POLITOSC🔍PE

CELEBRATING
75 Years of India's Independence

POLITOSCOPE

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FOREWORD

India's independence in 1947 was a momentous event in 20th century world history. It symbolized the spirit of the age of independence and self-determination as envisaged in the Atlantic Charter of 1941 and the United Nations Charter of 1945. It became evident that colonialism is being relegated to history.

India's first colonial democratic experiment began in the wake of difficult circumstances, the partition of the country and the deep economic crises as a result of mobilization in the Second World War when India was drawn into the war without its consent. Nehru's declaration in the midnight of 14th August 1947 of a tryst with destiny meant liberation of a country that was impoverished. The spirit of the freedom movement was enshrined in the Constitution of India proclaimed symbolically on 26th January as it was celebrated as Independence Day before Independence.

The Indian Constitution is a compilation deriving the best from the other constitutions of the world. It is a document, in the words of Granville Austin's Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation that emphasises fundamental rights, social justice, national unity and integrity in a nation of major contradictions to pursue a developmental model within a democratic order.

75 years in the life of a nation historically is a brief period but its evolution for a young nation but an ancient civilization like India is of crucial significance. The nation can be reasonably proud of its stupendous achievements in areas of scientific experiment, self-sufficiency in fulfilling basic needs, a national army and demographic advantage which ensures India's pivotal position in South Asia and among the world's comity of nations.

Jai Hind
Professor Sushila Ramaswamy

EDITOR'S NOTE

The last few months with the Politoscope have been nothing short of an experience. This journey entrenched our faith further in the paramountcy of expression and how important it is to give voice to your unique perspective. The theme of this year's issue of the Politoscope, 'Celebrating 75 Years of India's Independence' reflects upon some notable aspects of India's history from a colony to a sovereign country, looking forward to asserting its influence in the global world. The Politoscope presents to you articles analysing the salient topics of human rights and the basic structure doctrine. One of our writers has penned down an absorbing case study of MNREGA.

We present paper presentation articles that talk about the opportunities and challenges of India's G20 presidency, and India as the voice of the global south. One article covers the populist challenge to democracy while another reflects upon populism through the lens of hegemony, power, and morality. Another article analyses if forests of India are a community resource or a national asset. Every single article here is undoubtedly a treat for the readers and serves as food for thought.

Further, the 'Department Events' section of the Politoscope looks back at the academic and non-academic events the department has held so far with a special section on our department's Annual Academic Day, the Politologue. We also proudly present to you our achievers and office holders.

This magazine is the culmination of long hours of hard work put in by the entire team. We hope that by the end of this magazine, you will appreciate the Politoscope as much as we do.

Till then, happy reading!

Vanshika (Chief Editor)
Avni Chawla (Deputy Editor)

APOTHEOSIS OF SAFEGUARD AGAINST DEMOCRATIC SUBVERSION: THE BASIC STRUCTURE DOCTRINE

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MAJOR MILESTONES OF INDEPENDENT INDIA

Introduction

Fifty years on since the introduction of the basic structure doctrine review, debates around its legitimacy continue to rage. The basic structure doctrine was propounded in the historic Kesavananda Bharati v State of Kerala case as specific immutable components of the constitution, that cannot be dismantled by parliamentary amendments permitted under Article 368 of the Indian Constitution. It is an essential judicial review that the Supreme Court employs to test the validity of constitutional amendments proposed by the Parliament and establishes inviolable tenets of the Constitution (Noorani, 2001). These core tenets uphold the federalist, sovereign, secular, and democratic nature of the Indian Constitution. Additionally, these tenets also seek to maintain the trias politica model (Montesquieu, 1989) of the Indian polity that abides by the principle of separation of powers between the organs of the government - namely the Judiciary, Executive, and Legislature (Montesquieu, 1989).

Origin of the Basic Structure Doctrine

Although it is believed that the basic structure doctrine is a conceptualisation of the Indian Judiciary, the origin of the doctrine can be traced back to the theory of implied limitation proposed by Professor Dietrich Conrad (Noorani, 2001). Professor Conrad developed this idea from his observations of the exploitation of the Weimar Constitution during the Holocaust. The unlimited amending power of the Legislature granted by Article 76 of the Weimar constitution resulted in the complete overturning of the Constitution.

Through a 2/3rd majority vote, Hitler came to power as the Chancellor of Germany and completely dismantled the fundamental rights of the people of Germany by declaring an emergency that stripped all constitutional protections of civil rights (Tripathi, 2020). Thus, the unrestrained constitution amending the powers of the Legislature largely paved the way for the consolidation of power by Hitler's dictatorship, and licensed his regime to perform crimes against humanity (Tripathi, 2020). This left a long-lasting impact on the German State, which prioritized the implementation of substantive limits to protect the Constitution against brute force majoritarianism. Consequently, the Federal Republic of Germany adopted a 'Basic Law', that effectuated limitations to the amending powers of the Parliament and laid down certain unmodifiable features of the Constitution, including the rule of law, principles of democracy, and federalism, under Article 79 (3) of the Constitution (Noorani, 2001).

Professor Dietrich Conrad is therefore the brains behind the theory of implied limitation, which is the essence of the basic structure doctrine review. The theory of implied limitation proposed for express limitation on the amending powers of the Legislature and the Parliament, in a bid to protect the crucial elements of the Constitution from exploitation by legislative actors who seek to promote private partisan interests, thereby dishonouring popular sovereignty. It was a paper based on Professor Conrad's Lecture at the Banaras Hindu University on 'Implied Limitation of the Amending Power' that inspired MK

Nambiar's stance in Golaknath v. State Of Punjab (Noorani, 2001). In his lecture, Professor Conrad challenged the discharge of the provisions of Article 368 of the Indian Constitution, putting forth important questions on the application of procedural amendments of the Constitution sanctioned by the Parliament, such as, whether the Constitution could be completely nullified to establish Monarchy? Or if the ruling party could completely consolidate the power in the hands of the President who may act on the suggestions of the prime minister if the Party witnesses diminishing support and popularity, by repealing Article 21 of the Indian Constitution? (Noorani, 2001) These questions highlighted the glaring loopholes within the comprehensive Indian Constitution and influenced MK Nambiar, a constitutional lawyer, to take up the case of implied limitations to the amending power of the Parliament. Despite the fact that the court did not accept MK Nambiar's proposition for implied substantive limits on the amending powers of the Parliament, it recognized the importance of preserving certain basic principles of the constitution and rationalized the values of constitutionalism - an idea that binds the government to the limitations of the Constitution and emphasizes the supremacy of constitutional frameworks (Tripathi 2020). In the verdict of the Golaknath Case, the Supreme Court of India held that the parliament cannot enact any fundamental rights expunging constitutional amendments as it stands against the spirit of the Indian Constitution.

The tussle for power between the Judiciary and the Parliament

The events preceding the Golaknath case accurately represent the brewing discord between the Judiciary and the Legislature of the Indian polity. At the crux of heated debates and political contentions is the dominion of the constituent power of the Legislature and the scope of its amending powers. As a law-making body, the Legislature is entrusted with formulating laws (Krishna and Pratyush, 2020) that abide by the ethos of the Constitution and represent the will of the popular sovereign – wherein the government represents the power of the people. The Judiciary on the other hand is entrusted with interpreting the constitutional document and adjudicating upon the constitutional validity of legislation through the inherent power of judicial review (Krishna and Pratyush, 2020). In post-colonial independent India, the first known instance of the tussle for power between the Parliament and the Judiciary is marked by the controversial First Amendment passed in the year 1951 (Parthasarathy, 2019). The object of the First Amendment was to promote realisation of the development goals of the government, which could be impeded by judicial decisions.

Thus, the First Amendment, proposed by Jawaharlal Nehru, entrusted the power in the Legislature to amend the Constitution (Singh, 2020). Among the various reforms included in the First Amendment, the Act imposed limitations on the Fundamental Freedom of Speech and Expression and expressly stated that the Fundamental Right to Equality cannot influence the enactment of legislation that aims to uplift the marginalised (Sehgal 2019).

The Parliament with the First Amendment set ablaze a wildfire that continues to burn to this day. Throughout the tumultuous political history of India, through various regimes, the Parliament has continued to be emphatic about the disruptive nature of the judicial review. The evolution of the basic structure doctrine has only strengthened this narrative, since the doctrine was promulgated by the Supreme Court of India during a period characterized by widespread political unrest and uprisings against the policies discharged by the Parliament.

In pre-emergency India, the Indira Gandhi regime attempted to introduce various schemes to promote socioeconomic development to uplift the status of the depressed class.

In 1967, the Golaknath v State of Punjab challenged the constitutionality of the 1953 Punjab Security and Land Tenures Act on grounds of violating the Fundamental Right to Property under Articles 19 and 31. Article 19 upheld the right of citizens to "acquire, hold and dispose of property". On the other hand, Article 31 stated that "no person shall be deprived of his property save by authority of law." Since the controversial Act was placed in the Ninth Schedule through the 17th Amendment by the Parliament, it was immunized to judicial review by the Supreme Court (Nayak, n.d.). The aim of the Parliament in doing so was to shield itself from any obstructions by the Judiciary in pursuing its electoral promises. The process of Judicial review of legislation and constitutional amendments is integral to the Supreme Court of India.

The independence of the Judiciary is guaranteed under Article 50 of the Indian Constitution. It protects the judicial body and the structure of the Constitution itself from encroachment by the orces of the Executive and the Legislature (Sehgal, 2019). Therefore, such attempts by the Parliament disparaged the spirit of constitutionalism.

The Basic Structure Doctrine in the Contemporary Context - the NJAC Ruling

Over the years, the Supreme Court has utilized the basic structure doctrine review to test the constitutional validity of constitutional amendments and ordinary legislation. In the contemporary context, the most recent use of the doctrine was to strike down the proposed National Judicial Appointment Commission (NJAC) that would replace the existing Collegium system. Evolved through the judgment of the Supreme Court in 1993 in a series of cases called the Three Judge Cases, the Collegium system empowers judges to appoint judges to the courts (Rajagopal, 2014). The Chief Justice of India and four top judges will make decisions on the appointment of judges to courts. Criticized heavily for the lack of transparency and constitutional backing, the Parliament attempted to replace the Collegium system with the NJAC.

The NJAC system negated the primacy of the Chief Justice and the Judiciary in the appointment of judges, and instead introduced a bench comprising the Chief Justice of India, two top Supreme Court judges, the Union Law Minister, and two eminent personalities (C Raj Kumar, 2015). The Collegium system prioritizes the recommendations of the Judiciary as the government is bound to accept the recommendations of the Collegium. The NJAC system, however, dissipated the veto power of the collegium and instead advocated for a five-vote majority from the Commission Panel to appoint judges to courts.

History makes apparent the consequences of the Parliament meddling with the independence of the Judiciary. Although the Collegium system is criticized as a closed-door system, the idea behind it is to preserve the independence of the Judiciary.

Although the Collegium system is criticized as a closed-door system, the idea behind it is to preserve the independence of the Judiciary. In the years succeeding the Emergency of 1975 to 1977, several calls were made to transform the current system of appointment of judges. The existing system, back then, accorded the Executive the power to appoint judges and did not prioritize the suggestions of the Chief Justice of India. The dissatisfaction with the system could be attributed to the feelings of distrust in the Executive as the Emergency period was marked by rampant state sanctioned atrocities committed to destabilize the organs of the government, and consolidate power in the hands of the Legislature and the Executive. The hasty appointment of the lone detractor in the Kesavananda Bharathi Case, AN Ray, as the Chief Justice of India, after the application of the basic structure review in the State of Uttar Pradesh v. Raj Narain case, where the constitutional validity of the 39th amendment that introduced Article 329A was tested, also resulted in the breach of the independence of the Judiciary (Noorani, 2001). This amendment rescinded the power of the Supreme Court in intervening in electoral disputes and immunized the Prime Minister against electoral laws. The supersession of Justice AN Ray is deemed to be a direct result of his dissenting opinion in the Kesavananda Bharathi v State of Kerala ruling, which birthed the basic structure doctrine. Therefore, the Collegium System's evolution could be attributed to protecting itself against a partisan interest-driven majoritarian government.

The bone of contention about the legitimacy of judicial review precariously hangs on the ideas of perceived counter-majoritarian difficulty (Bickel, 1986). Counter-majoritarian difficulty, theorized by Alexander Bickel, suggests that the process of judicial review is flawed in the sense that it vindicates the power of a minority judicial representative over the will of the majority (Bickel, 1986). The purpose of the basic structure doctrine review, however, is not to impede the power of the Parliament, but to safeguard the Constitution against democratic subversion. Amidst the contentions against the basic structure doctrine review, there is a primary concern that the basic structure doctrine cannot be a legitimate and valid review as it infringes on the sovereignty of the Legislature. The sovereignty of the Legislature is protected against the influence of extra-legislative actors through Articles 122 & 212, which state that the legality of parliamentary proceedings cannot be questioned by the court. As the law-interpreting organ of the government, it is the duty of the Judiciary to adhere to constitutional rationale. Ordinary legislation or constitutional amendments, the Legislature as an arm of the government, must execute the will of the Constitution. Any aspect of legislation, if found to be vitiating the essential constitutional elements, must be scrutinized. The sovereignty of the Legislature surely cannot mean complete centralization of power within a democracy.

A free democracy is characterized by the doctrine of separation of power which contradicts legislative sovereignty (Montesquieu, 1989). A functioning, healthy democracy must exhibit harmonious working between the arms of the government, conflict and contentions are an inevitable part of this process. The application of the basic structure doctrine to the NJAC Case is also called into question, since detractors of the principle believe the basic structure doctrine is nothing but a tool to obtrude judicial activism upon the will of the democracy. Although the framework of a Judge Appointment Commission isn't included in the Constitution, it mandates the separation of powers between the organs of the government and upholds the independence of the Judiciary under Article 50. The inclusion of extra-judicial actors in the NJAC and supersession of legislative power over judicial primacy are harrowing reflections of attempts to rationalize the supremacy of the will of the Legislature over the independence of the Judiciary.

The basic structure doctrine is critiqued as a principle that upholds the rigidity of the Constitution, thereby directly impeding the development of the polity. The makers of the constitutional document intended for this particular work to remain flexible and adaptable to the tests of time, Article 368 is a testament to this fact. But the basic structure doctrine evolved during a time when the Legislature actively attempted to thwart the process of judicial review and passed resolutions to allow for constitutional amendments to amend any part of the constitution that stood in the way of the ambitions and policy formulations of the Parliament.

The Supreme Court's intervention and introduction of the basic Structure review was integral to holding together the fabric of the Polity. A hypothetical example employed by the critics of the basic structure is the possibility of democracy attempting to make fundamental constitutional changes, that expunge the essential values of the Constitution. Ultimately, the sovereignty of the government resides in its people and the Constitution must concede to the will of the people (Gupta, 2016). But chronicles of the polity prove that more often than not the attempts to repudiate constitutionalism have come from the Parliament, headed by political representatives, rather than the state's people.

Taramountcy of the Constitution vs Legislative Sovereignty

There arises a question, is it ever possible to assign absolute amending power to the Parliament without denigrating the essence of the rule of law and values of constitutional structuralism? Yielding the Parliament limitless amending power is equivalent to conceding the paramountcy of legislative sovereignty over the Constitution itself. Montesquieu's doctrine of separation of powers suggests that the concentration of power at the hands of a particular organ makes it impossible to conserve liberty and autonomy within the Polity. Unlike the American Government which demarcates the separation of powers between the different organs of the government, the Indian Government exercises the separation of powers through the process of checks and balances.

Thus, the basic structure doctrine is an important judicial review introduced to bind the Legislature to the Constitution, to protect the values of constitutionalism.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

A Critical Appraisal

-by Faria Khan

"Human Rights might also turn out to be A Trojan Horse, surreptitiously introduced into other civilizations, which would be obligated to accept"[1]

Evolution and scope

Human Rights essentially are entitlements that any political authority must secure to qualify as a guarantor of its subject's innate right to freedoms. Thus, both are subtly interlinked and vindicate each other.

Human Rights, as unpretentious as they may sound in theory, are densely articulated and ambiguously implemented. The concerns surrounding these modest bunch of rights range from pluralization of claims of authorship to Eurocentric origins and abstract idea of universal human. If we go along the mainstream prerogatives - human rights conceptions especially, are a 'westerns gift' and those inclined to preserve this 'cultural treasure' must not dismiss what Walter Benjamin poignantly articulated –

"There is no document of human civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such document is not free of barbarism, it also taints the manner in which it is transmitted from one owner to another" [2]

Essentially, the development of Human rights and freedom lurks large on conventional idea of an overtly concerned west to embark on a series of established rights, violators of which should be brought to account and there should be precise mechanisms to deal with those guilty of human rights crimes.

"Before the establishment of UN, US President Roosevelt's four freedom speech freedom from fear and want and freedom of speech and worship contained the same spirit, Britain Prime Minister Churchill echoed the views declaring an allied victory would mark "enthronement of human rights" and the colonized peoples in Asia and Africa came to a realization that freedom and human rights are not just the preserve of Europeans and Americans" [3]

The U.N charter set the goalmouth of "promoting and encouraging respect of human rights and for essential freedom of all without discrimination to race, sex, language and religion". The United Nations established the Commission on Human Rights in 1946. Successively, the General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. However, with this establishment, as much as one tries to look at Human rights with a pair of rosy glasses, the dynamic universal acceptance poses fundamental questions which would force one to deliberate twice before rendering Human rights entitlements as decisively relevant especially in a world where wise women and men act as loco parentis for the "wretched of the earth."' (used by Frantz Fanon, in his book "The wretched of the earth" to refer to rightless, colonized, stateless people). For them, human rights declarations are a series of callous governance tricks.

For example, "neo liberalism foster the conversion of human rights movements into human rights 'markets' inevitably commodify in the process human/ social suffering. The paradigm shifts of UDHR to trade-related market-friendly human rights further aggravated by concurrent forms of war on terror" [4] (post 9/11, for millions of rightless people was little different from times of war where those captured were denied satisfaction of rudimentary human rights- food, clothing and health).

Thus, these rights are frequently claimed to be intimately linked to statecraft with power and dominance providing imperatives for governmental and intergovernmental desires. Regardless of the universal

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1 Ghosal, Sarbani Guha. "HUMAN RIGHTS: CONCEPT AND CONTESTATION." The Indian Journal of Political Science 71, no. 4 (2010): 1103–25.
2 Walter Benjamin (1968) 256.
3 FDR and Four Freedom speech
4 Baxi, Upendra. The future of human rights. Oxford University Press, 2007.

entitlements that these rights enjoy, human rights politics treats human rights languages and logics as an array of means for legitimizing governance and dominance, and that it only universalizes the powers of dominant ways that constantly reproduce human rightlessness and suffering elsewhere.

The Critique

Accordingly, the universality of human rights is a contested concept. Kantians proposed the regulative idea as an abstract form of universal human rights that unites the infinite diversity of ways of being human with the overarching notion, enjoy equal respect and concern for the dignity and worth of all human beings. With this, one can pompously approve that human rights are indivisible, interdependent, illimitable and universal. However, the contradictory notions that emerge from actual operation across this multipolar world cannot be brushed under the carpet casually.

"After seven long decades of UDHR, it is high time to make enquiries into the universal notions of these rights. The moderates argue that the idea of universality undermines cultural differences. The cultural relativists question on the feasibility of universal rights in the context of extreme multicultural and multipolar world. Saudi Arabia was the first to contest in 1948, arguing that 'universalism' destructs not just undesirable but also desirable and just differences" [5]

Conversely, it is too idealistic to believe that all human rights ideals and norms, or their prevailing interpretation, are just, both in terms of the substance of rights and the mechanisms used to articulate them. Because the enunciation of the UDHR is faulted at the bar of respect for varied cultures and civilizations, contemporary critiques openly imply forms of 'unjust' lack of respect for differences. One can also ask: Which, What, and Whose conception of justice may gain prominence in the enunciation of universal human rights? This is due to the fact that perceptions of justice differ across cultural and civilizational traditions. For example, in the aftermath of 9/11, organized political communities severely threatened the secularizing concepts of human rights by annihilating state sovereignty. Similarly, can we assert that a state is just and that universal human rights can override a nation state's constitution? Declarations of state of emergency and subsequent violation of human rights, for example, are not entirely prohibited by the covenants on civil and political rights. Apprehensions also mushroom from the fact that how can one adjudge that the nation-state constitutions have a measure of respect for the internationally enunciated human rights. For example, what evidence does one have to adjudge that post-apartheid South African constitution is more just than its two hundred years old French and American counterparts?

Eleanor Roosevelt with the Declaration, 1949

5 Ghosal, Sarbani Guha. "HUMAN RIGHTS: CONCEPT AND CONTESTATION." The Indian Journal of Political Science 71, no. 4 (2010): 1103–25. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42748940.

Another major moral contestation in the realm of human rights is the ambiguity in the idea of 'human'. It is true that inclusivity is the hallmark of contemporary human rights, stamped with the notion of human or reconstructed universal human. However, this reconstructed 'universal human' continues to be catapulted outside the sphere of being recognised as a member of any political community, for example, the immigrants. Here, Hannah Arendt argument makes enormous sense – "the extreme violent social exclusion of human beings denied the very prospect of belonging to any organized polity" [6]

Similarly, the concept of global risk societies as proposed by Ulrich Beck which includes state assembled communities of misfortune falls within the domain of contestation. "Arguably, the victims of Bhopal, Chernobyl and Ogoniland experience their plight as injustice and not misfortune." [7]

Human rights and freedom therefore stand protected within the zone of sovereignty, ambiguously cast, within the creative as well as destructive dimensions of "family of nations". People outside this zone are pushed into fundamental rightlessness. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to say - human rights and rightlessness are born at the same moment wherein human rights are meaningful within state sovereignty whereas refugees, stateless persons are rendered rightless. "the refugees or the stateless person signify the very end of human rights" [8] . These rightless people might remain citizens from the perspectives of human rights but neither their citizenship nor their cries of being an human redeems them from the determination that theirs is the 'life that does not deserve to live'. These continuously reconstituted wretched of the earth (explained above) experience brand new manifestations of human rightlessness. Thus, rightfully said: international humanitarian law begins to separate itself from human rights law by placing the stateless peoples and individual's outside its jurisdiction.

Essentialism (ways of thinking that explores only common properties, universals) has become a major bone of contention. The contemporary human right paradigms have become severely essentialized that human rights are imposed regardless of the diversities of the subject in hand (for e.g.: women, refugees) and therefore creating a vast conceptual prison house for the subject. For example – "The constructions of CEDAW (the women's convention) human rights of all women everywhere. The convention constitutes 'women' as a massive form of generalized identity.

Even if it differentiates between collectives such as rural women or women caught in sex trafficking, it still employs lumping, homogenous categories" [9]

Despite the contradictions that haunt the core of human rights, one cannot deny that many paradigm shifts have happened since the enunciation of the UDHR. New critical languages such as feminist, ecological, and critical race theory have profoundly altered human rights practice and knowledge.

The Epoch of Human Rights?

The term human rights remain problematic. The expression is often masks the attempts to reduce the plentitude of its meanings into false totality. And even when we get a form of worldwide agreement on a set of human rights ideals, these serve as flawed guides to translations in official writing that enact human rights norms and standards, as well as subsequent interpretive histories. Evidently, when resisting communities articulate new human rights ideas, they do not always agree on how they get translated into human rights languages on paper. For example, "Porte Alagre's poetry and prose, as well as the Mumbai World Social Forum congregation, declare the potential of these rights in the statement "Other World are possible!" which is utopian in most basic sense." [10]

6 Baxi, Upendra. The future of human rights. Oxford University Press, 2007. 130
7 Baxi, Upendra. The future of human rights. Oxford University Press, 2007. 118
8 Ibid (1950) 297
9 Baxi, Upendra. The future of human rights. Oxford University Press, 2007. 135
10 Baxi, Upendra. The future of human rights. Oxford University Press, 2007. 9

The age of Human Rights is also an Age of Radical Evil as Hannah Arendt has articulated- "radical evil as a 'structural element in human affairs' in which human beings are 'unable to forgive what they cannot punish and… unable to punish what has turned out to be unforgivable" [11] Simply put, radical evil is the womb that rears the nucleus of the contemporary human rights. Therefore, in this epoch, people who dare to voice concerns about the future of human rights and freedom must address their own historical subject-positions and be reflective about the human rights choices they make. Because history has a subtle, almost inaudible voice conveying the undercurrents of harassment and agony. And today, as globalization has become an unprecedented reality, the growth of a trade-related, market-friendly human rights paradigm is undermining the concept of universal human rights. The human is currently represented in an era of digital capitalism fraught with information networks.

Most of all, Human beings hold multiple identities plagued by atrocities that no human rights paradigm can rectify because the state is the supreme actor. In an era when one is still liable to acts of caste rape, denied access to water, forced to obnoxious labour, huts set ablaze by Hindu militia concerning Indian politics, in the aftermath of brutal violation of women in Gujarat 2002, it is clear how political violation of human rights reduces citizens to mere subjects.

On one end when, human rights enthusiasts urge us to compare the sonorous enunciations of contemporary human rights with the lived time of rightless peoples to appreciate the distance. The question which plagues the multipolar world order is- "within the unceasing human rights discourse, whose violation and suffering should one highlight and whose one should ignore?

11 Hannah Arendt: The Human Condition (1958) 24

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MAJOR MILESTON

Tackling Poverty through Centralized Planning: A case study of MGNREGA

by Disha Jain

Abstract

Poverty and unemployment is a reality in nearly all the countries of the world. In India, like many other countries, the fight against poverty has been aided by the weapons of government policies and schemes. The article hereby attempts to pin the shift in public policy by tracing the evolution and success of relationship between state intervention and poverty alleviation and employment generation. The article tries to locate the reason for regional heterogeneity in effect to the results of Policy implementation of MGNREGA. It attempts to do so by comparatively analyzing the two states of Tamil Nadu and Bihar with the assistance of secondary sources available. The two states highlight the contrast between active and listless promotion of MGNREGA respectively. The article in its conclusion tries to establish that in absolute terms, schemes and policies have so far been successful however a comparative analysis shows that the poverty alleviation policies have been implemented unevenly. However, there is always a scope for policy recommendation and the 75th year of independent India also brings on to us, the citizens, the responsibility to constructively and critically analyze the efforts of the government.

In the years following 1947, poverty and unemployment loomed large. The government of India had to post-haste work upon these pressing issues inter-alia since the initial stage palpably intercepted India's embarkment on the journey of developmental and welfarist state.

Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon referring to inaccessibility to basic necessities like education and employment, sanitation, skills, nutrition and low purchasing power. It is a vicious cycle which can even take generations to end this. The anti-poverty planning includes humanitarian aspects, economic opportunities certainly increase the probability of betterment. Development of rural-urban poor households becomes paramount for the development to be inclusive and holistic.

Thus, intensive economic growth which creates employment opportunities was the broader layout for improvement of lives of people plagued with poverty. State intervention in poverty alleviation and employment generation was considered favorable primarily because of the welfarist nature of the state, the government had to look after the well-being of its citizens and also because for other developing countries, state intervention assisted the development process.[1]

Historical Overview: Efforts towards Poverty Alleviation and Employment Generation

Through the policy approach and economic reforms, reduction of inequality and sustainable economic growth have been made since the inception of planning in India. Independent India has introduced various anti-poverty and employment generation policy measures since 1947. A snapshot view of which shows that the **Public Distribution System** was introduced back in **1947** with special emphasis on agriculture and later on tribal blocks and poverty-ridden areas.

The policies and schemes introduced in 1970s-1980s include **Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP)**, 1978, one of the most effective programmes intended to create self-employment opportunities in rural India and provide income-generating assets.[2] **Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, 1983, Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojna, 1985** provided 20 lakh housing units. Later, the IRDP and allied programmes were encapsulated into one initiative called **Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana** in **1999, Annapurna Scheme, 1999-2000** and Jawahar Rozgar Yojana are few other initiatives taken up in order to help develop poverty-ridden sections of society.

The decade of the 2000s also saw major schemes and strategies for betterment of both rural and urban poor. **Sampoorna Gramin Yojgar Yojana, 2000, National Rural Livelihood Mission, 2011, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojna, 2016** are a few amongst many. Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana Scheme amongst others was also introduced by the government to quell the loss of employment during Covid-19 pandemic by increasing employability.[3]

MGNREGA was another important policy legislation put forth in 2005 under the UPA government. It emerged in the backdrop of economic growth which was not inclusive, and poverty and unemployment marked the financial landscape of India.

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[1] China's poverty alleviation programmes and schemes have helped the country. Lao PDR, Thailand, Sri Lanka amongst others have also benefited from the centrally planned poverty alleviation and employment generation schemes albeit the extent and intensity varies across countries.
Deolalikar, Anil B. Brillantes, Alex B. Jr. Gaiha, Raghav Pernia, Ernesto M. Racelis ,Mary. 2002. "Poverty Reduction and The Role of Institutions in Developing Asia". Asian Development bank.
https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/28443/wp010.pdf

[2] NITI Ayog's report on Poverty alleviation programmes
https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/mta/mta-9702/mta-ch6.pdf

[3] NITI Ayog's report on Poverty alleviation programmes https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/mta/mta-9702/mta-ch6.pdf

MGNREGA, was a significant amelioration as it followed a rights-based demand driven policy vis-a-vis previous policies and schemes which were essentially supply driven. MGNREGA was an assurance to the right to work and hence strengthened the democratic principles of rights to the citizens. Not only this but it made minimum livelihood security an indispensable entitlement for Indian citizenry.[4] However, it is not free from inconsistencies both in theory and in practice. The spatial variation in its implementation discussed in the article further highlights such inconsistencies

A Case Study- Implementation of MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu and Bihar
Inception of the schemes doesn't automatically translate into effective implementation. Moreover, implementation of schemes have not been uniform and ergo the outcomes have also been unequal. Implementation of MGNREGA in different states across the country forms a case for study, hereby, particularly focusing on states of Tamil Nadu and Bihar. The choice of the two states emanated from the categorization of states where MGNREGA has been actively promoted (including Andhra Pradesh, Kerala etc) and less promoted(including Chhattisgarh, Assam etc.) respectively.[5]

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was initiated in **2005** by the Government of India with a security of providing 100 days at wage employment to one member of a family who agrees to perform unskilled labour. It has dual benefits of providing employment and creating assets for the area like roads, wells etc. It is an effective tool for transforming society's socio-economic condition. Around 6.79 crore households have been benefited till now between 2022-23.[6] Here the analysis will revolve around the districts covered, employment of women, improvement in condition of households and creation of asset

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[4]Ranjan,R, 2017. *Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Guarantee Act (MGNREGA): A Critical appraisal of its Performance since its Inception.* https://www.iimidr.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/Vol8-2-MGNR.pdf

[5] Kumawat, Rishabh. 2021. "Significance and Critical Analysis of MGNREGA". Legal Bites. https://www.legalbites.in/significance-and-critical-analysis-of-mgnrega/

[6]Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx?Fin_Year=2021-2022&Digest=B5DSyTB%2feSUSkZd2BpGzbA

Job Cards

State : BIHAR		As on 24-03-2023
Total No. of Districts		38
Total No. of Blocks		534
Total No. of GPs		8,421
I Job Card		
Total No. of JobCards issued[In Lakhs]		171.67
Total No. of Workers[In Lakhs]		220.27
Total No. of Active Job Cards[In Lakhs]		83.24
Total No. of Active Workers[In Lakhs]		93.02
(i)SC worker against active workers[%]		15.14
(ii)ST worker against active workers[%]		1.53

State : TAMIL NADU		As on 24-03-2023
Total No. of Districts		37
Total No. of Blocks		388
Total No. of GPs		12,525
I Job Card	1	
Total No. of JobCards issued[In Lakhs]		92.34
Total No. of Workers[In Lakhs]		131.45
Total No. of Active Job Cards[In Lakhs]		75.39
Total No. of Active Workers[In Lakhs]		91.6
(i)SC worker against active workers[%]		29.28
(ii)ST worker against active workers[%]		1.73

Source: http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx?Fin_Year=2021-2022&Digest=B5DSyTB%2feSUSkZd2BpGzbA

The number of beneficiary districts are more in Bihar as compared to Tamil Nadu and so do the blocks and gram panchayats. In case of job cards yet again Bihar has issued 79.33 lakhs more job cards than Tamil Nadu and so the number of workers are also higher. This primarily stems from the fact Bihar has approximately double the population of Tamil Nadu, i.e, 6.04 crore more people. However, it is interesting to note that there isn't a major gap in active job card numbers. The active workers in Bihar exceed that in Tamil Nadu. This depicts that in absolute and relative context, the number of active workers is less. This is so because of migration, low wages and also lack of opportunities.(Kumar, 2019)[7] Workers from ST community are less in Bihar as compared to Tamil Nadu although the share of ST population is slightly higher in Bihar. In comparative analysis, decreased engagement of SC workers can be understood from the fact that SC population contributes less to the population in Bihar than in Tamil Nadu.

Progress

Women and total employment days per household- Tamil Nadu

SC persondays % as of total persondays		28.4
ST persondays % as of total persondays	6	1.4
Women Persondays out of Total (%)		86.35
Average days of employment provided per Household		48.73

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[7] Kumar, 2019. Bihar's MGNREGA Workers Stare at Deeper Rural Stagnation. https://www.newsclick.in/Bihar-MGNREGA-Workers-Stare-Deeper-Rural-Stagnation

Women and total employment days per household- Bihar

SC persondays % as of total persondays	17.57
ST persondays % as of total persondays	1.77
Women Persondays out of Total (%)	56.5
Average days of employment provided per Household	46.56

Source:
http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx?
Fin_Year=2021-2022&Digest=B5DSyTB%2feSUSkZd2BpGzbA[1]

The above data reflects a huge cavity in employment of women in Bihar and Tamil Nadu. Women seem to be either discouraged from going to work or don't willing undertake work because of migration issues, inter-alia. The total number of days of employment each household is less than 50% guaranteed by the scheme in both the states. It is even low in Bihar. Although while tracing it over the years, there is a little growth in the number of women involved in work.

Works

Tamil Nadu-2022-23

Total No. of Works Takenup (New+Spill Over)[In Lakhs]	8.97
Number of Ongoing Works[In Lakhs]	3.5
Number of Completed Works	5,47,801

[5]

Bihar- 2022-23

Total No. of Works Takenup (New+Spill Over)[In Lakhs]	21.01
Number of Ongoing Works[In Lakhs]	10.34
Number of Completed Works	10,67,009

[6]

Source:
http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx?
Fin_Year=2021-2022&Digest=B5DSyTB%2feSUSkZd2BpGzbA

The data above shows that Tamil Nadu is dawdling in the number of work taken up and done despite having more active workers as compared to Bihar. MGNREGA seems to be fulfilling the second aspect of creating assets for Bihar more. Thus, the infrastructural transformation particularly in rural Bihar owes much to MGNREGA as well.

Financial Progress

Tamil Nadu-2022-23

Total center Release[In Lakhs]	865459.11
Total Availability[In Lakhs]	965677.07
Percentage Utilization	115.12
Total Exp(Rs. in Lakhs.)	11,11,699.65
Wages(Rs. In Lakhs)	7,25,982.4
Material and skilled Wages(Rs. In Lakhs)	3,49,083.34
Material(%)	32.47
Total Adm Expenditure (Rs. in Lakhs.)	36,633.91
Admin Exp(%)	3.3
Average Cost Per Day Per Person(In Rs.)	320.81

Bihar- 2022-23

Total center Release[In Lakhs]	591563.24
Total Availability[In Lakhs]	676254.66
Percentage Utilization	96.05
Total Exp(Rs. in Lakhs.)	6,49,562.41
Wages(Rs. In Lakhs)	4,88,392.33
Material and skilled Wages(Rs. In Lakhs)	1,31,977.84
Material(%)	21.27
Total Adm Expenditure (Rs. in Lakhs.)	29,192.25
Admin Exp(%)	4.49
Average Cost Per Day Per Person(In Rs.)	282.7

Source:
http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx?
Fin_Year=2021-2022&Digest=B5DSyTB%2feSUSkZd2BpGzbA

Tamil nadu received 273895.87 lakhs more than Bihar linking to less availability of funds in Bihar. Utilization of funds has been more effective in Tamil Nadu. However, the average cost per person per day remains low in both the states which makes corruption of the amount allocated by the government quite evident.

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From this analysis we can conclude that in relative terms MGNREGA has helped a larger population of Tamil Nadu gain employment while the densely populated state of Bihar still remains ransacked by poverty. Bihar also has to make progress in gender-equal employment by making the state's socio-political situation favourable for women. It can also be gathered that the high number of job cards issued also owes to the fact that poverty in Bihar is more which asks for more employment opportunities. However, when seen in its totality, in both the states, MGNREGA has helped individuals and the state to improve Human Development Index especially in terms of income, living standards and women empowerment. It has opened floodgates to employment and rural development in the country. It is also found that the wages combined with the additional income is utilized in improvement in nutrition intake as the purchasing power has increased.[9]

MGNREGA marks an important policy shift and has made a huge impact on how the government perceives, designs and implements vital social protection systems.

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[8] https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09722661211005580

[9] Kumawat, Rishabh. 2021. "Significance and Critical Analysis of MGNREGA". Legal Bites. https://www.legalbites.in/significance-and-critical-analysis-of-mgnrega/

For instance, in the backdrop of the policy, the Bihar Social Protection Project, a World Bank-supported project was initiated. It better equipped the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Rural Development Department, GOI to qualitatively ameliorate the social welfare schemes so that the poorest and most vulnerable citizens can reap its benefits.[10]

A Way Forward

Policy recommendations ask for dissemination of information about MGNREGA among the potential beneficiaries and the mannerly planning and prioritization of work at Gram Sabha level should be done. Apart from this, delay of payments should be rectified and security of 100 days along with wages targeted on paper should be provided. Overall there is much scope for improvement.[11]

Beyond positive attempts towards inclusive growth, the introduction of schemes lay bare that poverty still persists which have been reiterated and augmented by the Covid-19 pandemic. As per NITI Ayog's first multidimensional poverty report 2021 approx. 25.01% of the total population is poverty-ridden.[12]

Other schemes along with MGNREGA have been successful in reducing poverty in states to a large extent however local social, political and economic issues also have a bearing on uneven implementation of programmes, policies and schemes. While appreciating India's relentless efforts towards uplifting its people and meeting the welfarist nature of the state it is also imperative to build a critical narrative so as to address the gaps which need to be plugged and remind the politico-administrative machinery of 'a job yet to be done'.

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https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/sief-trust-fund/brief/an-evaluation-of-indias-national-rural-employment-guarantee-act

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https://nrega.nic.in/Circular_Archive/archive/MGNREGA_SAMEEKSHA.pdf

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PAPER PRESENTATION ARTICLES

MAJOR MILESTONES OF INDEPENDENT INDIA

FOREST in India: A Community Resource or A National Asset?

by Vijeyta Panjwani

Abstract:

This paper accentuates the myriad historical changes that the government-centric forest management in India has witnessed, in order to transform ultimately, into decentralised forest governance. This focuses upon reversing the continued violation of community-rights, in favour of the emerging ecological considerations, as well as socio-political and economic claims of the 'forest dwellers', which have been ignored in viewing them as merely 'forest dependents' in the colonial and post-colonial forest laws.

The methodology followed is of 'phenomenological analysis'- a qualitative research approach which takes into cognizance, numerous case studies, reports, statistical data, and researches, to detail out, in this case, the impact of phenomenon of 'transition of forests from being a community resource to a National Asset, and gradual reversion to the former', upon the forest-dwelling communities, with special emphasis on their seminal role in modern forest governance in India, and the challenges being faced in the same.

The paper compiles previous analysis of contemporary challenges including red tapism, state-community conflict, lack of mutual trust, and mutual suspicion of indigenous and scientific knowledge of forest based thriving, and forest focused production, respectively. It brings to light the entrenched colonial impact upon the post-independence policies for the same, while deeply discussing the contemporary global push for decentralised forest governance, manifested in acts such as JFM, REDD+ and FRA, and suggesting a private-government-community partnership model for improved implementation of each, in a manner that the forest ownership retains with the historically acclaimed communities. This, in the presenter's view, shall prevent their forced eviction and industrial dependence, while also ensuring an ancient symbiotic relationship between the two that flourishes ecological growth and reduces carbon emissions, simultaneously promoting scientific economic growth, that the state can keep a check on. It concludes with reflecting upon the lack of tribal voice in popular understanding of these concerns.

Introduction: "The core dilemmas in the forest sector are: how should forests be managed, for maximising which/whose benefit and how should the boundary between forest and non-forest be defined and regulated[1]." The governance of these forests, especially in India, has thus always revolved around the intent of those who became the face of solution of these dilemmas. Historically, how these faces have changed, and the corresponding institutional transformations shall be elucidated next. However, these dilemmas came into light only after the aforementioned ownership became more centralised in contrast to being diversified among communities, prior to the colonial era.

With the advent of profit-maximising foreign companies, everything owned commonly up till then for the purpose of sustenance, came to be seen as a potential resource for profit extraction through individual trade. The most largely impacted were forests, and since then "the history of forest laws has been a history of social conflict [2]". This has been evident in the colonial hangover of "commerce-oriented forest policy", which persisted long after formal independence and led to creation of laws that successively violated community rights over forest management, eventually fading the native knowledge; while concentrating all power in central hands.[3] Over time, with this transformation of forests from being a community resource which was used as per need, to a national asset which was exploited as per want, not only did forest dwellers face eviction and hampering of livelihood, but the ecological balance of forests saw degradation as well, reducing the forest cover from 40-50% of land area in 1800s to mere 19.39% in 1999. Within the late 1900s, thus (after the coming of UN conferences on Human Environment, and Climate Change) it was realised, "If forests were to be protected, the local communities had to be given a role in their management.[4]"

Thus, came in measures like Joint Forest Management and eventually, Forest Management Act, which focused on decentralising Forest Governance. Despite their broad outlook, they've been replete with problematic assumptions and implementation. Their merits and demerits form the contemporary Forest Governance in India, its issues and challenges.

Historical Background:

Scholars have often emphasized that in pre-colonial times, the forest community owned the forest land almost exclusively, and managed it with the intent of revering it as their sustenance means. Even the kings who used forest resources for entertainment or basic economy, were checked on, by equally responsible community's constraints. A stable balance was thus maintained.

An increase in sale of Indian goods as exports, and the demand for railways as a smoother communication method led to a shift in British target to the forests, which were cut unmonitored post Lord Dalhousie's infamous 1835 minutes. Now realising, that the Indian Forests were not inexhaustible, the British set up the Indian Forest Department in 1864.[5]; whose essence lay not in being 'Indian' but in being of the 'British'.

1865 onwards, the British began to usurp all "land covered with trees, brushwood and jungle" as 'Government Land', alienating forest dwellers from their ancestral rights, rights over natural resources, and reducing them to mere 'users' and 'labourers'. On paper, however, the Raj never accepted having abridged people's rights, despite having clearly restricted their movement and resource collection within the forests.

This process of curtailing rights of forest dwellers persisted in intensified form under the Forest Act of 1878. This classified the forests into three categories- a) Protected Forests, b) Reserved Forests and c) Village Forests; each one, a symbol of oppression of the indigenous. The protected ones stood for those that required safeguard from further depletion, which was an indirect acceptance of the ecological harm caused already. The reserved ones were the witness of British arbitrary decisions and monopoly over Sal and Timber for export; while village forests identified villagers as only unpaid labourers in company owned forests, paving way for their dependence and poverty.

The Act of 1894 further set in place provisions for conversion of forest land into agricultural land, disregarding all ecological systems and significance of green cover under the garb of reckless commercialisation. The final push came through the act of 1927, the backbone of Indian forest governance (Malkani, n.d.), as it vested greater powers within Central hands and passed down to the post-independence governments. The previous acts had suppressed the concerns of the illiterate

tribals, and weren't revoked despite popular revolts (Guha, 2001). By 1947, unchecked practice of extracting money from a place meant for production of life resources, resulted in decrease of its area, and tremendous increase in government ownership over it; dislocating, impoverishing and ignoring the priorly self-sustaining forest dwellers, who now became dependent forest users.

Current Attempt to Decentralisation:

A pioneer in ecological anthropology, Verrier Elwin had recognised through a study of tribal revolts, and their relation to land rights; how intrinsically forest ownership is linked to a satisfactory tribal sustenance. Despite his warning regarding the same to the Congress, the 'government in the making' continued to ignore the role of aboriginals in Forest Management for long after independence, and it increasingly became more "commerce oriented", notwithstanding the tribal needs, while having silenced their demands long back (Guha, 2001).

Continuing thus, with the degraded condition of national forests, the Government brought out laws that first made forests a state subject, and later, a concurrent subject. However, a common character in each of them was the assumption of forests as a national asset, which the forest dwellers misuse. This manifested itself in Forest Policy of 1952, National Commission on Agriculture in 1976, and Forest Conservation Act 1980. There was also a conscious growth of timber and Sal forests, along with introduction of specific exotic species in man-made forests[6]. There was eventual growth in profit based production forests, with no direct measures for the tribals, who were consistently believed to be an ecology exploiting community.

This again, was based out of colonial ideas, and led to simultaneous dependence of tribals on private enterprises due to reduction of self-control on hereditary land, which ultimately led to a loss of indigenous forest conservation methodologies with an incessant felling of trees.

By the 1970s, as the global concern regarding loss of natural forests, and ensuing climate change began to herald deeper research, the colonial standards of centralised forest management came into question. It was increasingly realised that the natural balance of a healthy forest can only be maintained through an active partnership with natives and their symbiotic activities for the same.

However, the noble aims were soon obscured by scapegoating of the forest communities for degradation of forests and overuse of resources, which was actually more of a colonial act, and result of their oppressive policies. Due to a loss of conservation knowledge throughout these centuries, they had become corporate dependent, and yet were blamed for not having contributed in conservation

methodologies. Taking advantage of these uncontested claims due to ignorance of tribal voice, the Government, yet again in the 1980s, tried re-imposing central control over forests, overruling community and state. Not only did central monitoring policies have a conflict-ridden implementation, as pointed out by WWF, but also increased the gap and mistrust between the forest communities and the government.

Recognition of this failure, and subsequent awareness about excessive forest depletion led to a paradigm overturning in 1988, wherein it was recognised that forests were primarily meant to sustain ecological balance, and the local communities. Industrial exploitation was recognised, and a larger emphasis was given to ecological growth and stability, through encouragement of mixed forestry and decentralised management through "forest-tribal linkages". Central corporations were encouraged to involve tribal knowledge for forest conservation and regeneration; alongside allowance of import of forest products, and their alternatives in order to reduce pressure on the forest lands.

This increasing emphasis on people's participation, first manifested itself in the Joint Forest Management Programme (JFM), and then the Forest Reservation Act (FRA). The focus with the former, was on providing for needs of "fringe forest users" as well as minor commercial demands, along with involvement of grass root Panchayats, who in coordination with the Forest Department were to 'share' resources and mutually 'care' for national, as well as local needs. The latter gave a larger push by creation of 'Community Forestry Areas' which provide for around 35-40 million hectares of forest to communities for use, management and regeneration. These two measures along with several other acts that aim to empower the tribals with respect to forest management form the contemporary forest management framework in India. However, these aren't without their cons too.

Issues & Challenges:
Despite pushing for a maiden community involvement in Forest Management, after centuries of absolutist control over forest lands, and shift in intent from producing profit to that of regenerating ecology, JFM failed to achieve its full potential and aims, due to lack of proper institutionalisation, and historical loss of mutual trust, which was supposed to have been a pillar of this policy. The community was expected to save the forests, without being given a right to take decisions or a guarantee of rights[7] .Moreover, as pointed out by Anon, in cases of West Bengal and Jharkhand, after centuries of dependence, the communities cannot suddenly be expected to revert to lost knowledge of forest conservation without proper aid from the government. There was also a lack of funding, and a wider vision for areas of JFM. The focus still dwelled on 'conservation', the 'participation' of communities remained only a tool, not the goal, thus, still not providing for native needs (Lele, 2017).

Expecting FRA to have come as a mithridate, the government after the Niyamgiri Case, set in place the intent of involving local voices in forest management, while also providing for guarantees to their forest rights and access to natural resources. However, Menon shows how bureaucratic apprehensions regarding growth of native voice and loss of authoritative control over forest management, limits the scope of implementation of FRA, bringing the two stakeholders at odds with each other, especially due to a "laissez faire" approach for community involvement. Clearly, no systematic procedures have been set in for hearing the public voice.

Proposed Solutions:

A way out, or more accurately, a gap filling procedure lies in looking back, and forward, at the same time. Looking back to recognise historical hints for what Lele has termed as 'Multi-layered Governance', and looking forward in order to combine it with economic needs, so as to ensure a growth balanced with ecology. One might find a restriction of forest communities to merely forest as a cause for their low development, proposing the solution as Education and ensuing relocation to cities; but it would be a highly flawed assumption. This would erode the balance of nature-human relation, and clear green lands for creating larger urban settlements, further worsening the ecological conditions, as well as the lifestyle of those accustomed as forest dwellers.

The solution thus lies in what British Forest Officer Dietrich Brandis had proposed- a truly democratised forest management, wherein the Community owns a larger stake than the central rule. His reports were the first to have recognised the proficiency of native knowledge in forest management, and the kind of faith they share with local Maharajas. He saw the combination of the two as a tool to make forests both commercially beneficial and ecologically healthy. He proposed for a parallel management of forests by the two stakeholders, but was consistently over-ruled for his acknowledgement of Indian knowledge of natural management (Guha, 2001). While his focus on 'scientific management', and central role of government might be problematic, yet his emphasis on an amalgam of native and state responsibilities can be taken as a blueprint for further ameliorations in the system.

However, having seen the fallouts of basing management roles completely in either of the two for any of the forest regions, a newer way out would be to create a framework wherein forest dwellers are first recognised not as 'users' but 'owners' of forests, who share the control over process of use with 'modern users', i.e., the government and the private sector. They shouldn't be given absolute rights, so as to ensure that the community leaders do not end up overusing or smuggling resources,

while also receiving guaranteed support from the government, who must maintain an advisory role in forest management policies, rather than a supervisory one. Moreover, as pointed in a detailed study of Nagaland Forests[8] and that of African Baka Tribes,[9] since the natives have ensured a natural preservation of forests through use of indigenous techniques, but have gradually lost the knowledge of the same due to colonial eroding; the government must now fund larger research in native knowledge of forest management techniques that ensure maintenance of ecological balance, and should educate the current generation of forest dwellers in the same. This step becomes all the more important because, as seen in Rajasthan, the Panchayats took advantage of illiterate communities, and worked for personal motives in coordination with the government (Bose, n.d.). Therefore, in order to truly implement a decentralised process of forest management, the communities, or as Bose calls them, the social capital of informal institutions ought to be strengthened, and advised by the government rather than being ordered. This shall not only reduce their dependence on urban labour jobs, but shall consequently prevent their potential impoverishing, by slowly providing them back with indigenous methods of self-sustenance, while also ensuring a link with the national mainstream, and thereby opening alternative possibilities of livelihood as well. Simultaneously, the elders of the community, whom the locals would trust, must be collaborated with, in order to aid in training of government officials for native methods, as well as to explain the national economic requirements to the community. Moreover, the extent of private intervention in forests must be decided by trained and educated forest communities, who aim to conserve forests, and thereby, self-sustenance. Here, the role of NGOs comes into play, and shall aid in protection of rights guaranteed to the communities, as well as in spreading awareness about the same[10].

Such a colonial undoing, thus rests in a careful inter-linking of community-government-private, in order to bring together all stakeholders for a forest management that primarily aims to secure the environmental balance, and community fulfilment through forest resources, as well as ensuring of their citizenship in diversified forest lands ; and secondarily at economic growth that forest products have to offer! This will lead not only to a namesake democratising of forest management, but would also strengthen the focus group of the process-the forest communities.[11]

Conclusion:
The Forest Governance in India has always been a result of trial and error, with an extreme inclination towards either strict authoritarian control as seen in colonial centuries and early post-independence years, or unaided community management as witnessed in recent decades. In either case, a lack of acknowledgement of an

alternative perspective and demand has led to a loose management resulting in forest degradation, ecological imbalance, loss of indigenous management knowledge and impoverishing of forest dwelling communities. Lack of systematic access to forest resources, low institutional guarantees for "power devolution" (Bose, n.d.), and absence of monitored extraction of forest products has left numerous gaps in contemporary forest management in India. The solution lies in formulating an institutionally backed community-government-private partnership model that rests the forest ownership with the community, which shall be trained for the same through government and NGOs via education in indigenous methodologies, for self-sustenance in coordination with privates for economic growth.

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INDIA

AS THE VOICE OF THE

GLOBAL SOUTH

by Vidushi Sinha and Nikhitha Nelson

ABSTRACT

Having assumed the crucial G20 Presidency in 2023, the faith in India as the voice of the Global South has become more pertinent than ever. Drawing reflections and inferences from the "Finance Ministers Meeting" as well as the "Voice of Global South Summit" under the aegis of India's G20 presidency, India has firmly held its ground on the significance of reformed multilateralism and the democratization of global-decision making in contemporary times. With themes like food, energy, counter-terrorism, oil, and fertilizers- taking the centre stage in India's agenda, the long-neglected integration of global south issues has finally received its due attention. The carabiner for this stance is India's position as a geopolitical and economic sweet spot, through which it has sustained exceptional strategic and diplomatic relations with both the West and the East, including Russia. The aim of our paper is to study the foundational tenets of these bilateral and multilateral relations and devise a profuse understanding of how India can remove the various roadblocks, primarily the black-swan Russia-Ukraine crisis, and China's role, to achieve consensual decision-making at G20.

Keywords: Democratization, Reformed Multilateralism, Russia-Ukraine.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of the Global South is neither geographical nor a rigid enumeration of a list of countries but should be situated in a broader geopolitical context, rooted in a history of colonialism, neo-imperialism, and a different route of economic and social change through which large inequalities in living standards, life expectancy and access to resources are maintained in countries in the regions of Asia, Latin America, Oceania, and Africa (Dados and Connell, 2012). India has historically played a crucial role in assuming leadership of the developing and underdeveloped countries, ravaged by colonialism and global power politics, primarily due to its own status as a former British colony, and has made a significant niche for itself in the global order by maintaining one of the most successful democratic systems out of the West. As noted by David Malone, in India and the World, 'India's leadership in the Third World countries has been crucial in promoting South-South cooperation and in challenging the dominance of the West.' India's assumption of the G20 Presidency has put the country and its policies on the global stage proposing a revised stance on the multilateral world order and expressing a desire to be the voice of the global south. An important constituent of the challenges to India's G20 presidency is China's seemingly similar interests in leading the global south. An analysis of its uneven bilateral relations with the West and the East in contrast to India's coherent centrality in all social, economic, political, and strategic fronts lends us the opportunity to determine whether the global south holds a preference in its leadership. An addendum to the obstacles India faces is brought by the Russia-Ukraine crisis which challenges the very core of India's "non-aligned" policy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Through our research, we aim to provide answers to the overarching questions which include:

- How far has India been able to utilize its position as the G2O president to reiterate its role as a leader of the global south?
- Between India and China, do the Global South countries have a preference for their leadership?
- How can India devise a balancing strategy between the complicated relationship it shares with constituents of the global south while assuming its leadership?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research utilizes a predominantly qualitative approach by drawing inferences and substantiating our arguments through previous literature, interviews, news reports, press releases, articles, etc. pertaining to the theme in question including an evaluation of India's policies towards Global South, its bilateral relations, and special attention to the obstacles brought about by China and the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

Southern Multiculturalism

Southern Multilateralism, in its specificity, refers to an institutional arrangement similar to that of Multilateralism, comprised of and led by countries in the Global South. The initiatives, the responses, the resources, and the agreements within the global south streamline themselves to its eponymous contributors and interlocutors. Ancillary, acknowledging the historical significance and evolution of the global south becomes pertinent in realizing the scale and scope of its contemporary solidarity. Post-decolonization, countries of the global south have profusely held an umbrella stance on development and sovereignty, first at the UN, thereafter, by establishing the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the 1960s and promulgating and imploring for social, racial, economic, and national equality to be recognized and respected across nations and boundaries. The New International Economic Order (NIEO), formed in the 1970s by a group of 77 countries is another testament to the umbrella solidarity and collective voice shared by the global south.

However, an important aspect of Southern Multilateralism is to acknowledge the differences and seemingly lack of inclusivity that plagues the aforementioned Multilateral institutions. Although the UN, WTO, IMF, or the World Bank may have open membership that is subject to fulfilment of basic obligations in order to justify the membership exercised by the global north and south countries, it is salient to recognize that the impetus to conceive these organizations is driven by the interests of the global north, solely. Hence, it is imperative to consciously recognize the lack of inclusivity and the nebulous consolidation of decision-making power that rests within the hands of the global north.

India's G20 Presidency and the Challenges of Global South

On January 12 and 13, India hosted the 'Voice of the Global South Summit', a one-of-a-kind conference of the leaders of developing countries, at the crucial timing of the first month of India's G20 presidency. The symbolism of such a heterogeneous conclave alongside India's proclaimed goal of representing the countries of the global south absent in the G20, and mainstreaming their developmental and political concerns into the G20 discourse is significant and multifaceted, and clearly shows India's determination to position itself as the voice of the global south. One of the first prominent meetings held under India's G20 presidency is the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting, which placed the global south issues, including unsustainability of debt, issues related to food and energy, fuel security, and the need to reform multilateralism in global decision-making at the heart of its agenda. India's call for reformed multilateralism resonates with the years-long demand for representation in the international order by the global south countries. Therefore, India's resolve to utilize its diplomatic clout to mainstream and highlight the challenges of developing countries in multilateral international mechanisms such as the G20 remains stronger than ever, projecting a definite shift in its foreign policy attitude.

Russia-Ukraine Crisis:
A Black Swan Challenge

Labelled as one of the most pressing black swan events of the post-cold War era, the Russia-Ukraine crisis signals a soft stain on India's potential leadership of the global south.

It is a well-known fact that the two countries, India and Russia, have endured a concrete, time-tested friendship over decades, overcoming any and every setback or hurdle in their partnership.

However, Russia's actions, including its annexation of Crimea, its dubious involvement in the Ukraine conflict, and its growing inclination towards China, have rendered India in a quandary, especially in the context of its G20 presidency. India was unable to produce a joint statement at both the Finance Ministers and Foreign Ministers Meetings of G20, held in February and March 2023, respectively, due to disagreements on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, overshadowing India's attempt to push the crucial issues of the Global South.

On one hand, the international community has publicly and openly shunned Russia's actions and called for its condemnation, and on the other hand, India has continued to hold a murky diplomatic stance on these issues leaving enough room for questioning and undermining India's potential to be the voice of the global south.

Considering India's geographical and strategic centrality in the global order, it is somewhat justified for India to be "on the fence" about the Russia-Ukraine crisis. It shares an adulatory relationship with both the West and the East, hence, taking sides at the cost of losing support from either side might result in a major loss for India, one that it certainly cannot afford during its tenure in the G20 Presidency and the overall contemporary geo-political landscape.

India-China:
The Battle of Wits, Cooperation, and Authority

India and China are most commonly viewed as two countries in tandem with the potential to change the world's geopolitical order. The twin helixes of historical grievances and claims, in the context of their alleged mistreatment over the past decades in the global order, have paved the way for their dramatic rise in social, political, economic, and strategic tangents earning them an important buck at the global governance table.

However, in their journey of co-opting the revisionist proposal of the world order, their relationship has translated into a protracted rivalry that appears to hinder both their collective and individual ventures.

The two Asian giants share both a border and antagonistic economic and security relations with respect to those very borders. Nonetheless, despite their perfidious actions against one other, they have continued to display a synergy in matters of the global south. Both India and China have criticized the north-south/developing-developed contingencies alongside their cognizance of a revised definition of developmental policies, which adhere to non-Westphalian standards and reject the "northern" perspective. Transcending beyond their bilateral relations, both countries have thrived to bring the numerical strength of the global south members in the decisions pertaining to UNGA, WTO, IMF, etc… They have continued to prove South-South cooperation voices the concerns and demands of a major portion of the world; to be more than just a group of developing, emerging economies that still need reliance or support from up north.

CONCLUSION-
Proposing a Balancing Act.
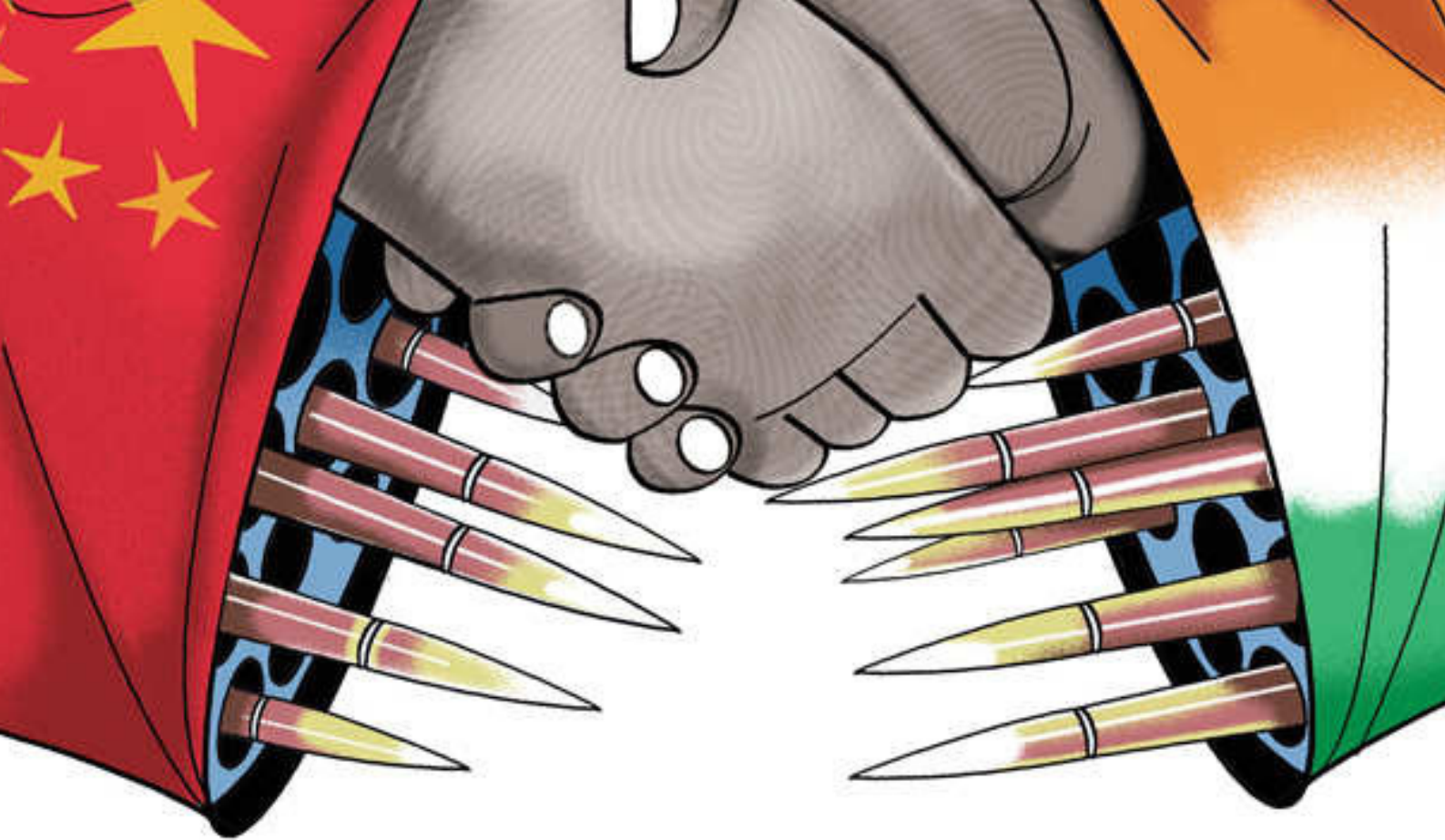
An important point to note is that despite China's alleged attempt to claim leadership of the global south, it has never officially proclaimed its desire to assume any such position. The historical evidence coincides well with its contemporary diplomatic stance as well. The country possesses stronger ties with the U.S. and other Western alliances which considerably narrows its relations with developing nations. Any subsequent proclivity toward Western alliances might become its "Achilles Heel".

Since both these countries have assumed global importance to an extent where their demands and concerns affect the global rules, they have continued to use their symbiotic relationship in ensuring the fulfilment of the demands of the global south that actually overlaps with their own interests as well.

With India claiming its responsibility to be Global South's champion in the "Voice of the Global South Summit" in January 2023, and accommodating the issues and demands of the member countries into the mainstream global governance framework certainly lends it a position higher up in India-China's "fight" for leadership.

Although the questions on India's political and diplomatic capability to be accepted as the leader of the global south persist, given the complexities in its bilateral relations with other developing countries, specifically the immediate neighbours-Pakistan and China; India has continued to be an active player in the international community, especially when it comes to South-South cooperation.

India has been providing assistance to various developing countries in different forms, such as technical cooperation, capacity-building, and financial aid. A case in point is India's medical diplomacy rooted in South-South cooperation during the Covid pandemic, during which India played an active role in distributing essential medical supplies and vaccines to the countries of the global south stretching across South Asia, West Asia, Africa, and Latin America. India has also been actively engaging with regional groupings such as the BRICS, IBSA, and SAARC to promote cooperation and dialogue among the countries of the global south.

To be the actual voice of the global south, India needs to implement a multipronged strategy that comprises strategic approaches to achieve its foreign policy goals. Firstly, India can sustain its efforts to maintain positive relations with its neighbouring countries by fostering dialogue and cooperation on issues of shared interest. Additionally, India can extend its developmental support to developing countries beyond its immediate neighbours, especially those located in Africa and Latin American countries. Furthermore, India can strive to establish and reinforce regional alliances like the BIMSTEC, AAGC, etc. to enhance cooperation and facilitate constructive dialogue among the countries in the region. This multi-pronged approach will enable India to achieve its foreign policy objectives while promoting regional stability and economic development and reinforcing its position as the leader of the global south.

Ambassador Rahul Chabbra, remarked in a conversation with the authors of this research, "India is not a ferocious voice of the global south, rather a benign one." Hence, regardless of the multitude of challenges faced by India including stressful bilateral relationships with its immediate neighbours in South Asia, the lack of continuous and strong diplomatic engagement with countries in Africa and Latin America, the inroads made by China into the global south and the delicate act of balancing its relationship with Russia and the west, we conclude that it remains beyond doubt that India is the only country among the third world which is capable and willing to accumulate the numerical strength and concerns of the global south and push its agenda in front of the global north from issues ranging from climate change, food, and fuel security, to poverty, economic inequality and everything in between.

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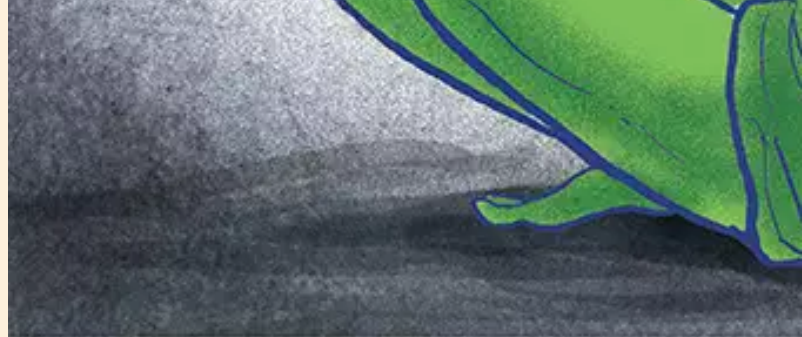
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OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES
OF
INDIA'S
G20
PRESIDENCY

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The Group of Twenty (G20) represents the global response to a rapidly globalizing world in the post Cold War neoliberal world order with the rise of the US global hegemon accompanied with the shifting power balances within the global economy indicating the emergence of a new institutional world order directed and led by key emerging and developing economies pivotal in shaping global economic discussion and governance . The Asian Financial Crisis (1997-98) and Global Financial Crisis (2007–08) perpetuated the establishment of G20 as a premier forum for international economic cooperation. India holds the Presidency of the G20 from December 1, 2022 to November 30, 2023 and is thus endowed with the responsibility to build consensus and cooperation to lead the world in shaping fair , inclusive and equitable world order . India's G20 Presidency aims to focus on 'Green Development' , 'Sustainable Development' , 'Accelerated , Inclusive and Resilient Growth' , 'Digital Transformation' , 'Reformed Multilateralism' , 'Voice of the Global South' and 'Women -led development'. This paper examines how India under its G20 Presidency can realise the opportunities of the 21st century and overcome the contemporary global and regional challenge through collective and coordinated action to

emerge as a world leader . The focus of this research is to understand the relationship between India's vision of " democratic and multilateral world order" and its commitment and comprehensive national power to harness concerted global action and unity to give hope to the world. The purpose of this research is to highlight and establish that India's G20 Presidency is fraught with multiple domestic , regional and global challenges within the larger context of global politics in contemporary times which need to be addressed to reach to the conclusion that despite these challenges India has the capability and willingness to demonstrate its leadership position to bring about a change and redefine the concept of 'global cooperation' and 'universal–oneness' for the well-being of humanity in a fractured world and to work together for a better future .

A Democratic and Multilateral Vision: India– a Microcosm of the World

India - world's largest democracy, fifth largest economy and a global information technology (IT) powerhouse with it's immense diversity, demographic dividend and human resource capital ,India is a microcosm of the world imbued with a rich cultural heritage [1]. India's G20 Presidency has come at an opportune moment celebrating "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav" and envisioning a new India fueled by "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" manifesting the true spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.[2]
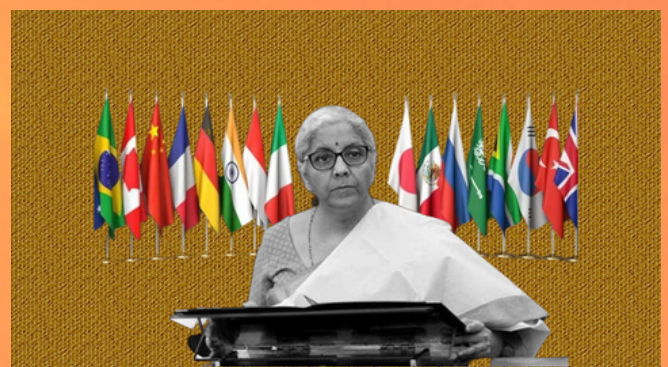

Bali, Indonesia hands over G20 presidency to India
Source: INDIATV

India's G20 Presidency marks a strategic shift in its global vision of becoming a "vishwaguru" or what Sunil Khilnani [3]points out to shape a new narrative of India's 'rising', 'emerging' or 'potential superpower' and guiding India's ambitions to increase its global power and stature , giving a renewed impetus and fillip to its innovative approaches of 'plurilateralism' and 'reformed multilateralism' to global politics as Samir Saran[4]has highlighted. Sidhu , Mehta and Jones have thus rightly accentuated:

In the global political realm , India wants to emerge as one of the key decision making poles and is keen to play a crucial role as a rule shaper , especially if it can work with other groups of countries and also ….. the G-20 provided a platform for working with key Western players within the existing system and for bridging the gap between them and emerging powers like India .

Thus , India[5] has the opportunity to bring together the countries of diverse hubris in G20 under a common fabric , balancing their national interests with the larger regional and global mutual interests , working together and interacting with the West and the Rest. India has assumed G20 Presidency at a time when the world is confronting unparalleled multidimensional issues , such as the Covid-19 pandemic induced economic downturn ,

slowed global recovery, climate change and Sustainable Development, Russia - Ukraine War , crisis in food , energy security , supply chains further exacerbated by deep geopolitical rivalries , growing polarization - ideological divide between United States and Russia-China axis , rise in unsustainable debts in Global South , disruptions in international free and fair trade, nuclear threats and other geopolitical tensions across borders. India is emerging as a crucial player amidst the evolving world order and global power shifts leveraging new opportunities and confronting enduring challenges.

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Jaffrelot and Sidhu " From Pluralism to Multilateralism ? ", 320.

A Paradigm Shift – Healing, Harmony and Hope : Shaping the Emerging World Order

The G-20 was the first major minilateral group that was economically and politically relevant to India for at least three reasons- provided India with a seat on a high table, an opportunity to try and restore the health of the global financial system benefitting India's economic growth and a platform for working with key Western players within the existing system.In contemporary times the G-20 is the most effective instrument of the moment for addressing the immediate global challenges with India and the G20 working together to create a new world order.[7] Under the G-20 umbrella, India has the opportunity to assert its power , represent the voice of the Global South and to lead the post - Covid world order in a sustainable, holistic, responsible, and inclusive manner. It is an opportune moment for India to prioritise global energy transition goals , 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development stressing upon the significance of "Common but Differentiated Responsibility" and through innovative Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) movement.[8] Climate change is another key priority for India's G20 Presidency particularly its engagement in the Arctic and striving towards resumption of scientific exchange.[9] India can leverage its G20 Presidency to play an instrumental role in , shaping Indo- Pacific geopolitics establishment of reliable and robust global supply chains , tackling cyber conundrum and techno-nationalism , voicing the concerns over the reforms in the United Nations and other international financial institutions mandating global governance to establish coherence in the system and make it more relevant and representative in contemporary times.

There is immense possibility for India to prioritise and channelise the commitments of the international community to adopt a consensual, cooperative , solutions- oriented approach and strategy to navigate through the Afghanistan crisis , shaping the discourse as a global , regional and sub-regional power in South Asia in the aftermath of Sri Lanka and Pakistan crisis and South-East Asia such as the Myanmar crisis . India has the opportunity to endeavour and bring forth its experiences as insights for global solutions , learnings and models as possible templates for others, particularly the developing world and the global South, whose voice often goes unheard and thus facilitate a fundamental paradigm shift in the mindset of world leaders.[10]India under its G20 Presidency can work in partnership and consultation with other world leaders of G20 on the priority areas of poverty and development,economic resilience, disaster resilience, financial inclusion , stability and sustainability, global health , education and employment,trans-nationalcrime,corruption, terrorism, and food and energy security, nuclear proliferation and others like global Investments , Infrastructure and Trade , Digital - Technological Transformation and global tourism led cultural integration to empower people and make the world realise the ambitious opportunities of the 21st century – embracing diverse voices of the Global South.

Devesh Kapur , " India and International Financial Institutions and Arrangements," in *Shaping the Emerging World : India and the Multilateral Order*, edited by W.P.S Sidhu , P.B.Mehta and B.Jones ,

(Washington D.C. : Brookings Institution Press, 2013) quoted in Jaffrelot and Sidhu ," From Pluralism to Multilateralism? " in Sidhu , Mehta and Jones *Shaping the Emerging World*

(Washington D.C. : Brookings Institution Press, 2013) , 320-21 .

Manish Vaid , " Can India's G20 Presidency Facilitate Global Energy Transition," Observer Research Foundation , last accessed April 3 , 2023 https://www.orfonline.org/research/can-indias-g20-presidency-facilitate-global-energy-transition/ ; LiFE is associated with environmentally sustainable and responsible choices, both at the level of individual lifestyles as well as national development, leading to globally transformative actions resulting in a cleaner, greener and bluer future (www.g20.org[8])

Anurag Bisen , " India's G20 Presidency : Opportunity to Resume Engagement in the Arctic," Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis , last accessed April 3 , 2023, https://www.idsa.in/policybrief/Indias-G20-Presidency-abisen-170223 ; Promotion of security and stability in the Arctic region and pursuit of international cooperation and partnerships with all stakeholders in the region, are listed as objectives in India's Arctic Policy

Prime Minister's Vision for India's G20 Presidency , G20 , (www.g20.org)

The World Disorder and Regional Impediments – Covid , Conflict , Crisis , Conundrum, Chaos and Climate Change

In the face of increased world disorder , India's G20 Presidency is confronted with multiple cross-cutting challenges. There is a broad agreement among scholars that along with the global challenges , there are other national , regional and diplomatic tightrope walks for India to successfully lead and direct international consensus within the G20 mandate along with balancing its own national , bilateral , regional and global interests in negotiating with world leaders of G20. India under its G20 Presidency has to bring these warring factions to the negotiating table which is a major challenge for India. Firstly , India has assumed the G20 Presidency at a time when it itself is facing multiple challenges at domestic economic and political levels- inflations, rising employment, increasing tensions between opposition and government, threats to parliamentary democracy and decentralisation, rising casteism, communalism and extremism, rapid urbanisation , increasing inequalities , poverty and hunger , poor health infrastructure , decline in gender equality, widening digital divide and setback to climate goals in the aftermath of pandemic and persisting loopholes in India's military and defence preparedness . As Sanjaya Baru argues, "India's biggest security challenge, in its journey to major power status, is largely internal, both economic and political." [11] Secondly, India itself needs to cautiously navigate through its bilateral relationship with both the U.S. and Russia. Russia and the U.S. both as member countries of G20, it is a venture for India to balance between the two and bring

them to consensus on contentious issues. Thirdly, India is still grappling with a border standoff with China and its increasing regional and global influence particularly in South Asia with India's neighbouring countries. This has been accentuated by the 'no-limits partnership' between Russia and China in the aftermath of the Ukraine conflict , with China influencing Russia's engagement with India. Thus , India also has the challenge of bringing the Russia-China axis and the U.S.- Europe united front to adopt a cooperative approach. India also confronts the challenge of sustaining a balance between its strategic autonomy and sovereignty on one hand while on the other engaging with global centres of power like the United States, Russia and China within the broader context of geopolitics, geoeconomics . Fourth , whether Global South , which India claims to represent at the G20, with countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America at different levels of development is a united common front and has conformed to India's leadership within the G20. Meanwhile, India , itself a developing and a third world , in its endeavour to "responsible multilateralism" has abandoned traditional third worldism in its approach to multilateral issues. [12] In this context , C.Raja Mohan has rightly argued :

..the third world itself has become a differentiated mass with sharply divergent interests in relation to trade, global warming, and arms control. In all of these areas, there has been growing divergence between India's [13] national interests and the presumed default positions of the developing world.

Shyam Saran in the same volume , within the same context, has further reiterated :

Sanjaya Baru, "Strategic Consequences of India's Economic Performance," in Globalization and Politics in India, edited by Baldev Raj Nayar (Oxford University Press, 2007), quoted in Sidhu , Mehta and Jones ," A Hesitant Rule Shaper, " in Shaping the Emerging World : India and the Multilateral Order, (Washington D.C. : Brookings Institution Press, 2013), 14.

C. Raja Mohan , " Changing Dynamics in India's Multilateralism, " in Shaping the Emerging World : India and the Multilateral Order , edited by W.P.S Sidhu , P.B.Mehta and B.Jones, (Washington D.C. : Brookings Institution Press, 2013) , 35.

Raja Mohan , " Changing Dynamics," 35

Shyam Saran , "India and Multilateralism : A Practitioner's Perspective, " in Shaping the Emerging World : India and the Multilateral Order , edited by W.P.S Sidhu , P.B.Mehta and B.Jones,

India, as an emerging power, has interests that are decidedly more complex and differentiated than its earlier role as a champion of the South. This is related both to the changes in the global geopolitical landscape as well as to India's own impact on that landscape as an emerging power.[14]

Thus , it is well-stated that with changing geopolitical equations of the global politics and with India' s own rise as a major power at the global stage its relationship with the countries of the Global South has become more intricate and continues to evolve with changing dynamics. Fifth[15] , India is confronting various regional impediments to cooperation when South Asian countries like Pakistan and Sri Lanka are undergoing political and economic crisis , rising menace of terrorism and religious fundamentalism in Afghanistan. Lastly , unexplored bilateral relations of India with countries like Argentina and Mexico ,tensions with Turkiye, increasing proximity of China with Saudi Arabia , bilateral divisions amidst G20 member countries like Saudi Arabia- Turkiye and Japan-South Korea and their likely implications on G20 proceedings and India's vision of fostering a multilateral world order with India as a reliable and responsible "rule shaper".[16]

Nevertheless , India's G20 Presidency provides a conducive, optimistic and inspirational environment for both negotiations , dialogues and debates to individuals , governments , civil society , thinkers, academicians , experts and analysts in a democratic and inclusive manner by bringing out the best and being a Lighthouse

In The Tempest[17] reaffirming India's leadership as " Your voice is India's voice and your priorities are India's priorities."[18]

In this paper we , as today's inquisitive and enthusiastic youth in our transformational journey to tomorrow's action and future oriented leaders and changemakers, made an effort to study, engage ourselves with and understand how the establishment of G20 , pivotal to global shared future, heralded a major power shift in the global politics with transition from

Source: Hindustan Times

unipolar world order to multilateral world order giving emerging powers like India , a democratic, economically capable and politically willing global power, an opportunity to demonstrate their leadership position in shaping and facilitating global governance, human - centric globalisation and citizen-led development in the contemporary times when the world is in turmoil and fragmented . India's G20 Presidency during Amrit Kaal , can provide a renewed impetus to G20 and send a message of hope to the world by serving the needs and fulfilling the aspirations of its own citizens and also of the world.[19]

[14] Washington D.C. : Brookings Institution Press, 2013) , 50.

[15] Saran , "India and Multilateralism," 50 - 51

[16] W.P.S. Sidhu , P.B. Mehta and B. Jones ,"A Hesitant Rule Shaper, " in Shaping the Emerging World: India and the Multilateral Order, edited by W.P.S Sidhu , P.B.Mehta and B.Jones, (Washington D.C. : Brookings Institution Press, 2013), 11.

[17] Observer Research Foundation , Ministry of External Affairs , Government of India , "Provocation, Uncertainty, Turbulence: Lighthouse In The Tempest ? " Raisina Dialogue 2023 , last accessed
April 9, 2023 , https://www.orfonline.org/raisina-dialogue-2023/, The Raisina Dialogue is India's premier conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the global community. The Dialogue is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion, involving heads of state, cabinet ministers and local government officials, who are joined by thought leaders from the private sector, media and academia.

[18] Prime Minister's Office , " Prime Minister's Opening Remarks at the Concluding Leaders' Session of the Voice of Global South Summit ," Press Information Bureau, Delhi , January 13 , 2023, https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1891102 , The goal of India in 2023 is to represent the Global South, "..your voice is India's voice. Your priorities are India's priorities". As India begins its G-20 Presidency this year, it is natural, our aim is to amplify the voice of the Global South. The countries of the Global South should unite and change the unequal "global political and financial governance" structures stressing the formula of "Respond, Recognise, Respect and Reform" for the Global South.

[19] Giorgia Meloni , President of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister) of the Italian Republic, "India's G20 Presidency Can Send A Message of Hope to the World," Raisina Dialogue 2023, ORF, March 27 , 2023 , 43:17 , https://youtu.be/b_4giu0NUJI . Samir Saran , President of ORF , quoted these lines while inaugurating the session

As India takes charge of the G20 , it must leverage the opportunity of investing in shaping a new , reformed world order and common agenda responsive to humanity and shared planet , accommodating new voices , thoughts , priorities , perspectives, ideas and resolve to change paradigms , reflect upon inspirations across the globe , reimagine common collective future and find solutions to common global challenges. We also highlighted multiple challenges confronting India's G20 Presidency at the domestic political and economic , regional and global levels vested with geopolitical competition and great power rivalries complicating India's delicate balancing and engagement with the world and at the same time giving us the reason and rationale for India as a beacon of light , illuminating , catalysing and working closely together with G20 countries enhancing and reimagining the prospects of cooperative global governance in the 21st century by re-energising the world. This paper concludes by reflecting upon the outcomes of this research which is igniting the young minds to endeavour and offer viable solutions to these challenges and commit themselves to action for delivering concrete results .

[20] Meloni , " India's G20 Presidency," https://youtu.be/b_4giu0NUJI

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Opportunities and Challanges of India's G20 Presidency

By Ashina Shabu

Abstract

India will be taking over the presidency of the G20 group in 2023, which presents significant challenges and opportunities for the country. India's leadership of the G20 will focus on achieving sustainable and inclusive growth, addressing climate change, and improving global economic governance. However, India will have to face challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, global economic slowdown, geopolitical tensions, and rising protectionism. Despite these challenges, India can take advantage of this opportunity to showcase its growing economic and diplomatic influence and play a vital role in shaping the global agenda.

Keywords: "Vasudhaiva kutumbakam"; G20's role as a forum for international cooperation; economic, social, and political challenges; India's influence at a global stage; strategies to adopt.

The G20 is a forum for international cooperation and decision-making on economic issues. The G20, consisting of 19 countries and the European Union, was established in 1999 as a forum for discussing global economic policies and addressing financial crises. Over the years, the G20 has emerged as an important platform for global governance, bringing together the world's major economies to discuss and coordinate pressing global issues. India, as the world's sixth-largest economy, has been a member of the G20 since its inception and has played an active role in shaping its agenda.

In 2023, India will take over the G20 presidency for the first time under the theme "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," which translates to "the world is one family." This theme underscores India's commitment

to promoting global cooperation and inclusivity in the face of emerging challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, and geopolitical tensions. According to Professor C. Raj Kumar, the Vice Chancellor of O.P. Jindal Global University, "India's G20 presidency provides a unique opportunity for the country to play a leading role in shaping the global economic and political agenda." (Kumar, 2021). In his book, "G20: Perceptions and Perspectives," Dr. Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow, and Research Lead (Trade and Economic Policy) at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), National University of Singapore, writes, "India's presidency of the G20 in 2023 promises to be an important moment in the country's economic and geopolitical history, and will test India's ability to lead a group of diverse and powerful countries towards a common goal." (Palit, 2021)

Overview

History and its Role

According to Kuznetsov (2019), the G20 was formed in 1999 in response to the Asian financial crisis. Finance ministers and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union began meeting to discuss economic issues of mutual concern. In 2008, the G20 held its first leaders' summit in response to the global financial crisis. Since then, the G20 has become the premier forum for international economic cooperation. The G20 plays a critical role in promoting global economic growth and stability through dialogue and cooperation among its members.

G20 Priorities

Economic Growth and Employment: The G20 aims to promote strong, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive economic growth that creates jobs and reduces poverty.

Infrastructure Investment: The G20 recognizes the importance of infrastructure investment in promoting economic growth and has launched several initiatives to facilitate investment in this area.

International Trade and Investment: The G20 is committed to promoting free and open trade and investment, as well as addressing unfair trade practices.

Climate Change: The G20 recognizes the urgency of addressing climate change and has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting clean enenergy.

Digitalization: The G20 recognizes the importance of digitalization in driving economic ggrowth and has launched several initiatives to promote the development of the digital economy.

What all challenges will India have to face?

Economic Challenges:

India's economy is expected to be the world's third-largest by 2030, after China and the United States. Still, it faces several economic challenges that might affect its G20 presidency. The first challenge is the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, according to the old bank, India's GDP in 2018 was 7.2% making India the fastest-growing economy. However, in 2019 it falls to 4.2% and to -7.7% in 2020 during the pandemic, which has severely impacted the Indian economy, particularly its informal sector. India is currently facing a severe economic crisis, with rising unemployment, inflation, and a decline in the GDP growth rate. This crisis could make it challenging for India to mobilize resources and implement its policy objectives during its G20 presidency.

Secondly, India's economy is heavily dependent on foreign investment, particularly from developing countries. This dependence could pose a challenge to India's ability to advocate for its interests and priorities, as it may face pressure from developed countries to prioritize its interests over its own. This challenge was faced by Argentina during its G20 presidency in 2018, where it faced pressure from developed countries to liberalize its economy, despite concerns about the impact on its domestic industries.

Thirdly, India's trade policies, particularly its protectionist stance, maybe a source of tension with other G20 members. India's trade policies have been criticized for being protectionist, particularly in the agricultural sector, where it imposes high tariffs and non-tariff barriers. This protectionism could create tensions with other G20 members, particularly those that advocate for free trade, such as the United States and the European Union.

Social Challenges:

India is a diverse country with multiple languages, religions, and cultures. This diversity could pose a challenge to India's ability to build consensus and implement policy objectives during its G20 presidency. India's experience with domestic policy-making shows that building consensus among diverse stakeholders is often challenging and time-consuming. This challenge could be amplified at the global level, where different countries have different interests and priorities.

Secondly, India's record on human rights, particularly concerning its treatment of minority groups, may become a source of tension with other G20 members. India has been criticized for its treatment of Muslims, particularly in the context of the Citizenship Amendment Act and the situation in Kashmir. This criticism could undermine India's ability to build consensus on issues that relate to human rights.

Political Challenges:

India has limited experience in global leadership roles, particularly in the context of the G20. This limited experience could pose a challenge to India's ability to effectively lead the G20 and implement its policy objectives. India will need to invest resources in building its capacity to lead and manage global negotiations effectively.

Secondly, India's relations with China and the United States could be a source of tension during its G20 presidency. India's relations with China have been strained over the border dispute in Ladakh, which could also affect its ability to build consensus on issues that relate to security and regional stability. These tensions could have a significant impact on India's position in the global arena. If India is perceived as being too aligned with one country over another, it could harm its ability to build coalitions and achieve its objectives during its presidency.

Another challenge that India may face is the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. The conflict has created divisions within the G20, with some members, such as the United States and the European Union, imposing sanctions
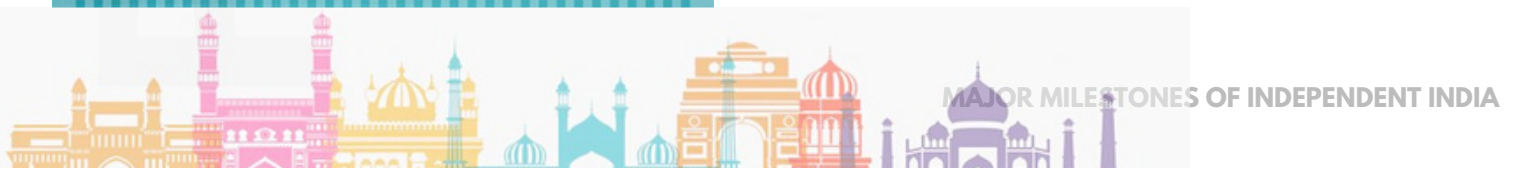
Considering all these challenges will it bring certain opportunities to India?

As a member of the G20, India is already a part of the decision-making process, but the presidency provides an opportunity to take a leadership role and steer the conversation toward its interests. This can increase India's visibility and influence on the global stage.

One of the potential benefits of India's G20 presidency is increased foreign investment. According to a report by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), India could attract up to $100 billion in foreign investment during its G20 presidency. This is due to the increased visibility and confidence that comes with holding the presidency, as well as the opportunity to showcase India's economic potential to the world.

Another potential benefit is increased cooperation on issues of mutual interest. India can use its presidency to promote cooperation between G20 members on issues such as trade, investment, climate change, and technology transfer. This can help advance India's own economic and political interests, while also contributing to global development.

To leverage its G20 presidency to advance its interests, India must first identify its priorities and develop a clear agenda. One area where India could focus is on promoting economic growth and development, particularly in developing countries. India has a strong record of economic growth and poverty reduction and can share its experience and expertise with other G20 members.

Another area where India could focus is on promoting sustainable development and climate action.
India could use its presidency to promote cooperation on climate action and to highlight the importance of technology transfer and capacity building in this area.

Past G20 presidencies provide examples of how countries can successfully leverage their presidency to advance their interests. For example, Germany's 2017 presidency focused on promoting free and fair trade, strengthening cooperation on climate action, and advancing digitalization..

Another example is China's 2016 presidency, which focused on promoting economic growth and development and advancing global governance re form.

Strategies to overcome challenges and maximize opportunities

One key strategy for India to make the most of its G20 presidency would be to promote cooperation and collaboration among G20 members. This is important because, as noted by Bown and Crowley (2019), "the G20 is a forum of equals, where members are expected to work together to promote global economic growth, stability, and sustainability." To achieve this, India can focus on building consensus among G20 members by engaging in constructive dialogue and promoting compromise on key issues (Stuenkel, 2018).

Another strategy for India to make the most of its G20 presidency would be to prioritize issues such as inclusive growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development, India can ensure that the G20 agenda reflects the needs and concerns of all its members.

A third strategy for India to make the most of its G20 presidency would be to engage with non-G20 stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, think tanks, and private sector representatives.

This is important because, as noted by Hansen and Sumner (2019), "the G20 decision-making process is often criticized for being opaque and exclusive, with little input from non-state actors." By engaging with these stakeholders, India can ensure that the G20 agenda is informed by a diverse range of perspectives and ideas. This approach was used by the Australian G20 presidency in 2014, which established a Business 20 (B20) group to engage with private sector representatives (Stuenkel, 2018).

Case studies:

Fight against corruption:

The G20 has recognized the importance of fighting corruption, as it undermines economic growth, distorts markets, and erodes trust in government institutions. One such successful case study is Brazil's "Operation Car Wash," which uncovered a massive corruption scheme involving the state-run oil company Petrobras. Brazil's efforts to investigate and prosecute those involved in the scheme, including high-ranking politicians and businessmen, have been praised by international organizations such as Transparency International. India can adopt similar strategies, such as strengthening anti-corruption laws and enforcement agencies and promoting transparency and accountability in government..

Promotion of green finance:

The G20 has also recognized the importance of promoting green finance, which involves investing in environmentally sustainable projects and companies. One successful case study is China's Green Finance Task Force, which was established in 2015 to develop policies and standards for green finance.

The task force has helped to mobilize private capital for green projects and has encouraged Chinese banks to increase their lending to green projects. India can adopt similar strategies, such as establishing a green finance task force and providing incentives for private sector investment in green projects.

Development of infrastructure:

The G20 has also recognized the importance of developing infrastructure, which is essential for economic growth and poverty rededication. One successful case study is Japan's "quality infrastructure" initiative, which emphasizes the importance of building infrastructure that is safe, reliable, and sustainable. The initiative has helped to promote Japanese companies' participation in infrastructure projects and has led to the development of high-quality infrastructure in other countries. India can adopt similar strategies, such as promoting the participation of Indian companies in infrastructure projects and emphasizing the importance of high-quality infrastructure.

Conclusion

India taking over the G20 presidency in 2023 presents an opportunity for the country to showcase its economic growth and geopolitical influence on a global platform.

India's focus on inclusive development, renewable energy, and technological innovation can bring a fresh perspective to the G20 agenda. However, India will also face challenges such as ensuring equitable representation of developing nations and balancing domestic priorities with global commitments. The success of India's G20 presidency will depend on its ability to effectively navigate these challenges and leverage its strengths. With a strong track record of economic growth and democratic values, India has the potential to leave a lasting legacy beyond 2023 by promoting sustainable and inclusive growth.

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MAJOR MILESTONES OF INDEPENDENT INDIA

POPULIST
CHALLENGE
to democracy

by Team pathfinders
(Ashwin and Gandhi)

"The recent rise of so-called 'populism' is seen by some to represent a backlash against globalization and liberal capitalism. It actually presents some interesting philosophical questions as it seems to derive its power from emotive anger, soundbites and slogans that often don't stand up to scrutiny; opinions presented as fact -- a form of extreme subjectivism."

Populism is not a recent phenomenon, as populist movements, right-wing as well as left-wing, have always been present in history, Nevertheless, it has disseminated itself rapidly in the political sphere in the last decades, while especially right-wing populism has gained increasing prominence in the world since the end of the twentieth century. Currently, there are populists in power and popular consciousness worldwide in every continent like Viktor Orban in Hungary ,Giorgia Meloni in Italy, Lopez Obrador in Mexico , Narendra Modi in India, Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, Nicolás Maduro Moros in Venezuela

Populism has been characterized by the creation of binaries, of "us" vs "them" in places it has taken roots. It is also a result of disillusionment which is taken advantage of, populism takes a path of authoritarianism, totalitarian and sans democratic values.

The paper would look into the development of "New Welfarism " or "Hand to mouth benefits" , a type of populism which is rising in India, rise of populism in context of India , its global rise and impact of populism on democratic values and democracy itself, would be critically assessed.

Introduction

The study of populism is centred around the binary of "The corrupt elites" and "The pure people". This binary is the basic premise on which populism is constructed upon. Populism has penetrated both the right and left of the political spectrum, in doing so it has kept its relevance and increased its appeal, this also means that populism is very versatile, as such it is a meta-idea which is extremely mutable and adapted to different circumstances. In his article "More Proof That This Really Is the End of History" Francis Fukuyama opines two issues that plague "Muscular authoritarian regimes", the first set of problem is an all-powerful individual, who decides everything and consequently possess low quality decision making. The second set of problem is lack of debate and public discussion, which means there is no accountability and the tendency of "Group Think".

Now, rephrasing Fukuyama we formulate our set of observation on populism, first of all we see the rise of charismatic leaders, who claim to fight the intrenched elites and represents the people's will. Secondly, public debates, dissent and discussions are branded as anti-people, against the many by the charismatic leaders. All these are greater threats to democracy at large, "The end of history" has not happened, liberal-democratic faces its biggest enemy "Populism" and it has appropriated liberal-democratic tools to erode it

TYPES OF POPULIST - LEFTIST & RIGHTIST

Left-wing Populism

Left wing populism is a political ideology that combines *left-wing politics* and populist rhetoric and themes. The rhetoric of left-wing populism often consists of anti-elitist sentiments, opposition to the establishment and speaking for the "*common people*". The important themes for *left-wing populists* usually include anti-capitalism, *social justice, pacifism* and *anti-globalization*, whereas class society ideology or socialist theory is not as important as it is to traditional left-wing parties.

It is considered that the populist left does not exclude others horizontally and relies on egalitarian ideals.
From leaders like Getulio Vargas to the more recent examples of Evo Morales and Hugo Chavez, the tradition of *left-wing populism* in South America has a long and complex history.
Left-wing populist parties define the people on a class basis, referring mostly to the poor. left-wing populist parties frame their criticisms economically and seek to protect the proletariat from exploitation by capitalists, more importantly though, despite left-wing populist being inclusive on the society level, this does not necessarily imply that they are not anti-pluralistic on the political level.
left-wing populist parties generally neither discredit minority groups nor object to granting these groups political rights, they do not accept political competition for that they, and only they, are the true representatives of the people. Consequently, they consider political control through effective opposition and institutional power check mechanisms as obstacles that prevent them from implementing the people's will. In this sense, left-wing populists are inclusive on the society level and the dimension of political participation. Yet, they are exclusive and essentially anti-pluralistic with regards to public contestation and the control of power

Right Wing Populism

Right Wing Populism which is also called national populism or right-wing nationalism, is a political ideology which combines right-wing politics and populist rhetoric and themes.

Right-wing populists define the enemy of the people to be "other" people, such as immigrants, refugees, etc. They tend to be skeptical of the facts presented by the establishment press, may be suspicious of intellectuals and want to be from "somewhere" as opposed to "anywhere." That is, they want to be rooted in a specific community and place, as opposed to being comfortable nearly anywhere Right-wing populism's incompatibility with democracy is clear when one carefully considers who "the people" often are in the populist imagination. They are not all the people. They are the minimum winning coalition of the people, and usually a part of the people that are defined in terms of their ascriptive characteristics (e.g., white). Such an exclusionary view of "the people" cannot be reconciled with democracy's requirement of political equality.

Right-wing populist parties are generally exclusive with regards to all of these aspects for that they object the extension of political participation rights to minorities in addition to claiming to be the only true representatives of what they consider to be the people. In short, left and right-wing populism differ with regards to political inclusion but share similarities in their ideas of political contestation and control of power.

Latin America

Populism has been dominant in Latin American politics since the 1930s and 1940s,[48] being far more prevalent there than in Europe. Scholars have noted that the region has the world's "most enduring and prevalent populist tradition".

Three waves of Latin American populism have been witnessed wherein the first wave began with the start of the Great Economic Depression in 1929 which lasted till the end of 1960s .

R Leaders like Vergas in Brazil , Juan Peron in Argentina and Velasco in Ecuador took power by emphasising "the people" and were anti-imperialist in nature.

The second wave took place in the early 1990s wherein scholars have called this wave as "neoliberal populism" . During the 1980s, many Latin American countries were experiencing economic crisis and several prominent populist figures were elected by criticising the elites in this scene and adopted policies like STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMMES (SAPs) to control the economic crises.

The third wave was initiated in the final years of the 1990s and continued into the 21st century. This wave was highly anti-imperialist although this time these themes presented alongside an explicitly socialist programme that opposed the free market. These socialist populist governments have presented themselves as giving sovereignty "back to the people", in particular through the formation of constituent assemblies that would draw up new constitutions, which could then be ratified via referendums. Leaders like Hugo Chavez in Venezuela , Kircher in Argentina and Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua emerged during this time.

In this way they claimed to be correcting the problems of social and economic injustice that liberal democracy had failed to deal with, replacing it with superior forms of democracy.

North America

In North America, populism has often been characterised by regional mobilisation and loose organisation. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, populist sentiments became widespread, particularly in the western provinces of Canada, and in the southwest and Great Plains regions of the United States.

Trump's victory was built on an authoritarian-populist faction of the Republican Party that had been growing for many years. His strategy to reach the White House exploited divisive and controversial cultural wedge issues about race, gender, religion, and nation that have divided American party politics for decades.

Asia and the Arab world

In North Africa, populism was associated with the approaches of several political leaders active in the 20th century, most notably Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser and Libya's Gaddafi . However, populist approaches only became more popular in the Middle East during the early 21st century, by which point it became integral to much of the region's politics. Here, it became an increasingly common element of mainstream politics in established representative democracies, associated with longstanding leaders like Israel's Benjamin Netanyuhu . Although Arab Spring was not a populist movement itself, populist rhetoric was present among protesters.[

India has seen populism right up from 60s in form of peasant populism, later during Mrs Gandhi's tenure we see the rise of a sharp form of populism in form of socialist way of life.The election in 2014 and the previous mobilization show robust populist tendencies, "Sab Sath Sabka Vikas" and the dissatisfaction of many corruption scandals during the UPA regime.

Now, the populist discourse has been given a new facade, the recent UP elections was a clear indication during the pandemic, this has been described as New-welafrism,a populism in the guise of instant benefits such as packed salt, grains etc, this has moved from traditional long term welfare of health, education and employment.

Europe

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has been cited as a populist leader who has undermined liberal democracy upon taking power. The populist leader has set the country on a path of de-democratisation by changing the constitution to centralise increasing levels of power in the head of government.

The packaging of Giorgia Meloni, the rising far-right leader in Italy, puts a soft glow on her intolerance on topics such as immigration and LGBTQ rights. She elides discrimination and cruelty with national security and righteous traditions. On the road to her party's recent electoral victory, she's made plain her desire to protect Italian identity. And that identity, as she and her supporters have defined it, does not include the folks arriving on Italian shores from Africa and the Middle East.

SURVEY INTERPRETATION
METHODOLOGY

In terms of methodology, the survey technique has been used. The survey was conducted using an online survey questionnaire (using the facilitator GOOGLE FORMS) for the purpose of research.
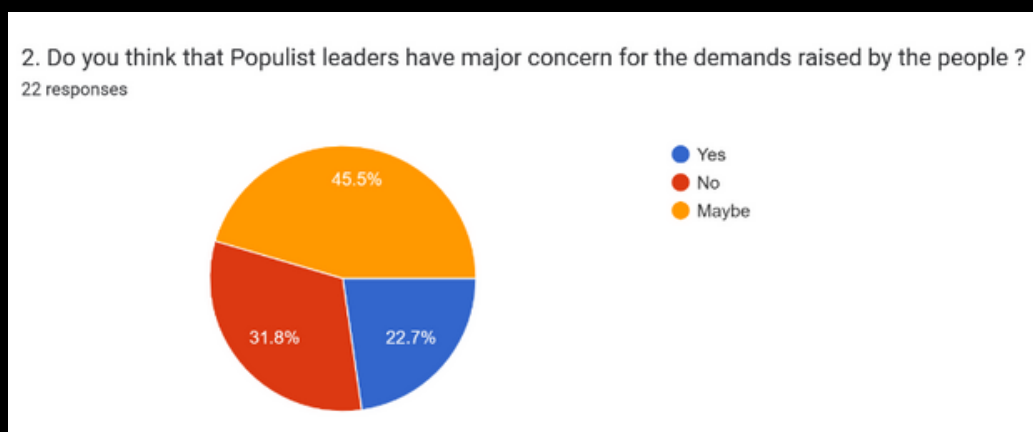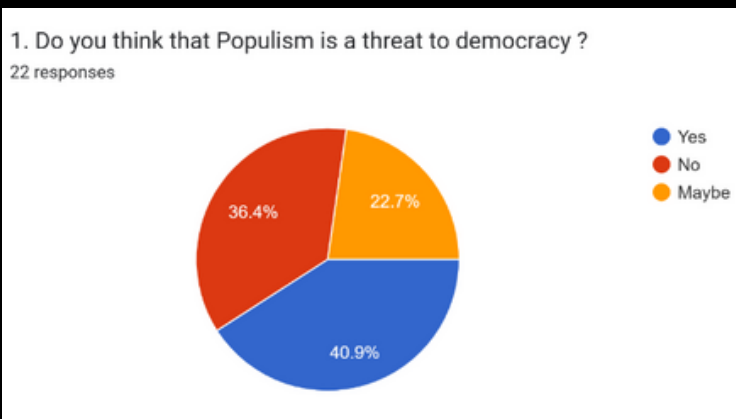
SURVEY OBJECTIVES

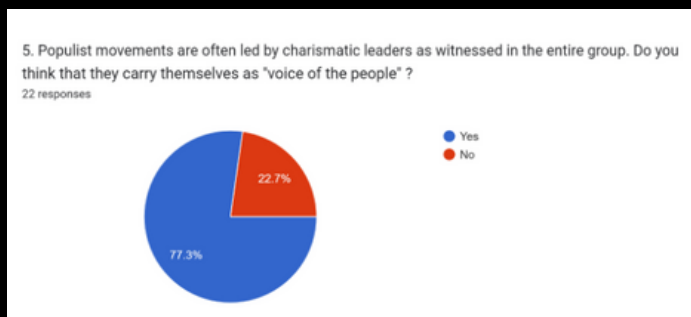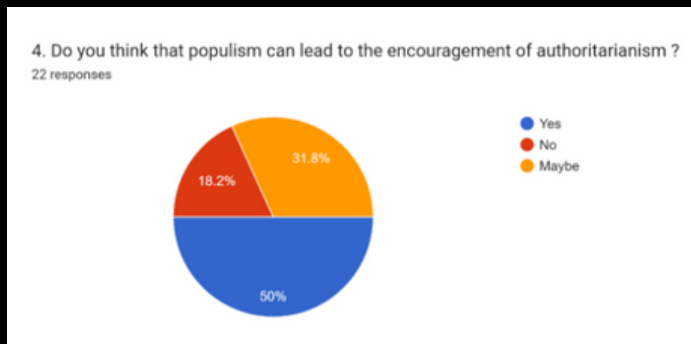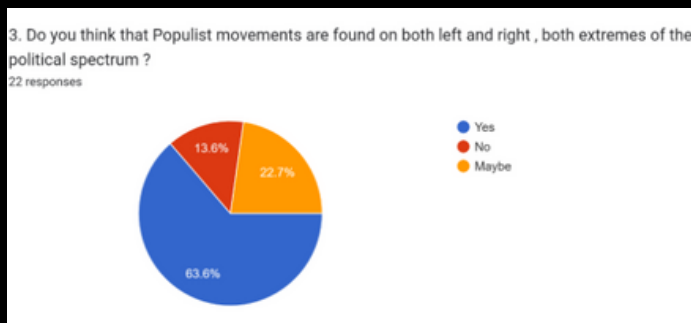(I) To gather public opinion on the knowledge of Populism.
(II) To gauge people's attitude towards their point of view about Populism & related discipline.
(III) To gauge the level of awareness of participants with regard to Populism.
DATA
Qualitative Data seeking participants' opinions and knowledge.

1. Do you think that Populism is a threat to democracy ?
22 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

40.9% / 36.4% / 22.7%

2. Do you think that Populist leaders have major concern for the demands raised by the people ?
22 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

45.5% / 31.8% / 22.7%

3. Do you think that Populist movements are found on both left and right , both extremes of the political spectrum ?

22 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

13.6%
22.7%
63.6%

4. Do you think that populism can lead to the encouragement of authoritarianism ?

22 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

31.8%
18.2%
50%

5. Populist movements are often led by charismatic leaders as witnessed in the entire group. Do you think that they carry themselves as "voice of the people" ?

22 responses

- Yes
- No

22.7%
77.3%

Suggestions
"Theory of developed citizenry"

Populism has hijacked and appropriated liberal-democratic tools of mobilization to effect the most crucial component of a liberal democracy that is the elections, and impacted outcomes and decisions.

-It was populist campaigns that lead to Brexit, fuelled by disinformation spread by populist politicians like Nigel Farage, disinformation and propaganda helped Jair Bolsonaro to win the presidency in 2018.This tells a cautionary tale of how disinformation can fuel populist agenda, the binary of "Us" vs "Them" is apparent. To liberal democracy to survive this attack, it would be only through strong mechanism like fact checking organization and inculcation of critical thinking in populace, that the attack of populist propaganda would be mitigated.

The other aspect of populism is it targets and mobilizes people who have been left out, this is the stark reality of what capitalism has resulted in, with the bust that occurs, economic crisis and impact of globalisation in making countries more diverse and multicultural. This is exploited by populist, as they come out as the Messiah who would lift them up, voice their concerns.

This leads to the problem liberal democracy is facing, due to the impacts of capitalism and a degraded social net, the populist have pop up in .The possible solution to the survival of Liberal democracy is going back to full public participation, transparency and the resorting of social net, so the Messiah factor does not comes out as people won't be left out, more understanding needs to be created, one cannot reverse multiculturalism and it is through creation of new accepting polity, that such xenophobic, messiah populist rhetoric would be solved.

Conclusion

Francis Fukuyama has opined that history has ended with the defeat of Liberal democracy's biggest nemesis Communist, and it was thought that liberal democracy has triumphed with its socio-economic model, but we see the rise of charismatic leaders across the globe which are proving this wrong while eroding democracy at large. This degradation has come with the populist using the existing mechanisms in liberal democracy to snatch power in the respective systems, this makes it a different enemy, which is an insider, only time will democracy triumph under the attack of rising populism.

P O P U L I S M

REACTIONARY RADICALISM: THROUGH THE LENS OF HEGEMONY, POWER AND MORALITY.

by Alin Rathore

MAJOR MILESTONES OF INDEPENDENT INDIA

In his book, The Social Contract, Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued, "The people, being subject to the laws, ought to be their authors." He believed in popular sovereignty in the form of constitutional government which could provide a framework for ensuring that the 'general will' of the people was reflected in government actions, while also preventing the abuse of power by those in authority. Popular sovereignty emerged from "the defence of specific rights and interests and more generally the need to protect themselves against oppression by rulers and their intermediaries." While operating in a liberal democratic set-up, populist actors ignore the former aspect of popular sovereignty and consciously evoke the latter notion elaborated as a mode of political contestation and struggle.

In this paper, I attempt to discuss (1) how silent, gradual captures by populist actors become effective through hegemony, power, morality and logic of equivalence, (2) the usage of various conceptions of popular sovereignty as a means to achieve institutional control, (3) Challenges of populists to the normative ideals involved in liberal democracy.

Populists' definition of "the people" as homogenous cannot serve as the basis for a modern democracy, which stands or falls with the protection of pluralism. Democratic praxis, focused on problem-solving, public enquiry, and interweaving intelligent action into the habits of democratic parties can be a solution to the populist challenge to democracy.

"There is one specific populist attribute which may or may not be universal - of that I am not sure. That is the advocacy of a social and economic programme for the single purpose of avoiding the horrors of industrialization and capitalism; it does not entail a passion for integralism, nor the visionary new-mediaevalism of William Morris, it has nothing to do with Morris dancing, or arts and crafts or Gandhi's spinning wheel, or a return to the Middle Ages; it is simply a sober theory of how we are to avoid the horrors of what is happening in the Western world.

This is the kind of populism which was professed by sober statisticians and economists towards the end of the 19th century in Russia, who were not necessarily partisans of some kind of Gemeinschaß. This was a perfectly rational social doctrine, founded, or at least aspiring to rest, on sober calculation and estimate of the facts: simply a social policy coexisting with other social policies, something which, I should have thought, was probably most prevalent in backward countries as Russia was in the 19th century, or the Balkans, not therefore equally prevalent in the United States and, therefore, representing a particular attribute of a particular populism at a particular time in a particular place."(Berlin, 1968).

These were the concluding remarks of Isaiah Berlin during a conference held at LSE in 1967, under the title, "To define populism". This aptly shows how different forms of populism are evident in different geographical locations through discursive, organisational, cultural and ideational approaches."But, it is also necessary to recognise the overarching theme that is present in all forms which revolve around popular sovereignty, general will, hegemony, communication, and audience democracy.

I am arguing that the transitional phase from liberal democracy to radical democracy due to unfulfilled demands is captured by populist actors through hegemony, power and morality. They communicate "radical democracy" as an end but follow means (since they follow the logic of equivalence than the logic of difference) which, on the surface level, operate in a democratic setup but are totally opposite in their core values. I am also challenging the current notion in the literature that shows these actors following the "general will" through its monist and moral distinction between the pure people and the corrupt elite. They avoid the idea of constitutional government and prevention of abuse of power which "general will" (volonté générale) is based on.

In an era of complex interdependence and an individualised, pluralist, liberal democracy, they use the manufactured "will of all" (volonté de tous) in order to gain legitimacy.

HEGEMONIC DISCOURSE

The emergence of populist discourse and the production of 'the people' as a potent political subject, is not static but a predominantly dynamic process. It presupposes a certain crisis, the inability of an established system to respond effectively, to social grievances and political demands. When this happens, these demands tend to create links with each other on the basis of shared opposition to the common enemy that is seen as frustrating their satisfaction: the government, the elite. This is how a populist chain is produced, which then can be shaped as a populist project, contesting the current order and putting forward an alternative political orientation (Laclau 2005).

A hegemonic perspective highlights the representational (and affective) mechanisms through which: (1) failures of established identifications and hegemonic orders can trigger a crisis of representation allowing populist and other actors to put forward alternative narrations of the crisis and their proposed solutions; (2) "the people" come to function as a discursive point of reference articulating the distinct political orientation of such populist actors; and (3) the ensuing articulation comes to rely on an antagonistic staging of the socio-political field along us/them axis.

Gramsci has never provided a clear definition of "hegemony," but his work is renowned for utilizing the concept "to mean the formation and organization of consent".

In Judith Butler's words: hegemony emphasizes the ways in which power operates to form our everyday understanding of social relations and to orchestrate the ways in which we consent to (and reproduce) those tacit and covert relations of power. Power is not stable or static, but is remade at various junctures within everyday life; it constitutes our tenuous sense of common sense and is ensconced as the prevailing epistemes of a culture.

Populist actors try to articulate new political representations (to represent the unrepresentable) because of the lack of the current structure to fully capture the real. "The fullness of society is an impossible object which successive contingent contents try to impersonate". ((Laclau in Butler, Laclau, and Zizek, 2000)

Hegemony thus denotes the mechanisms constantly (re)negotiating this failure: "No social fullness is achievable except through hegemony"; and yet, by relying on representation, hegemony is revealed as "nothing more than the investment, in a partial object, of a fullness which will always evade us because it is purely mythical" (Laclau, 2005). This shows that "populism" is the permanent expression of the fact that society always fails to constitute itself as an objective order. This is the reason why arguments for "will of all" (sum of interests at a particular time) are made.

This radical construction through articulation is arguably what populism performs. Within such a broad framework, populism is linked to articulations claiming to express popular interests and identities. This is why Laclau's first criterion in identifying a discourse as populist is the extent to which it privileges as its main point of reference "the people," which—in Laclau's jargon—comes to operate as a "nodal point" or an "empty signifier."

In a situation of radical disorder "order" is present as that which is absent; it becomes an empty signifier, as the signifier of this absence. In this sense, various political forces can compete in their efforts to present their particular objectives as those which carry out the filling of that lack. To hegemonize something is exactly to carry out this filling function.

These actors also make use of the logic of equivalence which is the logic of simplification of political space rather than the logic of difference which is the logic of its expansion and increasing complexity. When different identities feel the limits imposed by certain structures in the fulfilment of their certain demands, especially in times of crisis, social antagonisms emerge in the form of "dichotomization of the social space". Through effective investment and logic of equivalence, populism uses these as an "empty signifier".

Friedrich Nietzsche's Slave Revolt.

I will be exemplifying this process through an example of "slave revolt" that was mentioned by Friedrich Nietzsche in Geneology of Morals. This will also show how morality comes into play in the construction of hegemony in society.

Slave revolt in morality consists of a denial of the nobles as objects of value by the slaves or the "mass". According to Nietzsche, "slave morality" is a set of values that arise from the conditions of slavery and oppression, and which are in opposition to the values of the ruling class or "masters." In Nietzsche's view, the values of the ruling class are based on a sense of strength, power, and mastery, while the values of the slaves are based on a sense of weakness, powerlessness, and resentment. Nietzsche argued that slave morality arises when the oppressed class is unable to overcome their oppressors, and instead turns to a set of values that justify their suffering and promote virtues such as humility, obedience, and self-sacrifice.

The slave revolt's initial and defining act is thus the creation of the judgment 'evil' and it's being attached to the aristocratic nobility who exploited, oppressed, and offended the slaves. The Jews continued to assert their pathos of distance through the revaluation of values, and they enjoyed a 'spiritual' or 'imaginary' revenge in associating the knightly aristocrat's virtues with sin, indebtedness, and an expectation of atonement They attain their legitimacy because of popular mass support. We can see the construction of an ordered society which tends to show the will of the people through the appeal of morality.

TELEOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF DEMOCRACY

Radical democracy is a participatory form of democracy that seeks to empower citizens and challenge traditional power structures. In a radical democracy, decision-making is decentralized and participatory, and citizens are actively involved in shaping policy and governance. The goal of radical democracy is to create a more egalitarian and democratic society by redistributing power and promoting greater citizen engagement in decision-making.

Populism prefers equality among people by redistributing the power of the elite but the means that it follows do not achieve this. Since an attack on both liberal and democratic ideals is made. For populism, the people should be understood as a homogeneous community with a shared collective identity.

For liberal democracy, in contrast, the people should be understood as an irreducible plurality, consisting of free and equal citizens.

In the work of John Rawls (1996), for instance, the co-originality of liberalism and democracy already reveals itself in the liberal principle of legitimacy at the core of his theory of justice. This principle states that political power is only legitimate to the extent that it is exercised in accordance with "a political conception of justice that all citizens might be reasonably expected to endorse" (Rawls, 1996). They disregard this form and show their form of democracy as "pure". The fact that the populist ideology relies on a homogeneous conception of the people indeed implies that populists are generally wary of complex mediated forms of representation. This idea is also supported by Carl Schmitt's conception of democracy which emphasizes the identity of the rulers and the ruled.

They fail to recognize the intersubjective nature of democracy as a constructive process in which the will of the people reflects a discursive interpretation of the liberties all participants grant each other as free and equal citizens. This is the reason why populism bases its claims of popular sovereignty on this constructed, manufactured will rather than the individuals themselves.

CONCLUSION

We have seen how arguments in favour of certain conceptions of popular sovereignty were made by avoiding the idea of abuse of power, constitutional government, and logic of difference in a democratic setup in order to capture the "empty signifiers" resulting in a crisis or unfulfilled demands. Acting as a mediator between liberal and radical democracy, they formed their own form of "pure democracy".

Using the analogy of slave revolt also showed how popular sovereignty and legitimacy can be attained through the use of morality.

Steven Lukes' conception of the thin and thick theory of false consciousness justifies the whole argument concisely. He wrote, "The thick version claims that a dominant ideology works its magic by persuading subordinate groups to believe actively in the values that explain and justify their own subordination.

The thin theory of false consciousness, on the other hand, maintains only that the dominant ideology achieves compliance by convincing subordinate groups that the social order in which they live is natural and inevitable. The thick theory claims consent; the thin theory settles for resignation." This shows how, at different stages, populist actors make appeals to both consent and resignation in order to attain their ends or institutional control.

Keywords:- Populism, general will, sovereignty, liberal democracy, constitution.
Note: The text includes in-text citations.

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DEPARTMENT
EVENTS

MAJOR MILESTONE OF INDEPENDENT INDIA

TEACHER'S DAY

05.08.2022

To express gratitude towards the professors of the Political Science Department of Jesus and Mary College, Delhi University, the students organized a series of fun-filled activities on the 5th of September 2022. The celebration started with interactive games which made teachers brainstorm while putting a smile on their faces. Each teacher was then appreciated with a token of love including a handmade portrait and a thoughtful poem. The twinkle in the eye of students while reciting the poems made teachers feel special. The day went on with a few singing performances and a group dance show, filling the hearts of teachers with nostalgia as they were reminded of the Teachers' Day celebrations during their school days.

A few professors also chose to speak about what encouraged them to pursue the noble path of teaching. The words they chose to speak enlightened not only the students but also fellow teachers. The event hence, was more than just a celebration of teacher's day. It saw every student feel closer to the faculty of the department and connect with them on a personal level. The cake cutting by the teachers at the end of the event made every student feel that their efforts were successful. It was truly worthwhile to see professors thoroughly enjoy the event put up by the students of the Political Science Department.

DEPARTMENT ELECTIONS

16.08.2022

The Department of Political Science, Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi conducted department Elections for the post of President and Vice President on 16th September 2022. The election process consisted of multiple stages spread over a period of several days. For the post of President, 4 candidates from the third year were nominated- Anjaly Clare Sebastian, Kamya Kalra, Aditi Nayak and Taring Mepung. For the post of Vice President, three candidates from the second year were nominated- Vasvi Ahluwalia, Shagun Tomar and Nandini. Candidates were provided with a platform to campaign, and spread awareness about their ideas within the department. They came up with innovative hand made posters which were made available for all to see and were displayed on the department board. All second year and third year students cast their vote for both the positions. A total of 97 votes were casted and Anjaly Clare Sebastian was elected as the President of the Political Science Department for the term 2022-23 and Vasvi Ahluwalia was elected as the Vice President of the Political Science Department for the term 2022-23. The elections for the post of Secretary for the Political Science Association were conducted on 7th December 2022. There were 2 contestants- Jahnavi and Nikita. A total of 40 votes were casted and Jahnavi was elected as the Secretary of the Political Science Association 2022-23.
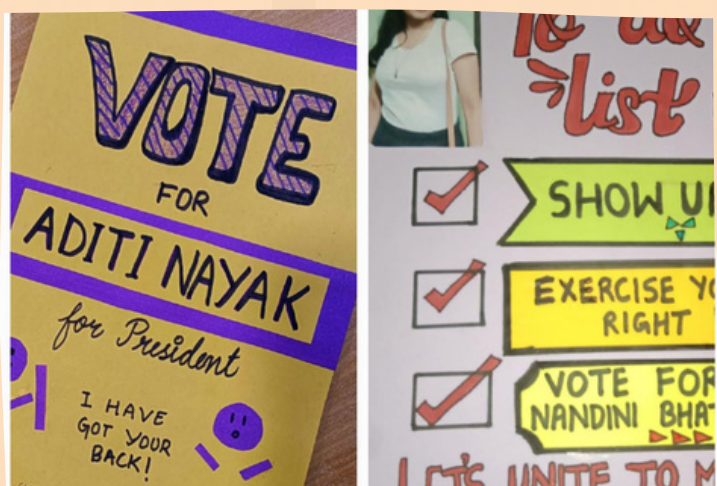
TREASURE HUNT

31.08.2022

To mark the beginning of the academic year 2022-23, the Department of Political Science Association organised a treasure hunt. Various clues were hidden in the college premises and the students, divided into multiple teams, had to search for these clues to reach the conclusion of the treasure hunt. It was a nail-biting and brain-racking activity coupled with a fun and laughter-filled interaction between the students and teachers over refreshments. Along with impromptu group songs, Treasure Hunt was the highlight of the interactive session. It was thoroughly enjoyed by the students of the department. The search for the treasure further boosted the enjoyment level of the students and helped in creating and strengthening their bonds with each other. The treasure was finally hunted by team Marigold. Students were divided into groups which also served as a way to get to know each other. It was a fun ice-breaking activity for the students and professors on a typical college day.

SPEAKER SESSION BY MAJ. GEN. ANIL VERMA (RETD.)

31.10.2022

On 31 October, 2022, The Department of Political Science held a speaker session on the topic 'Transparency in Democracy and Political Funding' by Maj. Gen. Anil Verma (Retd.), the Head of the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) is an organization that aims to improve governance and strengthen democracy through efforts in the field of Electoral and Political Reforms. Having served in the Indian Army for 37 years, Maj. Gen. Verma (Retd.) has now dedicated his time to overseeing all administrative and operational activities of the ADR, which is consistently working across the country to help make democracy more accountable to Indian citizens. On National Voters' Day, 2020 (25th January), Maj. Gen. Verma received the National CSO Award at the hands of the President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, on behalf of ADR, in presence of Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, CEC and other Election Commissioners for the voter awareness campaign conducted by ADR. As part of his talk, Maj. Gen. Verma addressed many topics that piqued the interest of the audience consisting of young voters. Through numerous interactive videos and pictorial graphs, Maj. Gen. Verma discussed the nature of Indian elections wherein he spoke about the increasing criminalisation of elections. Through the section on electoral reforms, Maj. Gen. Verma stressed on the importance of accountability and transparency in democracy, while focusing on the ways to do so. The students got a glimpse of their responsibilities as citizens, going forward, having learned about the responsibility of the youth in democracy. Responding with great enthusiasm, the audience was truly enlightened by the session which made the talk all the more fruitful and interactive.

FRESHERS ORIENTATION

23.11.2022

The department of Political science organized freshers orientation for the first years on 23rd November, 2022. The program took place in the presence of first and second years as well as the faculty members of the department. The fun-filled orientation took place in the college amphitheatre in the evening of a breezy day. It proved to be a soothing end to a tiring day for the first years. The orientation started with freshers introducing themselves with their pet-peeve. To make the program more interactive and fun-loving many games were organized. The games included were: the whisper challenge, dumb-charades, and guess-the-hook-step. In the whisper challenge the students experienced many funny moments and it ended with a hearty laugh. Everyone participated enthusiastically in all the games and proved it to be really engaging. The first years got to interact with the students over samosa and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

WINTER CHIMES

13.12.2022

The Winter Chimes was a musical event organized by Jesus and Mary College on 13th December, 2022 from 10AM to 4PM as part of the on-campus Christmas celebrations. The event took place in the Thevenet Hall comprising a Carol singing competition, as well as an Open Mic session. It also included a myriad of festive food and Christmas stalls set up by various NGOs and sustainable and eco-friendly businesses.

The Political Science Department team took part in the inter-departmental Christmas Carol Singing contest with great zeal and enthusiasm. The team had 21 members and comprised entirely of first year students. They presented a beautiful medley of various Christmas carols,, in both Hindi and English, which also included a unique rap segment, as well as a dance performance. A wonderful rendition of popular Christmas carols such as Silent Night, Feliz Navidad and Carol of the Bells was sung by the group. The team displayed great passion and verve, coupled with positive teamwork, harmony and active coordination throughout the event. Their hard work, enthusiasm and synergistic efforts bore fruit as the Political Science Department bagged the first position in the competition, followed by the Sociology and English departments.

The successful Political Science team members were awarded with a glittering trophy and Certificates of Excellence by the institution, as well as a sumptuous treat on behalf of the proud department. The commendable performance displayed by the team is a matter of great pride and honour for the Political Science department.

MAJOR MILESTONES OF INDEPENDENT INDIA

GROUP DISCUSSION

11.01.2023

On 11th of January 2023 the political science association of Jesus and Mary College organized a group discussion on the topic - "Is the 21st century the Asian century? "The 21st century is increasingly being tagged as the "Asian Century" as the region's economic and political power continues to grow. During a group discussion on this topic, participants grappled with the evidence to better understand the implications and opportunities of Asia's ascendance. The discussion started with opening statements by participants,the first speaker Shilpa agreed with the topic She stated that the process of globalisation began in the twentieth century and emphasised on how technological advancement have assisted the economies of Japan, Korea, and China leading to their development and their emergence as economic powers, which was refuted by Kanika, who went on to say that prior to globalisation, it was the west who brought about changes and stated that Asia is still influenced by the West. Participants noted that Asia's rising

dominance has been led by China, where an unprecedented three-decades of economic growth lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty. This has come at the expense of the United States, whose once unrivaled power has been challenged by a more assertive and assertive China, leaving the nation increasingly on the defensive. At the same time, other countries in Asia, such as India and South Korea, have steadily climbed the ranks of the world's economic powers.

LECTURE BY DR. HARISH WANKHEDE

18.01.2023

Dr Harish S. Wankhede gave a lecture on "Nation and State in Ambedkar's Philosophy" as part of the Department of Political Science. Dr Wankhede teaches political science at Jawaharlal Nehru University's Centre for Political Studies in the School of Social Sciences. Dr Wankhede has been a strong academic voice in Indian academia, continually interacting with new Dalit social identification systems being developed. Dr Wankhede has written extensively in both national and international publications and is the 2013–14 winner of the coveted Raman Fellowship for Post-Doctoral Research at Stanford University, USA. Dr Wankhede's lecture on Dr B.R. Ambedkar was received with much enthusiasm and interest by the students and the faculty members. While addressing the audience, Dr Wankhede highlighted that Ambedkar was a significant figure in Indian history, and his ideas on nation, state, and social justice have continued to have a significant impact on contemporary Indian politics. He said that Ambedkar's emphasis on the importance of

embracing the past for a progressive present and future is an essential aspect of his philosophy. According to Dr Wankhede, the role of Buddhism in Ambedkar's philosophy is also significant. He saw Buddhism as a means of achieving individual liberation and a path to social and political emancipation. Dr Wankhede pointed out that Ambedkar's idea of the state differed significantly from that of Savarkar, Gandhi, and the West's interpretation of the state. Ambedkar saw the state as a means of guaranteeing individual rights and social justice, rather than as a source of national identity or a tool for national power. Overall, Dr Wankhede's lecture on Dr B.R. Ambedkar was informative and enlightening, and it was heartening to see that students and teachers responded with such enthusiasm and interest in the relevance of Ambedkar's ideas in contemporary Indian politics and the emancipation of Dalits.

FRESHER'S

24.01.2023

On 24 January,2023, **the Political Science Department of Jesus and Mary College** organized a Fresher's Party to welcome the first year students in Room No 304.The theme of Fresher's was **'Award Show:Filmfare'**.

The first years looked like celebrities in their glitzy and chic attire and the red carpet was used for a filmic ramp walk to welcome the newcomers. The Ms. Showstopper title was given to the fresher with the finest ramp walk.The event was followed with a number of games and the first years enthusiastically participated. In the search for the Ms. Talented, the fresher's were welcomed to showcase their extraordinary talents. The Ms. Diva award was given to the fresher with the prettiest outfit. An astonishing dance performance by the second and third years got everyone dancing to the music and the event came to an end with the fresher's dancing to the tunes of a DJ and enjoying pure bliss moment.

25th January was a red letter day for the Political Science Honours Department. It was the National Voters Day. The aim was to promote awareness about the importance of election processes in general and voting rights in particular. The students from the first year prepared the photo booth and a poster's tripod. The photo booth was a replica of the electors' identity card. Students from various departments came and took pictures in it. The poster's tripod had three very captivating slogans urging everyone to go vote. Political Science Department Notice board was also designed. The board also showed how the election process started in India and how India had evolved from ballot paper to EVMs (Electronic Voting Machine). The other posters highlighted how important elections are for the survival of a healthy democracy. Lastly, there was a column titled 'My Voters Share' in which participants could write whatever they felt about this topic. This got an extremely enthusiastic response and it was a successful event that helped propagate the message of voting to all.

VOTER'S DAY

25.01.2023
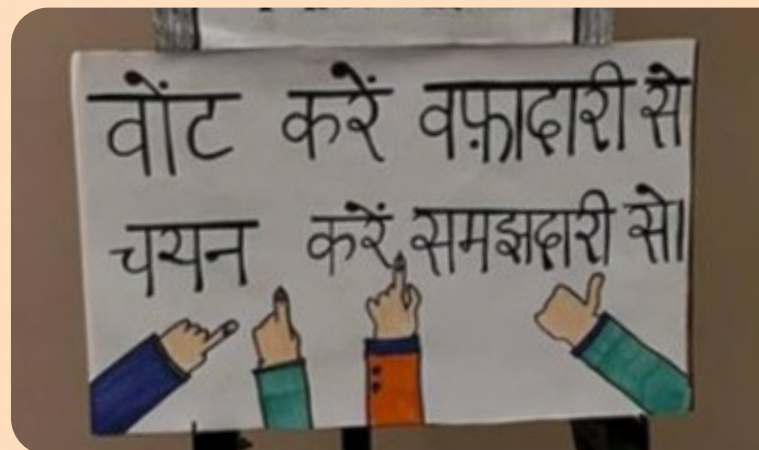
NUKKAD NAATAK

15.02.2023

On 15 February, 2023, the Department of Political Science held an Awareness Session and Nukkad Natak in collaboration with the New Delhi District Legal Services Authority (NDDLSA). The aim of the session was to spread awareness against vitriolage (acid attack) as part of the Delhi State Legal Services Authority's newly launched project, titled, "SPARSH - GIVE CARE & NOT SCARS - ENDING VITRIOLAGE - AN EFFORT THROUGH LEGAL AWARENESS". As part of the session,

punitive, rehabilitative and preventive measures qua acid attack perpetrators, victims and agents selling acid were discussed. The "I CAN DO IT" Theatre Group performed a stirring Nukkad Natak that shed light on the stigma associated with survivors of vitriolage and the need for societal empathy. Following the Nukkad Natak, Mr. Mikhil Sharda, a Delhi High Court advocate, delivered a talk on the historical trajectory of the legal campaign against acid attack as well as the ensuing constitutional and statutory measures related to acid attack. Acid attacks are an issue of immense contemporary relevance as India reports the highest number of acid attack cases globally. Largely speaking, vitriolage is a gender-based crime. The primary preventive measure promulgated by the NDDLSA is sensitisation through public campaigns. As per the government's rehabilitative measures, the medical treatment of acid attack victims has been made free of cost. The key purpose underlying NDDLSA's project SPARSH is to effectively counter the prevalence of acid attacks through disseminating legal awareness as well as overhauling societal attitudes.

MUSEUM RESEARCH, CURATION AND DESIGN SESSION

22.02.2023

The Department of Political Science held a session on Museum Research, Curation and Design on 22nd February, 2023. The session was conducted by Ms Sehaj Panesar, our alumna who is currently working in PAN Intellecom Ltd. Pan Intellecom Ltd. is identified as a leading Solution Provider and System Integrator of Audio/Video Solutions, Video Surveillance, Interactive Solutions, Security, Infotainment and allied products. During past two decades, they have diversified and strengthened their arena of services in Narrative Museums, Experience Centres, Visitor Attractions and Sound & Light Shows and attained strong and long-term associations with leading companies of stated activities across the globe.

Pan Intellecom Ltd. is a team of technocrats, professionals and technicians, specifically trained in the particular stream to grasp, execute and maintain as an integrated entity. Their mission is to be the Global Leader in System Integrated Solutions and Services as well as achieve sustainable growth. Ms Sehaj held a vibrant and an informative session on how museums are made through a comprehensive presentation. She engaged with the students and enlightened them about how new and modern age museums are built with the power to create unity on both a social and political level, but also on a local one. Local museums are able to provide a sense of community and place by celebrating a collective heritage, offering a great way to get to know the history of a particular area.

SPORTS DAY

02.03.2023

The Department of Physical Education, Jesus and Mary College hosted the 54th Annual Sports Day on 2nd March 2023. The day began with a Department wise March Past. The Department of Political Science marched sharply on the beats of Saare Jahan Se Achha. The students wore spotless uniforms and there was great unity within the March Past contigent. The department marched flawlessly as a result of the students' hard work and dedication the past few weeks. Moreover, various competitions were also held, where the Department shined and won laurels. The results were as follows :- Shruti Kandwal of 2nd year won the Gold Medal in Discuss Throw and the Silver Medal in Shot put. Anna Joyson, Cynthia Francis, Faria Khan, and Shruti Kandwal won the Silver Medal in the 4×100m relay. Anna Joyson won the Bronze Medal in 400m race. Nourina Choudhary won the Bronze Medal in Discus throw. Aarsi Bansal participated in the 100m and 200m race.

Politologue'23

ARTICLE BY KAMYA KALRA

On the 13th of April 2023, the Political Science Association of Jesus and Mary College held its Annual Academic Day, more commonly known as 'Politologue'. The day was filled with academically enriching events, exciting food stalls, photo booth corners and an open mic event which gave space to the creative expression of students. The day began with an Inaugural lecture given by Ms. Anjali Bharadwaj on 'The Importance of People's Right to Information in a Democracy.' Currently the founder of Satark Nagrik Sangathan, a citizens' group working in the slum settlements of Delhi, Ms. Anjali enlightened the students about the necessity of promoting transparency and accountability in government functioning. She also encouraged active participation of students as citizens in governance. Throughout the lecture, she stressed on the importance of knowing our rights and duties, and how they exist simultaneously in a vibrant democracy like India.

Soon after the insightful lecture, Politologue saw the beginning of various nail biting competitions which were spread throughout the campus and taking place simultaneously. These included Paper Presentation, Policy Analysis, Youth Parliament, Conventional Debate, Quiz and Cartoon Making Competition.

PAPER PRESENTATION

The Paper Presentation led by Ishita, Navomi and Parnika had various topics given to the participants for an abstract submission. Some of them revolved around gender mainstreaming, right to privacy, environmental concerns etc. Out of the selected few papers which were presented, Alin Rathore grabbed the first position, Ashwin and Gandhi secured the second position and the third position was won by Sunidhi. The best question prize was given to Gandhi and Vijeyta.

POLICY ANALYSIS

The Policy Analysis Competition, led by Kamya Kalra, Aanya Sharma and Joshika was held in two rounds. Participants were given hypothetical situations as contemporary problems and they had to come up with innovative policies as solutions. After the end of second round, Khushi Yadav and Anshika Malik won the first position and the runner up position was given to Pranjal Dubey, Pari Sharma and Vansh Tevatia.

YOUTH PARLIAMENT

The Youth Parliament discussion had women in the the unorganized sector as it's central theme. Led by Dishi Sharma, Radhika Kapoor and Nemneingah, the mock parliament saw the youth of the country providing innovative solutions that are needed to improve the conditions in the unorganized sector. The Best Parliamentarian was Jwala Singh, High Commendation was given to Siya Battla, Special Mention to Sahanubhuti Krisnan and a Verbal Mention to Deepak Kumar.

CONVENTIONAL DEBATE

Next, the Conventional Debate led by Jini, Soumya and Anshika gave the motion: 'This house believes that women's household labor should be monetized.' With a total of four minutes given to each participant, Afiya Asif was able to impress the judges and secured the first postiion.
Adya Venkateswara Minaxi and Pratha Jamwal got the second and third positions respectively. The best interjectors' position was won by Anuj Choudhary and Mohammad Ahzam.

QUIZ COMPETITION

Furthermore, the Quiz Competition revolved around the central theme of 'Contemporary World Politics.' Hosted by Disha Jain, Harrgun Kohli and Yashika Sharma, the competition had three rounds, at the end of which the first prize was bagged by Vasu and Deepak, the second prize by Sujal Rathore and the third price by Astitva and Ayush.

CARTOON MAKING COMPETITION

Lastly, the Cartoon Making Competition managed by Drina Joseph, Prashansa Goyal and Ishu Rana was the epitome of the famous saying that a picture speaks more than a thousand words. The topic given to the participants was 'Pre-poll Promises and Post-poll Behavior' where Sanjana Phillips won the first position and Asis Kaur Handa got the second prize.
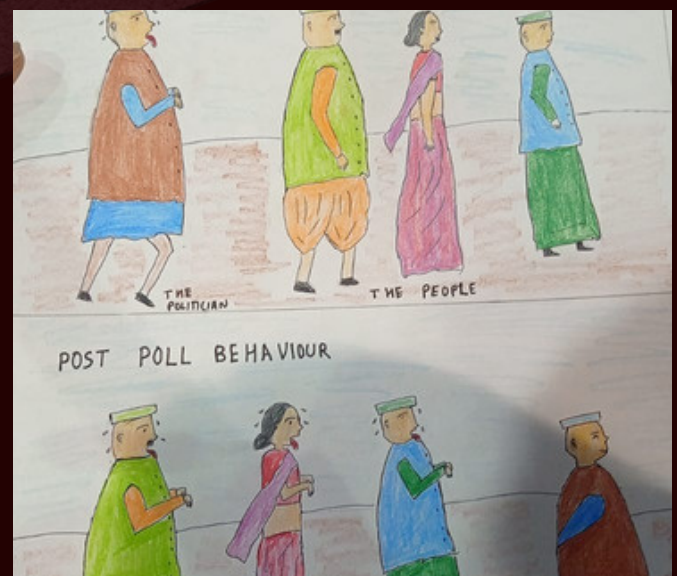
Moreover, various food and fun stalls were set up near the lavender flower wall. Some of them included Got tea, Lemons n Love, Baawre Brushes, Taj Cakes and Chocolates, Mol-Te- Moj, Handmade Beaded Jewelry, Simi Shop and Mona Tarot Card Reader. The department also collaborated with DaakVaak to encourage writing what one truly feels about anyone and sending them a postcard, either anonymously or otherwise. Finally, the open mic saw enthusiastic participation from the students of all three years where they wholeheartedly sang and graciously danced. The event ended with a beautiful group photograph and the teacher-in-charge, Professor Sushila Ramaswamy giving a gift of love and appreciation: a customized department's keychain to every student of the Political Science Association. Overall, Politologue was a huge success because of the tremendous efforts put in by each student under the guidance of knowledgeable teachers.
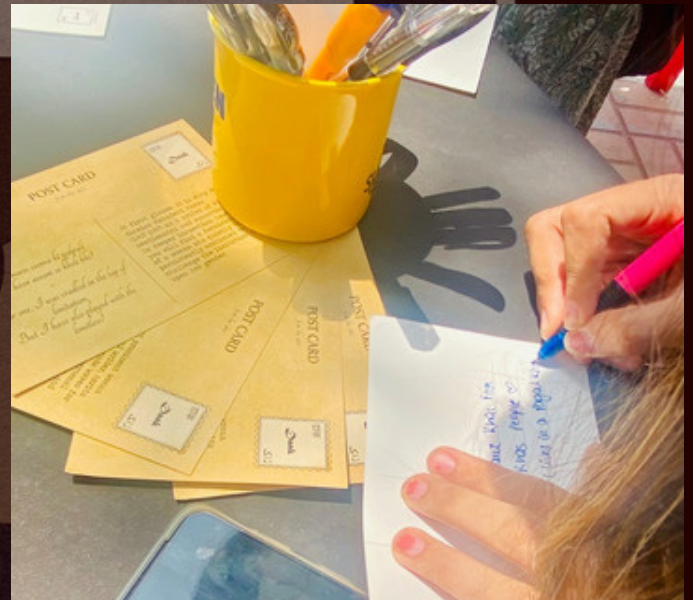
DEPARTMENT
ACHIEVERS

MAJOR MILESTONES OF INDEPENDENT INDIA

Sports

Shruti Kandwal

2nd position in 50th Senior National Handball Championship, Indore, Madhya Pradesh.
3rd position in Khelo India Youth Games, Panchkula , Haryana.
1st position in 51st Senior Women National Handball Championship, Andhra Pradesh.
2nd position in 44th Junior Girls National Handball Championship, Didwana,Rajasthan.
3rd position in Ladwa Open National Tournament.
1 gold ,2 silvers in discuss throw, shotput and 4X100m relay race respectively, in Annual Sports Day organised by Jesus and Mary College, 2023.

Vicky

Was team Delhi captain in Khelo India Youth Games held at Panchkula,Haryana and won the bronze medal.
First position in 51st Senior Women National Handball Championship held at Nandyal , AP.
Second position in 44th Junior Girls National Handball Championship held at Didwana, Rajasthan.
First position in Inter-College Championship.
Participated in North Zone Inter University Handball Championship held at Jind ,Haryana.

Anna Joyson

Second place in Women's Football Inter-College Tournament, Delhi University.

Second place in 100x4 relay and third place in 400m in the Annual Sports Day organised by Jesus and Mary College.

Second place in reel making competition, 75 Years of India's Independence organised by the student councilof Jesus and Mary College.

First position in Khelo India inaugurated by Anurag Thakur, sports minister, organized by the government on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Taring Mepung

1st position in YMCA Basketball Tournament,
1st position in Royals Clubs Basketball tournament
1st position in Volley Ball Women and
2nd position in Basketball Women organised under NESSDU Sports Meet 2022-23 held in JLN stadium.
2nd position in football tournament held at Satyavati College.
First position in Khelo India inaugurated by Anurag Thakur, sports minister, organized by the government on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Payal Vohra

Represented India in World U20 Athletics Championships hosted by Nairobi, Kenya in 4x400m Relay.

Co-Curricular

Monalika Jayani

Represented India at Global Peace Summit, Dubai'22 and Global Youth Leadership Summit and was awarded with Global Youth Leadership Award 2022. Awarded with certificate of excellence for organising and moderating 100 Model United Nations.

Received National excellence and training education award at seminar "Blue Economy for Peace in the third millennium" organised by United Nations Environment Programme.

Received an award in social work from the Khushi NGO.

Participated as a judge in debate competition organized by Lady Shri Ram College.

Kamya Kalra

Chosen as the Global Peace Ambassador for India in the Global Peace Chain, an IGO working for peace and cooperation among nations.

Represented the country in conferences held in Dubai and Thailand, won the gold medal for best strategies of conflict resolution and peace promotion.

Recognized as the Exceptional Achiever of JMC for Social Change in the event, 'Comacumen' held by the Commerce Department of JMC.

2nd Position in the extempore held by Peace Society, 2023.

Vanshika

Top submission in Anti-Racism International Youth Writing Contest 2022, organized by the student leaders at the University of Toronto. Article published on the the U of T website.

First position in national level poetry writing contest organised by S7 poetry (registered under government of India), 2022.

First position in essay writing competition organised by Green Society, 2023.

If Only

Article by Vanshika,
B.A. Political Science (Honours), Third Year
First position,2022 Anti-Racism International Youth Writing Contest,
Organised by the University of Toronto, Canada

TRIGGER WARNING: MENTION OF SUICIDE

The rusty fan in my college library coughs away while hunched over figures mechanically traverse through sites after sites of foreign universities. I'm probably the only exception to this daily ritual. I'm settled here with a suppressed rage that will pour out as I type. The tab that leads me to a University in Canada is sleeping away for I dare not wake it.

"Country of cow dung and illiterates," someone's comment on Youtube plays and replays in front of my vision. This malign isn't alien to me. In the summer of 2008, I visited my uncle in Australia for the first time. Born in a country of 'cow dung and illiterates', he wanted to build a life for himself beyond the borders. So, he decided to pursue education abroad. He was a dignified and proud man. Perhaps that is why it is quite regrettable that my most prominent memory of my uncle is him drenched in burning coffee, turban askew and eyes downcast. All because a livid white man on a bicycle threw the beverage at him, bellowing "Go back to your filthy village, bloody terrorist!"

The blatant disgust in that screech still echoes in my mind endlessly as I consider a future outside my country. For that man, it was a trivial demonstration of his prejudice; for my uncle, it was agony that burned his skin more than the coffee ever could. Yet, he endured. He endured until the winter of 2009 when he was found hanging from the fan in his dim lit apartment, all alone with everything but his turban awry.

In our 'filthy village' I would often sit with my saree clad dadis (grandmothers) whose skin sagged, weighed down by the jarring years of labouring for a living. The way they artfully fiddled with the wheat grains and rice in a copper plate like instrument mesmerized me. The dadis would often coo at me and affectionately regard me as 'gehoo' (wheat). I was extremely fond of that endearment. It was symbolic of their warm affection for me. So, I wore it like a medal. But now, I despise it to bits. Being wheatish in complexion makes my identity as a South Asian too conspicuous. Being 'gehoo' has invited snickers and condescendence during international events from my Western counterparts. If only I were the shade of 'chawal' (rice) instead.

At one such international event, my Kashmiri roommate's hijab was banned because it 'fuelled anxiety' among our peers. When she was packing away her luggage because she would rather lose out on the academic opportunity than be degraded, I couldn't help but laugh ruefully through my tears. We bawled at the utter blasphemy of the entire situation. What did they expect my hijabi friend would do? Fish out a bomb in the middle of the seminar?

But then, most injustices do not respond to "why".

In the arena of worldly affairs, the actors and their roles alter. You'd expect the victims of racism to be empathetic towards their fellow victims but we do not live in that utopia.

Momos is a beloved street food here and this dish owes its origins to Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan.

Perhaps it is because of this origin that 'momos' has moulded itself into a derogatory and racist tag for East Asians. I have become a witness to numerous uncomfortable instances where a mono lidded someone would be h.arassed by barbarians who wouldn't be so rash if they were the victim. A mister in his forties near my residence sobbed when I enquired about his well-being after some youngsters thrashed his modest stall. They claimed that there was dog meat in the dish he served. When asked if they had any proof for the accusation, they shrugged and said that they had spotted a dog loitering around the stall.

The mister had come all the way from the forests of Arunachal Pradesh to a metropolitan city just to earn enough to fill the stomachs of his elderly parents and provide for his children's education. That assiduous and diligent man was left with his tears, trying in vain to save what was left of his broken stall. His stall has been deserted since the advent of Covid. People associate his face to China and now, China for them equates to a pandemic and subsequent illness. The mister now merely sits in front the greasy pedestal fan beside his forlorn stall,staring into the void.

To rest in one's prejudice is convenient only for the doer. But the victim never forgets,it never hurts less.

Only yesterday, I heard the beautiful giggles of a baby on the metro I usually take to my college in the later hours of the day. I was enraptured by the adorable being. With my heart at ease, I turned to look at the trigger for the laughter.

And then, I was no longer at ease. A woman opposite to the child sat deliberately arching her eyes and repeating "ching chong" in a forcefully shrill voice. That is when it dawned on me that the baby had East Asian features.

The clueless child, viewing the world from the lens of his naivety, didn't know. But his mother, visibly uncomfortable, knew.

My grandmother used to tell me that to be different is to be beautiful. If only the world would agree. Or if only we could all be born to look the same.

"What's stopping you?" my friend pulls me back to reality as she regards the incomplete application form on my laptop screen. Besides this tab, there is another tab concealed away surreptitiously stating 'Indian Medical Student Murdered in Germany.' The fan above my head is still whirring away, swinging from side to side like a suspended pendulum in a humongous clock. It oscillates and under it, I search for an answer.

What is stopping me? Perhaps my mother in funeral white in the winter of 2009.

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