers has been subjected to severe hardship creating disenchantment against the government.

The majority among the informal sector labourers are women where payment norms are guided by patriarchal and other socio-logical norms. According to NSSO (2011-12) the women constitute the majority of the agriculture and farm workers. The informal sector works are manufacturing works and they have suffered due to lockdown and the women workers who are mostly low-paid and casual workers have been laid off. The lockdown has sparked worries of the phenomenal decrease in the women participation in outdoor economic activities. This will increase unemployment figures and weaken the economic backbone of millions of house-holds. According to some estimates close to "120 million people have been rendered jobless in one month of lockdown" what is worrisome is that "out of 406 million people employed, 324.8 million people are either daily wager, self-employed or small farmers". Recognizing the size and significance of informality of labour in Government of India has introduced multiple legislative measures such as the Un-organized Workers' Social Security Act 2008, Contract Labour (Abolition & Regulation) Act 1970, and Workers' Welfare Boards to stop their living conditions from worsening. Lack of accurate data on its size, creates confusion, misunderstanding and neglect of the sector. The growing informality of labour requires attention to stop it from interminable uncertainties. Some have improved their economic positions but many are struggling to meet basic necessities. Some in this sector have a reasonable income in normal times but many are casual labourers.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was enacted to provide safeguard to poor households during crises like the present one. MGNREGA was supposed to be one of the biggest schemes since independence to uproot poverty and hunger from Indian soil but the manner in which different states implemented this scheme suggested that the governments are not serious in reality to remove poverty and hunger. Some states did better; some did it reasonably well then other states. Some states did well in the implementation of MGNREGA in terms of the national average. A handful of states outperformed the majority of states so far as the effective implementation of worlds' largest employment schemes is concerned. There is considerable scope for improving the implementation of the scheme provided there is political will and support from the highest political leadership of the state governments and the top leadership at the Centre with reasonable allocation of money for the scheme. The lackadaisical implementation of the scheme suggests that the ruling elites across India are not serious about poverty alleviation.

Even when the UPA government was there at the Centre many decisions were taken to strengthen the operational capabilities of the scheme to implement them without much challenges at the grassroots. The reverse migration of the workers from towns and cities to the villages created challenges for the state governments. Through MGNREGA the states could create employment for the jobless. This is how states could transfer cash into the hands of daily wagers to reduce their sufferings. The Centre and States can come together to alleviate poverty and empower the poor through such revolutionary schemes.

4. Conclusion

The new waves of hunger and poverty emerging alongside the COVID-19 pandemic became calamitous and infelicitous-crisis for vulnerable households in the absence of robust social safety-nets. Corona-virus emerged mysteriously in China as the biggest ever challenge for the economies, health and medical services capabilities globally. The superficial and misleading understanding of multifaceted nature of human deprivation has led to poorly-targeted schemes and tardy implementation of the same. The experience and incidence of the pervasive deprivation in Indian society is hierarchically graded and varied in nature, extent and forms. Hunger

can be removed through a multitude of anti-hunger and anti-poverty economic policies and not through populist legerdemain. However, most policies in the developing world have been reduced to the artifice of politicians.

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The Role of ICT in Education : The Emerging Indian Scenario during Lockdown due to COVID-19

Sanjeev Mahajan*

It is a well known fact that Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs), with its presence everywhere, invades all aspects of human life. It provides newer, better and quicker ways for people to interact, network, seek help from others and gain access to all sorts of information. It is in this sense that many people recognize ICTs as catalyst for change. So far as education is concerned, it is very helpful in teaching and learning. It is not only helpful for teachers to present their teaching attractively, but also students/learners are more able to grasp various educational programmes. In this digital era of 21st century, ICT use in the classroom has assumed considerable importance for giving students opportunities to learn and apply the required skills. The present paper is an attempt to examine the changing role of ICT in education during the lockdown periods due to the global pandemic of COVID-19 using mostly secondary sources. This exercise of critically examining the role of ICT in education has been helpful in identifying the major challenges of use of ICT in education during lockdowns in India. The paper also gives some suggestions as remedial measures to meet such challenges during

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pandemics like COVID-19 that force the authorities to close down all educational institutions right from primary to higher ones.

[**Keywords :** ICT, Education, Lockdown, COVID-19, Classroom teaching, Online classes]

1.   ICT : An Introduction

Information is considered as the main key to democracy and its accreditation is fundamental to a successful democracy. The advent of IT has changed the way people live, learn, work and relate with each other. Information & Communication Technology (herein after referred as ICTs) can be explained as electronic-centred technology like computers mobile phone and tablet which is used to gather information, as well as to communicate with others. ICT is considered as the backbone of today's world. It can improve the quality of human life because it can be used as learning and education media, the mass communication media in promoting and campaigning practical and important issues, such as the health and social area. It provides wider knowledge and can help in gaining and accessing information. ICT is generally used as a general term for diverse set of technologies which enable users to create, access, disseminate, store, manage, and communicate information in a digital format.

ICT is an extensional term for information technology (IT) that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals) and computers, as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage, and audiovisual systems, that enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information. The different types of comm-unication in ICT include electronic mail, video conferencing, facsimile and telephone conferencing. ICT communication deals with storage, retrieval transmission and manipulation of digital information.

ICT is defined as any technology used to support information gathering, processing, distribution and use. ICT includes any communication device or application encompassing radio, tele-vision, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as video-conferencing and distance learning. Electronic textbooks, instructional software, email, chat, and distance learning programs are also examples of ICT. General ICT tools for teaching and learning include desktop and

laptops, projector, digital cameras, printer, photocopier, tablets, poppet (a tool that allows users to visualize ideas), pen drive etc. According to UNESCO (2002), ICT is a scientific, technological and engineering discipline and management technique used in handling information, its application and association with social, economic and cultural matters.

In last two decades, advances in ICT have heralded a major transformation in human communication, giving rise to new trends of media for social communication. Social media has become part and parcel of our daily life. From Facebook to Twitter and blogs, social media tools are an integral and important part of society, and these tools are here to stay. although ICT and social media are conceptually different, they are intertwined and inextricably connected. They converge when mobilized as resources for or employed as means in social change, a process that entails altering social patterns of a society, which can involve economic develop-ment, political progress, cultural change, social revolution, etc.

2.   State of ICT in India

As compared to developed societies, south Asian societies, including India, are quite less developed in ICT sector. For example, the proportion of south Asia's Internet users is too far behind the users in North America and users in Western Europe and even some of the Asian countries. This has led to digital divide and is fast raising concerns among nations in the developing world as it allows some individuals or nations to benefit more from the use of such technologies than others. As a result, efforts are being made by some of the poorer countries to catch up with technology by pumping resources into communication hardware and software. However, these efforts so far have not achieved much in bridging the gaps in ICT development among various south Asian countries. The impact of the ICT in this region is going to differ from one country to another as the deployment of this communication technology varies accordingly in different societies. It is worth mentioning that the development of this sector has been comparatively faster since 2010.

Though the term 'information technology' evolved in the 1970, however, its basic concept can be traced to the World War II alliance of the military and industry in the development of electronics, computers, and information theory. After the 1940s, the military remained the major source of research and development funding for

the expansion of automation to replace manpower with machine power. The evolution of information technology and the development of computers have been grouped into five different stages or generations (https://www.zimegats.com/the-history-of-informati on-echnology-past-present-future/) as follows :

- **The First Generation (roughly from 1940-1956) :** Computer systems used vacuum tubes, they were huge, relied on machine language, consumed a large amount of electricity generating a lot of heat which did result in malfunctions. These systems were expensive to operate. The ENIAC is considered an example of first generation.

- **The Second Generation (roughly from 1956-1963) :** In this generation, a major improvement was that the vacuum tubes were replaced with transistors cutting the size of computers, which become faster, cheaper, reliable and more energy-efficient. High-level programming languages like COBOL and FORTRAN made them more accessible, they replacing cryptic, binary machine language to symbolic, assembly languages which programmed written instruction. Also, the magnetic tape and disks replaced the punched cards.

- **The Third Generation (roughly from 1964-1971) :** Development of integrated circuits and programming languages (lile BASIC) increased the speed and the efficiency of computers in this generation. Transistors were made smaller and installed on silicon chips. Keyboards and monitors were created which allowed computers to operate many different applications at one time with one main program to monitor and store information. This is the generation in which society as a whole had more and more access to computers.

- **The Fourth Generation (roughly from 1971-Present)** : A number of transistors, microprocessors containing memory, logic and control circuits (central processing unit) on a single chip further revolutionized the computer technology in this generation. Computers like IBM and Apple PC (personal computer) were created for both personal as well as business purposes and language softwares like Word for Windows made them still more accessible. Networks, handheld devices and finally the internet were also developed subsequently.

Information and communication technology has now become not only essential to our lives, but has the part and parcel of our daily routine. Desktop computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, smart tvs, game consoles, wristwatches, e-book readers, digital cameras, smart home security systems etc. are some of the main examples of digital technology to which more and more people are adopting now globally, including India. For example, only smartphone penetration has increased manifold from 5.5 per 100 people in 2013 to 24 percent in 2016, 26.2 percent in December 2018 and has now reached 42 percent in financial year 2020. It is estimated that the penetration rate of smartphone in India would reach 51 percent in financial year 2025. It may also be added that there were 1.10 billion mobile connections in India in January 2021 (an increase of 23 million, i.e. +2.1% between January 2020 and January 2021; equivalent to 79.0% of the total population).

There were 524.9 million mobile users in India in 2013. This number increased to 684.1 million in 2016, 696.07 million in 2020 and is expected to reach 973.89 million in 2023. Similarly, the internet penetration rate in India was only 15.1 percent, which rose to 34.8 percent in 2016 and 20.0 percent in 2020. With over 560 million internet users, in 2020 (now the penetration rate is 624 million), India has become the second largest online market in the world ranked only behind China.

There were 448.0 million social media users in India in January 2021, which is 78 million more as compared to 2020 (an increase of +21% between 2020 and 2021; 32.3% of the total population in January 2021).

At present, we are currently in the fifth generation. A lot of today´s research focuses on the following :

- Artificial intelligence,
- Creation of intelligent machines that function and behave like humans,
- Speech or voice recognition,
- Learning, planning and problem solving more efficiently,
- Develop devices that respond to natural language input and are capable of learning.

However, the fact must be underlined that the poorer countries countries are far behind in ICT as compared to the developed ones

leading to real danger that the global information society will remain global in name only if no assistance is rendered to poorer countries. Many studies have demonstrated that GDP per capita income, basic telecommunication infrastructure, urbanization and more importantly the political stability correlate with ICT penetration in a country. Not only this, ICT has increased digital divide among the haves and have-nots within the country. With a better understanding of the various factors affecting ICT diffusion, it is hoped that developing countries will better target their efforts in reducing the digital divide, both across and within nations, and make the ICT a truly global information network. We should also not forget that ICT has been successfully used in poverty alleviation, improving living standards and uplifting marginalized sections of society by providing important commercial, social and educational benefits in remote and rural areas. This implies an approach to developing strategies for information systems and technology that are derived from and integrated with other components of the overall development.

According to Asian Development Bank, the strategic and effective use of ICT-combined with a reform-oriented mind-set, necessary set of skills, institutional structure and capacity, appropriate business models, as well as policy and regulatory environments can facilitate fast and efficient delivery of public services in key sectors.

3.   The Role of ICT in Education

ICT can improve the efficiency and quality of education at all levels. The use of ICT in education can strengthen self-learning, and there is no doubt that ICT is one of the key instruments to strengthen 21st century knowledge and skills. ICT connects teachers and students to audio-video learning resources and information related to their curriculums. Teacher, students, administrators and every one related to education are now using ICT in various forms.

A general consensus has emerged among practitioners and academics over the years that integration of ICTs in education has a positive impact on the teaching-learning environment. It has been underlined that ICTs can be successfully employed to reach out to a greater number of students in diverse socio-economic and cultural context. ICT helps not only in promoting learning among students, but also exposes them to the technical skills required for many occupations. Geographical distance has no longer remained an

obstacle to obtain education with the help of ICT. This ia the reason that The role of ICT in education has become more significant today than ever before as it is powerful and capable enough to enhance the learning environments available for education (Pajo & Wallace, 2001).

In fact, ICT has the potential to transform the nature of education by improving teachers' design work, enhancing the roles of students and teachers in the learning process and helping to create a collaborative learning environment, etc. Many scholars (like Volman and Van Eck, 2001; de Corte et al., 2003) hold that the use of ICT offers powerful learning environments and can transform the learning and teaching process so that students can deal with knowledge in an active, self directed and constructive way. At present, ICT is considered as an important means to promote new methods of instruction so far as teaching and learning are concerned.

With the introduction of online education services, students can learn from anywhere using the internet; this has helped in spreading of essential education materials to all students across the globe. Online education is also being enhanced by the creation of a mobile application which enables students to access education material via their mobile phones. Bhattacharjee and Deb (2016) have rightly stated that the teachers are at the core of any living society. Technologies play an important role in training programme of teachers. Students' accesses knowledge and information through TV, digital media, cable network, internet and social media i. e. Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Linkedinn, Igo, Line, Wechat etc. ICT is very important for pre-service teacher education programme in the 21st century.

e-learning helps to bridge the gap between teachers and students. It also promotes distance learning. e-learning is a learning programme that makes use of an information network- such as the internet, an intranet (LAN) or extranet (WAN) whether wholly or in part, for course delivery, interaction and/or facilitation. Web-based learning is a subset of e-learning and refers to learning using an internet browser such as the model, blackboard or internet explorer (Tinio, 2009).

Mumtaz (2000) and Hattie (2009) have also stressed that the research findings over the past two decades provide some evidence to the positive effects of the use of information and communications technology on students' learning. Sanyal (2001) has stated that there are four ways ICT can support basic education :

- Supporting education in schools,
- Providing non-formal education for out-of-school children and adults,
- Supporting pre-service distance education of teachers and their in-service professional development, and
- Enhancing The management of schools.

Likewise, Ehrmann (1994) has identified four distinct faces of quality education, which can be supported by ICT :

- Learning by doing,
- Real time conversation,
- Delayed time conversation and
- Directed instruction.

Rosswall (1999) has stressed that ICT enhances higher education in following ways :

• It enables the effective storing/sorting of information, and can offer new fast ways of communication;

• It enables the reduction of information quantity towards a higher quality and better structure;

• It can be integrated into teaching and learning strategies – and used to support relative learning theories; and

• ICT can be used to create new types of interactive learning media for improved quality, equity, and access in higher education.

Today's most of the educational institutions in India have well-developed social media strategies, and use a suite of social media tools for various purposes including internal and external communications, recruitment, sharing research findings, and highlighting exciting student initiatives. ICT can improve equity and inclusion by enabling access to high quality instruction and learning materials through, for example, massive open online courses (MOOC), open educational resources (OER) and personalized learning software. ICT can also improve effectiveness and efficiency of education systems through robust Education Management Information Systems that provide quality and timely data for evidence-based policies.

It must be mentioned here that for the betterment of the education system in India, all the stakeholders and participants in the system (teachers, faculties, leaders, researchers, parents, policy-makers, financers, promoters, technology innovators and developers, society, community and organizations) have to adopt and use

technology. A proper, more suitable and rational choice has to be made to use the available ICT aids of e-learning for education from among the following :

- **Blended learning** (a combination of teacher, pedagogy, E-technology and learners; a learning model that combines the face-to-face classroom practice with e-learning solutions),

- **Active learning** (learning according to the desires, needs and requirements of learners that involves engaging the learners actively with the course material in various forms like discussions, problem solving, case studies, role plays etc.),

- **Collaborative learning** (a learning model which develops a deep and sound relation among the learners, teachers and experts, irrespective of their caste, class, ethnicity, religion, etc.),

- **Creative and innovative learning** (a process of sharing informations, views and experiences to gain knowledge and to promote the students' experience),

- **Evaluative learning** (a process of learning which is directed and diagnostic in nature and that changes the affective evaluation of a previously neutral stimulus by associating it with another positive or negative affective stimulus),

- **Learning through blogging** (learning through informative websites),

- **Learning through podcast** (learning through series of audio or video files in form of episodes combining learning with entertainment),

- **Ubiquitous learning or U-learning** (a flexible mode of learning to facilitate participation, learning and acquiring information and knowledge at any place and anytime),

- **Constructivism** (a model to learning that holds that people' actively construct/make their own knowledge based on their previous experiences),

- **Open and distance learning** (an effective way of providing learning opportunities to the scattered learners and/or who for some reason or the other can't become regular students),

- **Web seminar learning** (facilitating learners to participate and interact with experts through web seminars),

- **Mobile learning or M-learning** (a new way to access learning content using mobile devices) and

- **Digital citizenship** (using technology to become active citizens and to make one's community better).

Besides, the initiatives taken by Government of India for the digitalization of school education like **NROER** (National repository of open educational resources), **DIKSHA** (Digital infrastructure for knowledge sharing), **NISHTHA** (National initiative for school heads' and teachers' holistic advancement), **e-PATHSHALA** (Learning on the Go) as well as higher education like **SWAYAM** (Study webs of active learning for young aspiring minds), **NPTEL** (National programme on technology enhanced learning), **SWAYAM PRABHA** - The 32 Educational DTH Channels, **e-PG PATHSHALA** (an initiative of the MHRD under its National Mission on Education through ICT and being executed by the UGC), **e-Pathya** (one the verticals of e-PG Pathshala which is software driven course/content package that facilitates students pursuing higher education), **e-Books or e-Adhyayan** (a platform to provide e-Books for the post-graduate courses), **NDL** (National Digital Library), NAD (National Academic Depository), **Shodhganga** (a platform for research students to deposit their Ph.D. theses and make it available to the entire scholarly community in open access), **e-ShodhSindhu** (access to e-resources to universities, colleges and centrally funded technical institutions in india), **e-Yantra** (Engineering a better tomorrow) and **Virtual Labs** (remote-access to Labs in various disciplines of Science and Engineering) are also proving quite helpful to the learners.

The use of the above ICT aids of e-learning for education are for both the educators to supplement and strengthen the classroom teaching and learners/students who mat take help of them through internet at anytime sitting in their homes. On the one hand, ICT is exerting its considerable impact on pedagogical approaches in the classrooms vis-avis teaching practices, school innovation, and community services, whereas, on the other hand, it has helped higher education and research by providing all type of knowledge to students/researchers at their disposal. It may also be stressed that all these ICT aids for education are helpful in learner-centred learning environment that requires personal engagement to the learning task using the desktop computer/laptop/tablet/i-pad /mobile and the internet connection.

In short, we may say that ICT has played a catalyst role in promoting the education globally and India is no exception to it. Chandra and Yadav (2020 : 10) have rightly stressed in this context that digital initiatives taken by Government of India are transforming the traditional education system as well. These e-learning platforms are very effective in terms of availability of diverse range of courses and their significance in building one's skills and capabilities. It has bridged the gap between schools and homes as it is easily accessible and brought the transparency that can be easily monitored and hence making it reliable.

4. Lockdowns due to COVID-19 in India

The global outbreak of coronavirus since a patient in the city of the wet market of Chinese city Wuhan reported pneumonia-like symptoms on December 8, 2019, had turned into a global pandemic in 3-4 months and threatened the lives of millions of people across the globe. This virus has put the world on standstill until few weeks/months earlier. It created the World War situation across the globe as most of the countries were blaming China for this pandemic for hiding the facts and misleading WHO. At present, majority of the countries in the world are fighting the menace of coronavirus (changing its form constantly) which has disturbed the safety, security and well-being of their citizens, besides paralyzing the economies. All the countries were forced to impose various restrictions on their own people, which probably they have not even imagined before. The world battled with COVID-19 during lockdown to save their citizens as well as economies (Mahajan, 2020 : 64). Emphasis of policy makers shifted to take radical measures, including social distancing and hygienic practices, to slow the contagion. Hence, it becomes imperative to investigate the impact of lockdown due to COVID-19 on education system as educational institutions at various levels were closed during first wave in 2020 as well as second wave in 2021. This closure of educational institutions has resulted in both challenges and opportunities for them as they shifted to virtual and remote course delivery.

India faces multiple major challenges on the COVID-19 front as its position is quite different from other countries in terms of dense population. Social distancing without total shutdowns is unimaginable, especially in the big cities with crowded streets, trains, buses and offices. Besides, India has a population of 1·35 billion and

the largest concentration of COVID-19 cases initially had been in the metropolitan cities of New Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Chennai. The government response has included prolonged lock-down, public awareness campaign and a series of innovations including a novel smartphone application called *Aarogya Setu* for contact tracing and aiding in quarantine and related containment measures.

During the first wave of infections in India during March-May 2020, the Government of India implemented the "world's strictest lockdown" (Hale et al., 2020) to curtail the spread of COVID-19. The period of lockdown during first wave in 2020 in India was initially from March 25 to April 15, 2020 (19 days) and then from April 15, 2020 to May 3, 2020 (19 days). Even during the subsequent unlock periods, all types of educational institutions remained closed for a long time. When they started opening for regular classes and/or getting ready to conduct pre-board examinations in the year end and the beginning of new year, the sudden spurt in cases again forced the state governments to shut them again. Subsequently, with the start of second wave in 2021 in India, various states and union territories were given freedom by the central government to declare lockdown in April according to local situation as regards the number of cases and its spread as well as positivity rate. This resulted again in disruption of regular classes and the conduct of examination. The most of the institutions at various levels are still closed in various states and union territories.

5. The Changing Role of ICT in Education during Lockdowns in India : Challenges and Prospects

Prolonged lockdowns due to COVID-19 has far reaching and severe impact on educational institutions as they were closed indefinitely, as a logical solution to enforce social distancing, leading to the danger of disconnect among students and teachers. In fact, no one ever imagined before the pandemic that the face of the Indian educational system could change so drastically in India. The pandemic prompted a shift from classroom teaching to online education in the form of all the classes, tests, examinations, parent-teacher meetings, admissions, etc. In fact, there was no option except online education (virtual education) as a result of closure of all types of schools, colleges, universities and coaching institutions during the lockdown due to COVID-19 to continue education and to accomplish the set aims and objectives and to allow instruction to continue.

However, we have not developed suitable infra-structure in educational institutions required for the online education. Not only this, this sudden shift to electronic learning/e-learning resources led to different problems/challenges for the teachers, students and the respective authorities of all the educational institutions to necessitate training, facilitation, or orientation sessions to acquaint with this unexpected and sudden shift. Even this could not materialize in India, as in all other developing countries in the short and medium-term.

In short, we can say that undoubtedly ICT has the great potential to improve the educational system to a great extent, but we remained far from reaping these benefits because of certain specific challenges as enumerated below :

- The challenge of making available different digital apps for providing online education like Zoom, Google meet, Google classroom, Webex, Microsoft team etc.,
- The challenge of making available different digital platforms for online education like Swayam, Webex, Impartus etc.
- The challenge of training teachers/educators to develop e-contents/notes/synopsis of the topic/PPts etc. related to courses & deliver them to students un-interrupted,
- The challenge of providing such electronic gadgets like mobiles/desktop computers/laptops/tablets/i-pads etc. to students and making them familiar to access e-contents, interact with teachers and participate in discussions/deliberations with others through these gadgets,
- The challenge of making available reliable and high-speed internet at both the ends, institutions and homes so that none struggle to participate in digital learning,
- The challenge of creating a safe and conducive learning environment virtually and at homes,
- Lack of basic facilities, external distraction and family interruption during online teaching at learners' homes,
- The challenge of lack of training, a lack of technical support and a lack of clarity and direction to teachers in educational institutions,
- The challenge of supporting such barriers as the budget for purchasing advanced technologies in educational institutions, especially the primary, middle, higher secondary schools and colleges in remote rural/tribal/backward areas,

- The challenge of allocation of sufficient funds/grants for the educational sector by the state and central governments for strengthening and using the ICT infrastructure, which does not seem to be a priority and very attractive to the political leadership,

- The challenge of training and bridge the digital divide in different states and union territories (i.e. the country as a whole) and move closer to achieving sustainable development goals,

- The challenge of endorsing the digital revolution in the education sector in India during pandemic when most of the resources are diverted to expand and strengthen health sector which has been hitherto neglected in the country in the past,

- The challenge of creation of a dedicated unit to devise the development of digital infrastructure, digital content, and capacity building to supervise the e-education needs as envisaged in National Education Policy 2020 because not only its implementation has been delayed due to pandemic, but also the allocation of less than 10 percent of GDP to education sector, and

- The challenge of eliminating the digital divide due to differential access of ICT to different sections of society (23.8% of Indian households had internet access as revealed by the National Sample Survey, 2017-2018) and expanding ICT- based educational initiatives in India.

Due to the above challenges, the importance of online education has not only been realized, but it is also now acknowledged by the various stakeholders in the education community. A number of studies have been conducted on online versus classroom teaching in India (as well other developing countries) highlighting challenges and remedies for smooth functioning of education system during the pandemic, which disrupted the education of millions of students in different contexts.

Khan et al. (2012) have enumerated many barriers posing challenges to the use of ICT in education in Bangladesh which apply to other developing countries also. These include ICT supported infrastructure and lack of resources, insufficient funds, vision and plan of schools/colleges/universities, stakeholders, educators,

business leaders and government, political factors, social and cultural factors, corruption, teachers' attitudes and beliefs about ICT, lack of knowledge and skill of teachers, lack of time, etc. Many scholars like Williams (1995), Pelgrum (2001), Mamun and Tapan (2009), Ihmeideh (2009) also hold that Teachers' lack of knowledge and skills is one of the main hindrances to the use of ICT in education both for the developed and underdeveloped countries. The students' isolation has the potential to unsettle them (de Oliveira Araújo, de Lima, Cidade, Nobre & Neto, 2020) or could contribute to their lack of self-discipline.

As regards social and cultural factors, differential gender access to ICT is foremost. In this context, Sharma (2003) has stated that one of the most significant factors influencing the use of ICT in developing countries is the low social status of women. This is the reason that educating or the use of ICT to women is not considered paramount. Even if women were educated having the necessary hardware and software for the use of ICT, they may find very little time to use them due to the burden of domestic chores.

Saksham Mahajan (2020), in his study on "Online Education : Emerging Substitute of Traditional Classroom Teaching due to COVID-19", collected information from 384 students studying for their graduation, post-graduation and Doctorate degrees in various streams using structured questionnaire ('Google form') in the month of August. His findings revealed that three convenient platforms (Google Product, Zoom and Youtube Live) were mostly used by 92% of students in order of preference and almost three-fourth (76.6 percent) used Android as operating mobiles for accessing online classes. The study also showed that online teaching was considered good substitute of traditional classroom teaching only by one-third (32.8 percent) students only. Not only this, only half of the selected students agreed that the traditional classroom teaching supplemented with online teaching by providing e-study material could be more effective.

A study of 232 students in West Bengal by Kapasia et al. (2020) on the impact of lockdown on learning status of undergraduate and postgraduate students during COVID-19 pandemic, has shown that they were using android mobile for online classes, facing various problems like depression, anxiety, poor internet connectivity, and unfavourable study environment at home. These problems were

faced much more by those students who belonged to remote areas and marginalized sections of society.

Jena (2020) has elaborated the merits and demerits of online learning platforms and highlighted tools and techniques for online learning which can ensure the continuity of education. The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education, according to him, might be long lasting. He has highlighted some of the tools and techniques for online learning which can ensure the continuity of learning and given many suggestions. One such suggestion was to adopt the policy to provide free internet and free digital gadgets to all learners by the government and/or educational institutions. This is important to curtail the digital divide among the learners as many scholars (such as Manzoor and Ramzan, 2020; Singh-pillay and Khumalo, 2021 among many others) hold that the online mode of the teaching-learning process is not only discriminatory to poor and marginalized students, but also for hearing-impaired students.

Mishra et. el. (2020) have emphasized that online teaching-learning has become a massive challenge for the stakeholders to deal with as they were neither ready to adjust with the sudden change nor technologically competent to embrace the changes in the system due to the current situation of lockdown in COVID-19 induced time. They have suggested that the governments must ensure the the following for digital transformation :

- Ensure the availability of reliable communication tools,
- Ensure high quality digital academic experience,
- Promote technology-enabled learning for students to bridge the disparities originated in the education system before and after COVID-19 catastrophe which is also inevitably necessitated for uninterrupted learning,
- Develop suitable curriculum reflecting the perceptible change in the content knowledge and learning experience of students as well as enable them to think critically, and
- Bridge the gap between the haves and have-nots, remote rural and urban affluent as students come from different socio-economic backgrounds and applying the same pedagogical approach may not yield the desired results.

The survey conducted by Naik et al. (2021) with various stake holders of all higher education courses to know the efficacy of teaching-learning process has shown that paradigm shift from

traditional face-to-face teaching method to online teaching has posed technical difficulties affecting the efficacy of teaching-learning process. Their study revealed that more than 60% of the students were not ready for the online classes due to lack of technical, infra-structural, and high-speed internet access, and power supply, limited network data per day etc.). Online sessions of problematic subjects were considered difficult, but theoretical subjects were easy to understand by the students. Study also revealed that the most of the students found morning time (8 am to 12 noon) more effective for online teaching and stressed the need of revision of portions covered duringin online classes with face-to-face classroom teaching after reopening of institutions.

Referring to the positive side of use of ICT in education in India, Mathivanan et al. (2021) have stated that although the online education can't transform traditional classroom education, which is based on personalized attention and face–to–face communication, still it can be a more effective supplement to the education system model in India. Educational institutions have started moving to a blended learning approach where both face-to-face delivery and e-learning model have become standard practices; modern standards of learning management systems may deliver more; a definite improvement in learning material has been noticed; collaborative work has risen due to lots of academic web meetings, workshops, and conferences at university, state, national and international levels. This is the reason that e-learning seems a viable solution to fill the void made due to the lack of classroom learning in present scenario.

It is evident that the students did experience many challenges/ obstacles in opting with online classes, as they were not accustomed with this new method of learning. They were not able to interact with their teachers effectively through online learning. Not only this, even the teachers were not able to give attention to all the students equally. However, it must be remembered that the students take their own time to adapt and adjust to the new platform of learning and deal with the situation effectively as it has been imposed on them suddenly like other stakeholders in education system.

6.   Conclusion

It may be safely concluded that the use of ICT in today's scenario has become very much helpful in education. ICT seems to function as a 'bridge' to break the dis-continuity in education during

lockdown due to COVID-19 in India as elsewhere throughout the globe. Earlier, the ICT was used for making classroom teaching more effective for students. ICT, at present, has become indispensable and inseparable part of the education system. It is in this sense, that ICT is said to have started transforming educational society gradually into the knowledge and information society, which in turn, is reconstructing economy to knowledge economy and supporting nations to create wealth by exploring knowledge.

However, a universal and an acceptable fact is that ICT is no substitute of teachers as it cannot replace them. Teachers are and will remain core part of quality teaching. ICT cannot succeed in education without them. The only thing which can be changed, modified and upgraded keeping in view the present scenario, is way, method and mode of teaching with the applications of advanced technology. In other words, this is possible only with adoption and integration of ICT with teaching and learning in the system of education.

7.   Recommendations

On the basis of this study, I would like to make following recommendations which may be helpful in long run to make the use of ICT in education system more effective for transforming Indian society :

1. Development, expansion and infra-structure required for digitalization of education in schools/colleges/universities for preparing them to deliver online teaching during the time of crisis/pandemic or even otherwise more smoothly and effectively. For this special grants may be provided by state and central governments by allocating more funds for this purpose at priority basis. This includes the facility of fast internet also.

2. Appropriate training to teachers and students for becoming accustomed for online teaching. It has been revealed by many studies that majority of teachers at all levels of education are neither equipped with gadgets like tablets and laptops, nor they are trained to develop e-content in the form of PPTs, brief synopsis and complete lectures for delivering to students via online classes. Facilities for crash courses, small duration workshops, refresher and/or orientation courses for such training should be started by the state and central governments and make them mandatory for all the teachers to enable them to

prepare e-contents and teach students on digital mode (virtual classrooms, virtual learning and teaching). Such trainings should be made the part of minimum requirements for recruiting the teachers in future. Educational planners and authorities have to understand that online education/class is not possible unless the teachers adapt to technology and become competent for virtual engagement of students. Until the teachers become 'tech-savvy' through training, crash courses, small duration workshops, refresher and/or orientation courses, the government should play the role of a subject-specific, contextualized, and age and grade appropriate content curator- facilitator with the support of experts in each subject to provide them through portals started for this purpose.

3. Students have to be provided with digital gadgets like smart phones, tablets, laptops, i-pad etc. by each state government. Central government/central government funding agencies/ HRD ministry, state education departments should grant sufficient funds for this purpose. Though, it may impose additional financial burden on governments, it is worth implementing it for the bright future of our young generation. Moreover, it is not impossible because a number of political parties in India have been promising and distributing free laptops to students to influence their families during elections. Besides this, necessary training has to be ensured to students to enable them with the ability to use digital platforms to receive e-contents and learn through online classes.

4. Students of marginalized and vulnerable sections of society as well as those with disabilities need still more attention as a number of studies have demonstrated the difficulties being faced by them in digital education. They don't have necessary tools to access online classes and reliable internet and/or technology. Similar is the position vis-a-vis gender. This has already started broadening the gap and expanding digital divide among haves and have-nots as well as that of gender to an alarming scale. Members in Lok Sabha have already pointed out this gap and raised their concern on March 17, 2021 during a discussion on demands for grants of the education ministry. It was brought to the notice of government that there is in-adequate infrastructure for the education sector at present. Government should take appropriate steps for bridging this

gap on priority basis. Earlier the better as there are many news of suicide by brilliant students as they did not have resources to buy a digital gadget due to the financial position of their family. If possible, help should also be taken from NGOs who may be happily willing to do this noble job of providing digital aids to marginalized and vulnerable sections of society, including those with disabilities. Even UNESCO (2020) had proposed that the governments could assist these vulnerable individuals by providing them with learning technologies (like laptops or tablets, if necessary) and support them with internet connectivity and other issues.

5. Parents also have to do the needful for providing their wards an appropriate and highly conducive atmosphere for online classes. WHO has already voiced the concern about the development of such feelings among some children and young people as being more isolated, anxious, bored and uncertain during pandemic. They may feel fear, and grief, over the impact of the virus on their families. Parents have to take steps for safety during open digital communication for online learning; ensure that the privacy settings and parental controls, including safe search, are always on in the device being used; instruct them to keep personal information private from strangers who may pop-in during online classes; help the children to recognize and avoid misinformation and age-inappropriate content by spending some time with them; and should remain in touch with the teacher/mentor/institution concerned. It is worth mentioning that even a slight exposure of students to porn contents available on web may be very harmful for their wards and derail the entire process of online education (teaching and learning). Parents also have to teach their wards COVID appropriate behaviour regarding preventive measures and practices in a sustained manner so that they get accustomed and don't feel any difficulty in their schools/colleges/universities whenever they assume regular classes and/or examinations.

6. Positive attitudes towards digital education, self-regulation and intrinsic motivation for teaching/learning among both the teachers and students do play an important role in improving performance in general at schools/colleges/universities and are very important for online learning to continue during lock-

downs due to pandemic like COVID-19. Keeping in view the danger of third wave of corona in the near future, it is necessary to strengthen positive attitudes and motivation towards digital education so that they are ready for it in the long run.

Camilleri (2021) has rightly stressed the need for further research that investigation on the impact of remote teaching through digital and mobile learning technologies on the students' learning journey using different methodologies, sampling frames, and analytical techniques to shed more light on the implementation and executiveness of remote learning. These studies can also examine the effects of having fully virtual and remote course delivery on the students' experience and their learning outcomes.

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Education of Art in Ancient India

*Reetika Garg**

According to Rigveda 'all truth, goodness and beauty emanate from the Lord. Art is eternal, unending,....The express consciousness of the beauty of God is called art'. According to Chitrasutra, all the work of art including painting played an important role in the life of the society. In the vedic age, the artist had established himself as a respectable member of the society. Even Ribhus had been awarded the status of godhead on account of their creation skill. First of all the mention of sixty-four art found in the thirtieth chapter of the Yajurveda and later Vatsayayan stated sixty-four types of art in his book Kamasutra. The sixty-four arts were not equally popular among the citizens, but a few like painting, music, singing, dancing, drama and instrument playing etc received prominence. Education in fine arts like music, dance and painting was considered essential for unmarried maidens of affluent families. Even the ancient stories were replete with instances of young lovers exchanging paintings as loving gifts.

[**Keywords :** Art, Chitrasutra, Ribhus, Prominence, Education, Affluent]

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1.   Introduction

"The creative energy of God, which man receives in a limited form is art".
                                                                    - Indian aesthetics

According to Rigveda "All truth, goodness and beauty emanate from the lord. Art is eternal, unending. The express consciousness of the beauty of God is called art." The art and culture of India has established the unity of oriental civilization down the centuries. Here spiritualism, religion and art have recognized constituent factors of social harmony. The impact of Indian art, culture and philosophy can be very easily perceived on the art, culture and philosophy of many countries of the world. The healthy tradition of art has existed in India since ancient times.

This paper is an outline of the scenario of art education in ancient India. In the modern period, all aspects of study are related to art and education of ancient time. First of all the stone age started in India from where we get the glimpses of rich knowledge art, culture and technological advancement.

Apart from the drastic climatic and environmental changes, the essential process of development is a progressive change in emphasis from core to flake tools. Varied bone tools have been recovered from all excavations of the Mesolithic period. The first urban culture or Harappa culture gradually evolved from these pre-existing cultures. The earliest indigenous cultures which are of interest in the historical study of art, science and technology are those which center in Harappa in Punjab and Mohenjo-Daro in Sind; the so called Indus Valley Civilizations which represents the bronze age of India. When talk about technological education, the prominent characteristic is that of standardization. Cities are built to a uniform plan, resembling the layout of a chess board and off well-fired bricks of a controlled size, and domestic pottery is turned from the wheel in specific form and capacity.[1]

Archaeological excavations and explorations revealed the spread of Harappa culture over an area of about 840,000 square miles. Besides the Indus Valley proper, its spread includes Makran Coastal areas in southern Baluchistan upto Sutkagendor near the Iranian boarder, northern Rajputana, Kutch, Saurashtra and Gujarat upto the Narmada and East Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and the region almost upto Delhi. Harappa culture (2300 B.C. 1750 B.C.) died a mysterious death and for this, various agencies' have been attributed.

2.   Ancient India and Art Education

Ancient India covers a period of more than 2000 years and educational methods ideals and institutions could not remain unchanged through this long period.[2] The growth of Indian education of art and science is influenced by the Vedic people. In the hymns of the Rigveda there is found the first account of the way of life of the Aryans, their recognitions of and devotion to one supreme cause, their realization the behind the phenomena of the natural world, which appear shifting and changeable, there is constant principle (*rita*) or order in events. Despite the gradual development of philosophy, the personification of the primeval forces of nature, for instance, sun God Surya, or the God of fire, Agni, continued. Sacrificial altars, at first mere heaps of turf, evolved into elaborate designs demanding arithmetical and geometrical calculations. Vedic literature gives us only fragmentary information concerning the early stages of Indian education. The wisest procedure is to examine the whole evaluation in the light of Indian literature.

The Vedic age was not generally the age of deep and critical thinking, but one of religious and vigorous living in the midst of the forces of nature, personified and gods, as living on the earth, in the sky and in the heaven beyond. Men offered oblations to the gods and asked for cattle, crops, wealth, prosperity, health, longevity, progeny, victory, peace and happiness here and in heaven after death. Occasionally, some wondered as to whether there was any overlord of all the gods.

According to Chitrasutra, all the works of art including paintings played an important role in the life of the society. The polite education of a citizen the educated urbane man of town included knowledge and skill of several arts in addition to erudition in literature, rhetoric, grammar, philosophy and allied subjects.[3] In ancient Indian literature the word 'shilp' stood for art and 'shilpi' for the artist. The word 'kala' has definitely been used in 'Rigveda', 'Shatpath Brahman', 'Shadvinsh Brahman', 'Sankhyan Brahan' and 'Atharvaveda', but it has been used merely in the sense of 'efficiency in work, skill or craft'.

In the Vedic age, the artist had established himself as a respectable member of society. 'Ribhus' had been awarded the status of Godhead on account of their creation skill. In those days, art was used to stimulate sex but in the word 'Kala' (art) came into use much

later and gradually, the term was construed as a synonym for culture. First of all the mention of sixty-four art found in the thirtieth chapter of the Yajurveda and later Vatsayayan stated sixty-four type of art in his book Kamasutra.[4] Sixty-four arts were not equally-popular among the citizens, but a few like painting, music, signing, dancing, drama and instrument playing etc. received prominence. Instruction were also given to the effect that the citizens ought to learn these arts and those who were conversant with them were accepted as cultured. As regards their contribution to the prosperity of civil life, the exposition of Vatsayayan is extremely clear and unambiguous. He maintains that these arts were completely traditional.[5]

Education in fine arts like music, dance and painting was considered essential for unmarried maidens of affluent families. The ancient stories are replete with instances of young lovers exchanging paintings as loving gifts. Painting-Chitra-Kala was recognized as an essential part of the curriculum in the upbringing of children of 'good families'.[6]

Art is actually the best means of communications. Art and creativity act as a link between natural world and the inner spiritual world. It gives us the mental peace. Artists in ancient India generally dedicated himself to his art and very rarely inscribed his name on any piece he created to perpetuate himself. It is said; citizens connoisseurs of art, accomplished courtesans, painters and sculptors among others studied standard texts on painting. Such widespread studies naturally brought forth principles of art criticisms as in 'alankara-sastra'. Kautilya deems it a responsibility of the state to support art-masters that spread knowledge among youngsters.[7] The Ajanta paintings establish beyond doubts that painting had prominent place in Indian religion and society, and if the classical form of painting had existed, the principles and methodology characteristic of it must have been there.[8]

The artists of Ajanta created valuable treasures of the art world. They were the inheritors of an ancient tradition that painted and decorated palaces, temples and caves. The theories, principles and techniques followed by those artists came down to them through oral traditions bequeathed by a long line of artists spread over several generations.[9] These artists were guided and inspired by the techniques and principles of Chitrasutra of the Vishnudharamottarra

Purana. Basically Chitrasutra is the part of the Vishnudharamottarra Purana which deals with the art of painting. According to Chitrasutra 'Great paintings are a balm on the troubled brow of mankind. The purpose of art is to show one the grace that underlies all of creation, to help one on the path towards reintegration with that which pervades the universe'. So the ancient artists of India was trying to follow these principles in his art. Another important texts of ancient India are 'Ashtadhyayi, Natyashastra, Kamasutra, Chitra-lakshanam, Shilparatna, Puranas' etc.

So the main characteristic of ancient Indian art has been its remarkable unity and consistency. Another important feature of the ancient Indian art was its vision of life and its world view. That inward vision and a sense of peace and tranquility are its hallmarks. E. B. Havell an eminent art critic, who was the principal of 'Calcutta art-school' in British India, praised the ideals of Indian art and the underlying spirit behind it.

3. Conclusion

Thus, in the view of the available texts, art works, description and record of ancient literature, we can say that the art and science of painting, drama, dance, music, sculpture etc. were fully developed and had reached its peak. Indians were not only sufficiently proficient in art work during the ancient period but art had become a part of their life styles.

Pic. - 1 : Bodhisattva Padampani (Ajanta Cave)

Pic. - 2 : A View of Ellora Cave

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Edmund Candler's Abdication : A Britisher's Insights in Colonial India

Neerja Deswal*

The British colonial hold on India which fired the imagination of the English for almost three centuries inspired a vast body of literature known as 'Anglo-Indian Literature'. The tradition of Anglo-Indian Fiction begins roughly from 1890 and the three following decades are important because they produced a number of writers. Among the significant Anglo-Indian writers are Fanny Penny, E. M. Forester, Rudyard Kipling, Paul Scott and Edmund Candler. The earlier generations of Anglo-Indian writers had regarded vast areas of India merely as blank spaces. They took it upon themselves to portray India and its inhabitants from the point of view of a colonizer. But this sense of superiority of the colonizer as opposed to the inferiority of the colonized could not go on forever. As an educator and novelist, Edmund Candler was sympathetic in his portrayal of India and his depictions were largely realistic and sensitive. This research paper tries to elaborate on his political and social realities in colonial India as an outsider-insider.

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Second half of 19th century saw a lot of changes in the colonized India. Indian kept on building their resistance against the oppressive British regimen, whereas, the British adhered to the ideology of implementing various political and economic measures for the consolidation of their rule. From 1870s the indigenous reform movement designed to eradicate social ills in Hindu society gained further impetus in Bengal, Maharashtra and Panjab through the efforts of local reformists. The Arya Samaj movement was also making inroads in Panjab and in some areas of Uttar Pradesh in the 1880s. Bengal and Maharashtra too became grounds of social reform movements.[1]

Late 19th century became the hub of mobilizing masses through socio-political messages. Vernacular literature, press and local symbols were used to garner the support of local people. Celebration of local festivals, recitation of folk tales and enactment of plays in Marathi-these were used to forge an aggressive Indian nationalism. After these efforts, the Marathi literature grew rapidly and dramatically. To stop the spread of patriotic fervour, the British government banned Marathi texts which contained themes of political disturbances.[2] In Bengal, newspapers, magazines and novels for used to express indigenous responses to colonial rule. Bankimchandra's Anandmath with Bande Mataram struck an emotive chord. Newspapers and journals like Bangbasi, Amrita Bazaar Patrika in Bengal and Tilak's Kesari gained immense popularity by invoking patriotic and populist ideals.

Edmund Candler (1874-1926) was an English journalist, educator and novelist. He came to India in 1896 and stayed in the East for about twenty years and took up various teaching positions in order to gain insight into the emerging political and social realities. After his arrival in India, he taught in a school in Darjeeling. He was also a private tutor to a native ruler before taking over as a Principle of Mohindra college in Punjab. Hence, his experiences in Bengal and Punjab provided him ample opportunities to observe fast changing political trends and developments which were unfolding in the early twentieth century. In 1912, His novel *Sri Ram : Revolutionist* was published anonymously. Set in the background of Punjab, the narrative offers an important intersection of politics of text, religion and nationalism in the genre of Anglo-Indian literature located within the imperial tradition of the early twentieth century.

Abdication appeared in 1922. *Sri Ram : Revolutionist* and *Abdication* provide a political context and negotiation with the prevailing political and social conditions which endeavoured to shape imagination in the historical and political background in the early twentieth century.

Abdication was kind of a sequel to *Sri Ram : Revolutionist* and any attempts to read it without reading the former is reductive. The central figure in *Sri Ram : Revolutionist* is an anglicized Indian. This cultural process of 'Anglicization' prevents a cultural assimilation with the ruling community. Sri Ram commits suicide. Skene in the spirit of benevolent Christianity still feels responsible for 'pathetic hybrids'.[3] In *Abdication*, Sri Ram's friend and Skene's student, Banarasi Das needs to be rescued. It is his turn to chart out his destiny in the politically fluid situation.

Riley, the editor of Thompsonpur Gazette, came to India seeking quixotic, 'Romantic East'. The First World War has destroyed the notions of glamour, romanticism of empire; and has given way to the emergence of different discourses of nation, race and religion. Though the discourse on the East is still orientalized for its exoticness, it has lost its exotic appeal and attraction in view of current harsh realities. Where is that East romanticized and orientalized by the poets? Riley explores the existing realities, which have destroyed his ideal notions of adventure, and mystery that had initially inspired him to come to the East. The basic question that emerges for the Anglo- Indian officials is how to govern India? Was India to be governed by pen as Henry Lawrence, the Anglo-Indian civil servants had said, or by sword? The question agitated the official mind as the narrative in *Abdication* demonstrates. This theme has been addressed in *Abdication*.

Riley, located in Punjab, realizes that political developments have mitigated the romance and now the 'unglamourous East represents a space for contesting and conflictual identities and culture. The acknowledgement of the fact that the British symbols are perceived meaningless for the natives drive him further to analyze the winds of political changes. The question is whether Queen Victoria's statue stands for the "monument or effigy"[4]. The narrative explores Riley's consciousness and through him the increasingly complex structure of political situation perceived by the Anglo-Indians and the natives. For him it's not the stage of accepting

legitimate grievances but time to let India manage her own affairs. Violence has overcome placidity and the narrative delves into the situation and brings out the various strings and threads connected with politics.

> "It must be beastly being run by foreigners", he thought, "I should hate it. Of course, it was all right before they began to worry about these things. What a bore it must to be politically correct" (6-7).

This is the confession and admittance on the part of the dominant race that the political consciousness of the subject race has evolved and has become dominant. The educated and politically-conscience people worry about their own place and identities in the changing scenario. 'The trouble now is that we have taught the East to be dynamic, hence the collision. And we have done it with our eyes open. It is the relationship between these two dynamics which needs to be defined. Tension between them exacerbates mutual distrust, hatred and suspicion. Riley wants to cross the space and reach out to the natives. He is in tension with his own society. A witness to various historical events Riley examines the various possibilities to resolve the racial impasse. It is also the exploration of the idea, whether the contemporary political and social structure owes their existence to the official Anglo-India and their racial policies towards the natives.

Banarasi Das, an enthusiast for participating in the political process to achieve glory, attaches himself to various organizations. He is perpetually moving in search of a stable identity to fight for the Motherland. In order to define himself he lends himself to the revolutionaries but fails to pass the test of strength. The narrative is engaged to show the dense complexities within the political system. It explores the development of Hindu- Muslim camaraderie during the Khilafat Movement. What brings them together is the destruction of the British Rule in India. The narrative represents the Khilafat movement as a pan-Islamic movement. In spite of his honourable intentions and devotion to the cause, Banarasi Das's effeminate nature becomes his enemy, and he appears a suspect, a betrayer without his fault in the eyes of the Wahabis, and the Islamic fanatics. The fragile trust and faith cemented between them against the British is destroyed.

In the first novel, there is a move to mobilize regions, for the nationalist ideas travel from Bengal, Maharashtra into Punjab. In *Abdication*, the scope extends to examine the relationship between Hindu- Muslim communities. The narrative represents the mood of the people by showing how the majority of them during the Khilafat and Non-cooperation Period were mobilized to denounce the government and its authority of justice and fair deal. The indigenous politics was no longer confined to the intellectuals and the professionals, but extended to the masses.

The Colonial discourse of Hindus and Muslims discord finds resonance in the narrative of many Anglo- Indian writers. Banarasi Das, in midst of the Muslims and the British opts for the Muslim cause, but through his personal experiences rushes to embrace his former foes, the British in India, which shoes that his affinity with the Khilafat cause has been rather superficial. The discourse confirms the British perception of the artificiality of religious harmony. In the background of religious fanaticism, Banarasi Das is taken unawares. The narrative invokes fear and anxiety to highlight the violent conduct and religious bigotry. Bulbul alias Abdul Hakim launches the strategy of recruiting volunteers to go to Istanbul to "unite the jehadis"(4). He is an austere soldier who is willing to go any extent to meet his goal.

Riley breaks the conventions of his own society and gives his opinions by objectively subverting his own colonial enclosure. The official Anglo-India rejects his opinions and he finds himself alienated in the club. He reflects over the race relations and the extent of complete mistrust as any "contact was likely to take the form of collision"(8). A narrative set in the context of political events takes disparate opinions and bemoans why the bureaucracy has refused to acknowledge the flow of ideas and political movements in the country. It is the attitude of people, their traditions, their conventions and their orientations, which bureaucracy has refused to accept. The British in India have become as static as men like Bolton, who have no contact with men and who are engrossed in paperwork. They have become fixed in their established conventions and are unable to see the altered atmosphere. The natives agitate and Riley takes note of it, "I'm not justifying it. I'm explaining it" (47). The air of apprehension, scepticism, and complete wariness engulfs both the colonists and the colonized. In such an uncooperative, contradictory environment, the

other elements emerge that destroy the whole system and vitiate the political and social atmosphere on the basis of persistent practice of rumour-mongering.

It is the deployment of language, twisted metaphors which heighten the passions of people, leading to an aggravation of already stained relationships. Men like Barkatullah and Banarasi Das are created in the atmosphere of political and racial hatred. These 'hybrids' offer a critique of the colonial educational policy. Barkatullah, is an inveterate opportunist, without any conscience and scruples embezzled money. He has been extremely successful in the eyes of public by writing scurrilous articles in his paper Itihad. He becomes Gandhi's disciple and in the manner of Mark Antony destroys Gandhi's discourse of non- violence before the masses and becomes a popular hero. The British in India punish him for spreading poison and their policy of punishment turns him into a hero. The Extremists, too, have taken immense advantage by inventing circulating, advertising, unrolling rumours and propagating activities of the disgruntled persons who become public heroes on the basis of their shallow rhetoric. The narrative also unfolds the shrewd manipulation of dynamics of power by some disgruntled persons to further their personal interests. In the scenario the Moderates have been pushed aside as they have lost ground to the Extremists. Gandhi is a 'soul force' but for Riley it is alarming to note as to what extent the government and Gandhi are responsible for the creation of 'riffraffs' who refuse to see the proper perspective and are bent upon deliberately creating anarchy. They are active in concocting 'grievances' in order to marshal support among people to inflame discontentment and hostility against the British in India. 'Murder Europeans', becomes a rallying cry. Topi Walla an abuse flung in reckless abandon reflects hatred for Topi - a symbol of British colonialism. Propaganda has affected so much the Skene admits 'how much they believe of these rumours. I would give a good deal to see the Raj through the eyes of Banarasi Das.' Such a picture through the 'reversal of gaze' would be at variance with the colonizer's image and conception. The forces of vernacular papers correspond to bazaar rumours and the writers mindlessly reiterate this material venomously in newspapers. Riley says about the government "They are afraid to govern and daren't abdicate." And he seeks the unadulterated East, the traditional, original conventional East

without the influence and impact of the British authority and direction.

In the narrative, the treatment of political developments in not chronological, by identifying them in a succession, one event following on another, nor is thematic. Right through the narrative deals with the historical developments alluded to from the end of the First World War to the Non-cooperation movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi. The main focus in the work is on the government's recruiting policy in the war, E. S. Montagu, the secretary of State's famous declaration of 20 August 1917 (which emphasized the general development of self- governing institutions in India), the famine riots in 1918, the Montague-Chemsford report in 1918, the Rowlatt Bill passed into law on 21 March 1919, the Jallianwala Massacre and Martial law and the Khilafat and the Non- cooperation movements. The account is an imaginative reconstruction of the past by highlighting by the interplay of personalities and events. It is the study of the official mind of the British in India, its perception of what was going on in the country and the evolution of their policies. The impact of their policies on Indians and the convoluted entanglements are interpreted and narrated which throw light on various dimensions of the relationship that subsists between Indians and Anglo- Indians at the critical junction when events were moving fast. Riley often intervenes in the narrative and he departs from it to leave for the hills, living among the natives.

The narrative digresses from the genre of Anglo-Indian fiction as the inhabitants of India enter into the imagined space and are engaged in inscribing themselves. In Sri Ram: Revolutionist, India is an abstraction, an idea that the inhabitants of the country are unable to define. In Candler's second novel *Abdication* India's identity becomes concretized, and the objectives of the political movement though the contradictory are evident. The natives through their 'reversal of gaze' challenge the prevailing colonial discourse and assert their presence within the Anglo- Indian genre by their varied, counter affirmations and discourses. These are neither nameless nor faceless passive beings but personalities deployed by Candler to play active part in his narrative. It also brings to our attention the movement of ideas across the space and as a consequence the emergence of Indian 'nation' in the text. The idea of India is imagined

in the process. The British-Indian encounter in the realm of political text emerges in the genre of the Anglo-Indian literature.

The debates centering around the colonial discourse hold the novel as the most significant 'artifact' and an agent for circulating knowledge, translating the local, indigenous cultural processes and perpetually engaged in the process of their discovery and identity. Firdous Azim studies the novel as an 'imperial genre'. The British had set the Imperial agenda. It is in the Imperial ideological location that Candler's text is situated in order to study the literary and cultural processes which shaped the novel which also negotiated with emerging heterogeneous political processes in the early twentieth century.

Thus, it is safe to say that Edmund Candler succeeds in depicting the real struggles of Indians in the colonial era. On the cusp of social and political changes, the nationalist movement was sweeping through the country. The religious ties were strained. All these realities are sympathetically captured by the pen of the novelist. He has shaped the narrative in such a way that history as well as his subject are equally justified.

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Role of Panchatayi Raj Institutions in Rural Development : A Critical Assessment

Veena Kumari*

Since independence, the focus of Indian government has been on the overall development of country. In the earlier Five Year Plans the main thrust for development was laid on agriculture, industry, communication, education, health and allied sectors. Though this yielded positive results in the beginning, still it was realized that the all-round development of the country is possible only through the development of rural India. Keeping this in view, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have been introduced under the 73rd Amendment Act of the Constitution of India in 1992. Rural Development includes measures to improve the rural infrastructure, improve income of rural households and delivery systems pertaining to education, health & safety mechanisms by strengthening the democratic structure of society through the PRIs. Government of India has taken many steps to develop rural India and for this. PRIs are expected to play an important role in rural development in India after independence. An attempt is made in this paper to critically assess the role of PRIs in rural development. It has

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been suggested that PRIs must be given adequate powers to use resources and undertake integrated rural development by improving their functioning.

[**Keywords :** Panchayati Raj Institutions, Rural Development, 73rd Amendment Act, Role]

1. Introduction

Recent interest in the study of rural social structure and the changes within it stems out of their far-reaching influence on the patterns of economic development and social change in the Third World. A decisive break from the colonial and semi-feudal past is being witnessed in these areas as leading to the changes in economic motivation, a heightened political consciousness, and an increased social awareness. Rural societies have, thus, become a prolific area of inquiry for the social scientists in general globally as well as in India today.

It is now generally accepted that economic development cannot be adequately understood in isolation from the social framework within which it takes place. This is particularly true of the underdeveloped countries of Asia where economic organization has a lower degree of autonomy than in the industrial societies of the West and is, therefore, more closely intermeshed with a variety of social institutions whose functions are partly economic and partly non-economic (Myrdal, 1968). Indeed, in many sectors of these societies it is by no means easy to differentiate between economic and other social institutions in terms of clearly defined functions.

Rural development has always been an important issue in all discussions pertaining to economic development, especially of developing countries, throughout the world. In fact, rural society is not static. It has been changing fast. The changes have been more rapid during the last decades of 20th century and the first two decades of 21st centuary. It is quite interesting to mention that not only in India but in almost all the Third World countries, much amount has been spent on rural development. It has been stressed by social scientists that key to country's development lies with the development of rural people. International agencies have provided focus on the economic development of the rural society. Social scientists have made intensive studies on various aspects of rural life (such as caste, class and family, education, industry, cooperatives and entrepreneurship) in India as a result of various schemes and policies.

Rural development planning has gained prominence in recent times because of the growing realization that benefits from development have, by and large, bypassed large segments of rural society. The first organized effort to solve the problem of rural India was made through the Community Development Programme in the year 1952 and National Extension Service in 1953. With the rural planning in India becoming an area of prime importance for the government of India, the Ministry of Rural Development was formed to accelerate rural development. At the same time, it was also recognized that the organization and structure of the process of planning have to be modified, so that policies and programmes reflect the development needs of rural areas.

This is the reason that on the completion of first five years of the CDP, the planning Commission appointed a high-ranking study committee headed by Balwant Rai Mehta, Chief Minister of Gujarat. This team pointed out both positive results and inadequacies in the implementation of the programme. This committee considered decentralized planning very important in a country like India and recommended Panchayati Raj for rural areas, where majority of the population lives. The prime objective of Introduction of Panchayati Raj Institutions (herein after referred as PRIs) was to create another layer of government and political representation at the grass-roots level so that the development plans are formulated and implemented by the elected representatives in India with better governance.

Before discussing and critically evaluating the Role of PRIs in rural development, it would be pertinent to clarify the concept of rural development and PRIs first.

2. Concept of Rural Development

In simple words, development refers to growth, evolution, stage of inducement or progress. This progress is mostly gradual as it occurs in sequential phases and there is increasing differentiation. "Development" usually means improvement, either in the general situation of the system, or in some of its constituent elements. It also refers to the over all movement towards greater efficiency and complex situations.

Rural development is a collective process, which aims at improving the well-being and self-realization of people living in rural areas. It designates the utilization of approaches and techniques

under one single programme, which rally upon local communities as units of action to bring change from the traditional way of living to progressive way of living. Rural development is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in rural areas. According to Agarwal, rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of rural poor.[1]

Rural development as a concept means all round development of rural areas. In this sense, it is a Comprehensive and multi-dimensional concept that includes agriculture and allied activities— rural and small scale industries and skills, socio-economic infrastructure, community services and facilities, and above all human resources in rural areas.

As a phenomenon, rural development is the result of inter-actions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural and institutional factors. Rural development as a strategy is a scheme designed for the economic and social welfare of a specific group of people (the rural poor). Rural development as a discipline is of interdisciplinary nature intersecting agriculture, social behaviour, engineering and management sciences.

According to Robert Chambers, "Rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of rural development. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants and the landless."[2]

The United Nations defines Rural Development as "......a process of change, by which the efforts of the people themselves are united, those of government authorities to improve their economic, social and cultural conditions of communities in to the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national programme.

Rural development is a national necessity and has considerable importance in India because of the following reasons[3] :

1. About three-fourth of India's population live in rural areas, thus rural development is needed to develop nation as whole.
2. Nearly half of the country's national income is derived from agriculture, which is major occupation of rural India.
3. Around seventy per cent of Indian population gets employ-ment through agriculture.

4. Bulks of raw materials for industries come from agriculture and rural sector.

5. Increase in industrial population can be justified only in rural population?s motivation and increasing the purchasing power to buy industrial goods.

6. Growing disparity between the urban elite and the rural poor can lead to political instability.

The objectives of rural development are as follows :

1. To increase the availability and winden the distribution of life-sustaining articles,

2. To raise standards of living and

3. To free from servitude and dependence.

Thus, it is evident that rural development refers to the process in which efforts are made to promote and accelerate economic development in rural areas through natural and human resources, technology, infrastructure, institutions and organizations and government policies and programs. Its objective is to provide employment to the rural poor and bring quality in their lives by making rural people self-reliant. It is a process of transformation of the entire rural social system with the aim of developing good living conditions.

3. Panchayati Raj Institutions

In India, there is a mention of village panchayats or other similar institutions addressed by the same name from the earliest times. Panchayats have been mentioned in the early times from Rigvedic literature till the time of the arrival of the British. The inspiration of Panchayati Raj is derived from the traditional 'Panch Parmeshwar' i.e. God speaks in five Panches. This means that the payment of the five Panchas is the payment of God. After independence, special interest has been taken in the reorganization of Panchayats. The village has always been conceived as a self-reliant autonomous government. It has always been an effort that the villagers can take all their decisions on their own.

Panchayats are rural political institutions as they are related to the power structure at the village level. Although the Constitution of India does not have a separate provision for the political organization of Panchayati Raj, the Directive Powers of the State Governments

provide for the reorganization of Panchayats so that the village can function as a self-governing unit. Village Panchayats have the right to collect land tax, provide security, settle disputes and public welfare.

Panchayati Raj means the governance of villages by Panchayats so that villages can be rebuilt. Radhakumud Mukerjee has called the village panchayats as the gods of democracy. In fact, Panchayati Raj is concerned with the democratic decentralization of power. Therefore, Panchayati Raj can be called a method of making people participate in its welfare work in a democratic state. It is a mechanism for the development of administrative autonomous government at the local level. After independence, the role of Panchayats was accepted to make people more and more involved in governance. It was hoped that these would provide opportunities for self-government to the rural society. Therefore, the system established for the development of rural society and to give democratic form to economic and other activities is called Panchayati Raj. Some consider it as an agency of administration, expansion of democracy at the lower level and also a manifesto of local rural government. After independence, Panchayati Raj system was established in India. It decentralized political and economic power. According to Rajni Kothari, "The national leadership had a visionary task – the establishment of Panchayati Raj. Due to this the Indian polity is getting decentralized and their unity is also increasing by the creation of a single local institution in the country. Pt. Nehru said that "the rights should be handed over to the people of the villages. Let them do the work, even if they make a thousand mistakes. No need to worry about it. Give authority to the Panchayats." Balwantrai Mehta, in his study, suggested a three-tier system for the Panchayati Raj system. Under this scheme, there are Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayats at the lower level and Zilla Parishad at the higher level and there are area committees in between these two.

After independence, the Uttar Pradesh government first passed the 'Uttar Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1947' in the country. This act was passed by the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly on June 5, 1947 and by the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council on September 16, 1947. The Governor General of India gave assent to this act on 7th December, 1947 and since then it is applicable in Uttar Pradesh. Similar Acts have been passed in all the states. Presently the form of

Panchayati Raj in India is based on the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, 1993 AD. It is estimated that at present there are 2,26,108 Gram Panchayats, 5,736 Panchayat Samitis and 457 Zilla Parishads functioning in India in which about 34 lakh public representatives are working.

Three-tier system of Panchayati Raj system has been implemented in most of the states : Gram Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level. Village level institutions are addressed by the name of Gram Panchayat in all the states. Panchayats have been reorganized at the local level in most of the states at three levels : (a) Gram Sabha, (b) Gram Panchayat and (c) Nyaya Panchayat. Gram Sabhas are established in villages with different population in different states. In Punjab, Gram Sabha is established in villages with a population of 500 or more, whereas in Uttar Pradesh this number has been fixed at 250. In most of the states Gram Sabha has been formed in the village whose population is 250. If the population is less then two or three nearby villages are merged. There should be no natural barrier between them. Membership of the Gram Sabha is optional. It is necessary for a member of the Gram Sabha that he should be 18 years of age or more and should not be a leper, lunatic, insolvent, punished and an employee of the State Government. The Gram Sabha meets twice in a year – first immediately after the Kharif crop is harvested and the second after the Rabi crop is harvested. In the first meeting, the budget is presented and in the second meeting, the income and expenditure of the last year are accounted for and various development plans are discussed. The Gram Sabha elects a Pradhan (President) and an Up-Pradhan (Vice President) whose term is now five years or up to the term of the elected Gram Sabha. It is necessary to take the approval of the Gram Sabha for all the works and plans.

The executive body of the Gram Sabha is called the Gram Panchayat. Its members are elected from amongst the members of the Gram Sabha and their number depends on the population of the village. Earlier thirty to fifty-one members were elected but now this number is from nine to fifteen. All members are elected for five years. The head of the Gram Sabha is also its head. The members of the Gram Panchayat elect one of the members as Up-Pradhan, whose term is for one year. The meeting of the Gram Panchayat is held once in a month and if one-third of the members wish, they can request the

Pradhan for a meeting at any time and thereafter the Pradhan is required to convene the meeting within fifteen days. The President can be removed from his office by a motion of no-confidence by a two-thirds majority. The Pradhan presides over the meeting of the Panchayat and if the Pradhan is absent in any meeting, the Up-Pradhan performs his responsibilities.

Nyaya Panchayats have been established at the third level to provide affordable justice system to the villagers. A Nyaya Panchayat is established on four or five Gram Panchayats, the number of which is between twenty and twenty-five, that is, each Gram Panchayat elects four or five members and sends them to the Nyaya Panchayat. The Panchayati Adalat has an elected Sarpanch who is nominated by the District Magistrate at times. In addition to the Sarpanch, an assistant Sarpanch is also elected and both these office bearers must be educated. The term of each Panch of the Nyaya Panchayat starts from the date of his becoming Panch and lasts till the term of the Nyaya Panchayat is over. Civil and criminal cases are heard by these Nyaya Panchayats in the respective villages. Generally, the Nyaya Panchayat is divided into four or five Nyay Peeths, which settle disputes and disputes related to their village. The decision of this court can be appealed against in a court of law. Courts of law may also, on finding that a case is liable to be tried by a Nyaya Panchayat, transfer a case to a Nyaya Panchayat of competent jurisdiction, except as provided in sub-section (4) of section 55 .

Thus, Panchayati Raj Iinstitutions are main body of village local government that play very a significant role in development of village especially primary education, health, agricultural develop-ments, women and child development and women participation in local government etc. One can say that PRIs form the third strata of the decentralized structure of the government of India, the two being the Central government and State government. The introduction of panchayati raj as the third tier of decentralized administration is indeed one of the most remarkable social and political reforms since independence.[4] The primary objective of establishing PRIs as the third tier of the government is to increase democratic participation, to better articulate local needs and priorities, and to ensure a more efficient use of local resources along with greater accountability and transparency.

4. Achievements and Limitations of Panchatayi Raj Institutions in Rural Development

PRIs, initiative for democratic decentralization, have been quite successful politically at grass-root level in India. In other words, they are system of rural local self-government in India. The Panchayats are expected to play an important role in rural development in India, particularly after independence. Plan documents of both the central and state governments and various committees have emphasized the importance of these bodies in the polity. The implementation of rural development programmes through the PRIs has brought a radical change in the socio-economic conditions of the rural tribal people.[5]

PRIs can decide the local priorities and prepare the development plan. According to the available statistics, there are 2,60,512 PRIs in the country, 2,53, 268 village panchayats, 6,614 intermediate panchayats, 630 district panchayats, approximately 31.0 lakh of elected members of PRIs out of which 13.75 lakh are women representatives. Rs. 54077.80 crore were allotted by FFC as basic grant and 6609.33 crore as performance grant in 2019-20. Capacity building and training to the elected representatives of PRIs and other stakeholders has been the main thrust of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

Besides, the ministry has incentivized the best performing Panchayats recommended by the State Governments/Union Territories since. The awards are given on the National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD) celebrated on 24th April every year. As PRIs are the cornerstone of local self-governments and peoples' participation, the Ministry has been providing all type of support for building up and continuously striving to strength PRIs through financial support for attaining decentralized, participatory local self-government and to ensure inclusive development with social justice, and efficient delivery of services.

This initiative of democratic decentralization has actually provided the right of 'Swaraj' to the people; inspired the people to manage their own affairs, which leads to the development of social and political consciousness; helped in developing a sense of responsibility among the people and developing the ability to work; helped in timely and speedy disposal of all tasks by reducing the delaying tendencies of bureaucracy and in ending economic and

social exploitation; developed the spirit of mutual aid and cooperation among the people; reduced the pressure of the central and state governments on local problems; provided a solid foundation for the establishment of democratic traditions; and awakened and developed a sense of self-respect in the public.

PRIs have given an opportunity to get involved in the development programmes. It is generally held by various scholars that while the PRIs have been successful in creating another layer of government and political representation at the grass-roots level, they have, by and large, failed to provide better governance. Studies on PRIs have also shown that female political representatives in local self-government makes women more likely to come forward and report crimes. In the districts with female Sarpanchs, significantly greater investments have been made in drinking water, public goods.

PRIs have been successful in co-operative village management, rural extension programmes, community development, abolition of intermediaries, land reforms, democratic decentralization, poverty alleviation, additional investment in agriculture, irrigation, small scale and cottage industry, introduction of new technology in agriculture, the maintenance of sanitation and hygiene in the villages, provide drinking ware facilities and so on to some extent.

However, it may be mentioned the PRIs are suffering from many limitations and grey areas, which need to be addressed at priority level. These are :

1. The lack of adequate funds as panchayats have not been able to enlarge the domain to raise their own funds and they are even so starved for funds that they are often unable to meet even payroll obligations.

2. The interference of local MPs and MLAs in the day-to-day functioning of panchayats which adversely affects their performance.

3. Very little devolution of authority and unscientific distribution of functions to PRIs without adequate administrative, financial and technical support as the transfer of various governance functions are not mandated, but left to the respective state legislatures.

4. PRIs also suffer from structural deficiencies i.e. no secretarial support and lower levels of technical knowledge, lack discretionary powers over spending, inadequate powers of taxation

even for subjects falling within their purview, autonomous budgeting powers etc., which ultimately restrict the aggregation of bottom up planning.

5. Lack of clarity and differentiation of functions among PRIs as state executive authorities have proliferated to carry out these functions and indifference as well as neglect remains prominent on the part of state governments

6. Presence of adhocism, i.e. lack of clear setting of agenda in gram sabha, gram samiti meetings and no proper structure.

7. Proxy representation in case of women as their husbands are on the fore front. Concepts of Pradhanpati amply demonstrates this. The same is the case with members.

8. Some of the PRIs do not have their own building and they share space with schools, anganwadi centre and other places.

9. Social challenges which work against the emergence of leadership from the marginalized sections of society like dalits, women and tribals. The marginalized sections of society like women, other backward classes and SCs/STs continue to face many hurdles and find it difficult to participate at the grass-root level development process.

10. Deficiency in the 73rd Amendment Act as it does not define clearly the role of political parties, does not speak about the relationship between the panchayats and local bureaucracy, does not explain specific grounds for the dissolution of PRIs etc.

11. Half-heartedly implementation of major rural development programmes (like MGNREGA, SGRY, IAY, RGGVY, TRYSEM and DWCRA etc.) of the state and central governments through PRIs.

12. Inability of the three-tiers to operate as functional authorities as it has been observed that the hierarchical domination and predominance, "fitters down step by step from Zilla Parishad to Panchayat Samiti and from them to the Village Panchayats".

Thus, the PRIs have not been an absolute success. They have to take a number of measures to ensure that the benefits of these special schemes reach the real poor instead of the intermediaries. People belonging to weaker sections have to be given priority in the development efforts so that the benefits of planned investment can go to the relatively backward sections of the community.

5.   Conclusion

It may be concluded that the socio-political changes expected from the introduction of PRIs have not been fulfilled to a large extent. This has resulted in the non-fulfilment of the objectives like social equality, gender equity and changes at the grassroots level leadership envisaged in PRIs. Now that there are millions of elected representatives giving voice to Indians at the grass-roots level, these representatives need clear mandates of local functions, and the ability to raise their own revenue, to foster better local governance. Without the functions and finances, PRIs will only be an expensive failure. There is need for bottom up planning especially at the district level, based on grassroots inputs received from Gram Sabha. It is also important to have clarity in the assignment of functions and the local governments should have clear and independent sources of finance. To solve the problem of proxy representation, social empowerment must precede the political empowerment by setting some minimum qualifications for Panchayat elections.

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Book Review

Surabhi Mahajan, *COVID-19: Changing Social Fabric in India,* **New Delhi : Nation Press, 2020.**
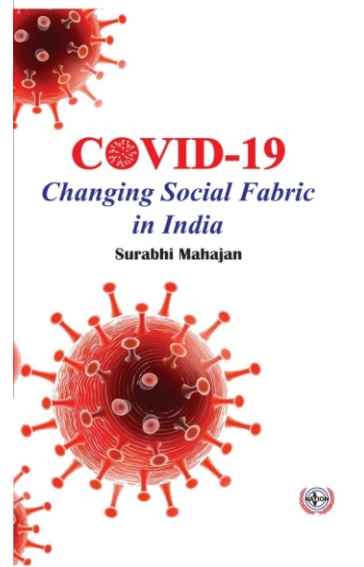
S. K. Gupta, Panjab University, Chandigarh

Surabhi Mahajan's book *COVID-19: Changing Social Fabric in India*, is written effulgently and is packed with statistical data in the form of tables. It is a great reading for all those concerned with COVID-19 globally and its impact on individuals, families and society at large in India during first three phases of lockdown in particular. This book is very well timed at this hour when the coronavirus has taken a death toll of more than 8 lakh globally with 2 crore plus positive cases (more than 50,000 deaths in India with 30 lakh plus positive cases) and there seems to be no end to this unforeseen pandemic in near future.

The cover illustration of structure of coronavirus is just as captivating as the book itself. The book has a preface and is divided into seven chapters. The foreword has been written by Prof. Sandeep Bains, Dean of College of Community Science, PAU, Ludhiana. Three chapters (4, 5 and 6) are devoted to presentation and analysis of data. Interestingly, as one glances through the references, one notices that most references are of online articles of 2020 understandably in accordance with the topic under study. With barely any book in the reference list, the references reveal the fact that for this pertinent issue, not much has been documented or written. This huge gap is what the book tries to fill.

The book under review attempts to investigate the impact of lockdown due to COVID-19 on various sections of Indian society at three different levels : individuals, families and society. Its importance increases manifold as it also attempts to suggest possible measures to cope with such pandemic in future. The responses of a sample of 750 from 19 states and union territories of India (Bihar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal) well illustrate the impact at these three levels.

The authoress categorically mentions that the lockdown has been a tough period, but the overall, majority of the respondents are appreciative of the government's decision taken for the welfare of the country men amidst this pandemic, irrespective of their age, sex,

profession, type and financial position of the family. She has concluded on the basis of empirical evidence that our life at individual level is not going to be the same as before the global spread of COVID-19. Social distancing, use of masks, sanitization and washing hands repeatedly are going to be part of our life in during journey by bus or train, morning and evening walk, shopping in market places and malls and going out for dinning in hotels and restaurants, joining marriage (wedding) or birthday parties, any religious or political gathering and so on. This problem is going to be more severe when the authorities allow school/ colleges/universities to reopen shortly. Only time to come will validate as to how each and every one shall be able to learn this new way of life and customize themselves with new situation.

The study has revealed that overall the lockdown had more of a positive impact on families in terms of building sound relationship amongst each other and providing a moral support to handle the hard time of crisis. It gave a chance to the family members for not only staying together but also spending quality time with each other for better understanding. But, the negative implications especially for those families who were not able to earn two meals for themselves due to the lockdown or those families whose one or two members were struck anywhere else and so all were not together was painful and cannot be ignored. What one can do in this sensitive hour is to pray for one and all so that all families remain safe and comfortable to face global crisis spread due to COVID-19.

Her study has concluded that undoubtedly lockdown had a brighter side relating to self-realization and up-gradation of people, well-being of the community and healing of Mother Nature, new role of police and para- military forces, positive impact of increased use of technology as well as simple weddings without huge gatherings. However, the darker side also covers painful pictures of lower sections striving for essential commodities, difficult & very painful exodus of migrant labourers to their homes in native states, loss of income and jobs

for so many people due to the slowdown of economy, more problems like heated arguments, quarrels, divorce, depression etc. due to social isolation and an adverse effect on social relations due to social/physical distancing in the lockdown. Hence, it has to be ensured that a secondary epidemic of burnouts and stress- related diseases may not pop up in the end of latter half of 2020 or early 2021. The pandemic has left an indelible impression on many of us, making us to maintain cleanliness habits and follow good discipline in our life.

Every private or public library should have this book on its stacks for the simple reason that it provides an intensive narrative about the coronavirus, both at the global level as well as India, its impact at various level and the suggestions it renders to cope with such pandemic. The effectiveness of lockdown as a means to control the spread of coronavirus and the views of cross-section of society included in the book are also revealing and helpful for the authorities in the ongoing unlock periods. Not only this, Surabhi Mahajan comes up with some viable suggestions in last chapter to cope this as well as any other such pandemic in future. These suggestions are definitely going to prove very useful.

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I, Dr. Dharam Vir, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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