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Ethnicity, Caste and the Failure of War-related Long-term IDPS in Jaffna, Sri Lanka to Escape their Plight

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Abstract

The war in Sri Lanka is typically understood as an ethnic war where the fault lines between the Sri Lankan state and the rebellious Tamil Tigers were primarily ethnic. Ethnicity and nationalism were part and parcel of the political narrativesin Sri Lanka, preceding, during and in the aftermath of the war. The metanarrative of ethnicity and ethno-nationalism, however, silenced a complex array of caste, class and gender configurations in society that operated side by side with and/or independently of ethnic mobilisations. As the war ended and the LTTE's tight grip on Tamil society loosened, caste, class and gender are resurfacing not only as group identities, but also as determinants of access to resources and a basis of power or lack of it. Using secondary data and qualitative research, this paper examines the plight of the remaining IDPs in Jaffna Peninsula who have not been able to escape their long-standing IDP status due to the unwillingness of the Sri Lanka's predominantly Sinhalese security forces to release the land acquired from them to set up the high security zones, on the one hand, and the inability of these IDPs, most of whom are from the bottom layer of the Jaffna Hindu society to secure alternative land in view of the tight control of the land market by the Vellalars, the dominant caste in Jaffna, the chronic poverty of the IDPs due to their limited land rights and further impoverishment through processes of displacement and related processes of social marginalisation.

Key words: Caste, Internally Displaced People, Panchamar, Ethnicity, Postwar Sri Lanka

The war between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from1983 to 2009 uprooted nearly all Tamilinhabitants in the Jaffna Peninsula irrespective of their social class, caste and gender . The total number displaced by the brutal war is estimated to be around 1.5 million. Among them nearly 750,000 people moved to foreign destinations in Europe, North America, India and elsewhere as refugees or as legal migrants. The remaining 750,000 were internally displaced within Sri Lanka in IDP camps, among relatives of the displaced and in various other living arrangements. Seven years after the end of the war, most of the persons internally displaced by the war have been resettled by the GOSL in either their original villages or in new settlements. The GOSL has declared its policy of resettlement of IDPs successful in terms of housing, infrastructure development, livelihood restoration, recovery and reintegration of IDPs. However, as of early 2017the resettlement of IDPs remainedan unfinished business and the last set of

IDPs yet to be resettled remained an intractableproblem as they appeared to be collateral victims of the war as well as the parallel and mutually reinforcing processes of ethnic, class and caste oppression.

As of January 2016, approximately 38,000 people (11,000 families) were identified by the state as remaining IDP population in Jaffna peninsula. The veritable "wretched of the earth" among them were some 3,970 war-displaced persons (1,100 families) who live in a total of 31 IDP camps located across six administrative divisions in the Jaffna Peninsula. Many of these IDPs have been living in the camps ('welfare centres' in government terminology) for well over two decades and others were actually bornin the IDP camps. The relief and subsidies provided to these IDPs by the state and NGOs stopped in 2011 and this has not encouraged them to move out. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights,ZeidRa'ad Al Hussain, who visited selected IDP camps in Jaffna in February 2016, referred to them as a 'lingering sore' in post-war recovery in Sri Lanka (Sunday Times 28-2-2016).

The Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) has not been able to resettle these long-term IDPs due to a combination of factors, including the forcible acquisition of their land by the predominantly Sinhalese military for the establishment of the high security zones (HSZs) and the refusal by the security forces to release the acquired land for IDP resettlement on the grounds of security for military installations, complete landlessness of some of the IDPs and the dogged refusal of these remaining IDPs to move to alternative sitesand accept the package of incentives proposed by the government. This had resulted in a deadlock in the government plans to complete the resettlement process and proceed with the post-war recovery in Sri Lanka. Prior research by Thanges and Silva (2009),Thanges (2013, 2015) and Rasanen (2015) found that many of these long term IDPs belong to a socially excluded group within Jaffna Tamil society, a group collectively identified as "depressed castes", "Panchamar", "minority Tamils" or "a minority within a minority". While the war displaced most Tamil inhabitants in the Jaffna Peninsula irrespective of their caste and class, the largely overlapping categories of upper class and the high castes in Jaffna (see Pfaffenberger 1982, 1990) were able to move out to safety from the IDP camps using their social networks, marketable skills and the financial resources at their disposal. On the other hand, the displacement of depressed caste IDPs was prolonged due to the forced acquisition of their land by the military, a process that may have been facilitated by the interstitial nature of their original settlements, their fragile land rights and lack of representation in and the inability to influence the state. Moreover, they may be prevented from moving out of IDP camps due to their lack of financial and social capital, continuing disadvantages and discriminations they experience in the land market and in access to public utilities in general and the caste-blind and ethnically-driven policies of the state. What steps should be taken to prevent the recurrence of such outcomes in situations of mass displacement and refugee crisis caused by armed conflicts remain an important analytical and policy question.

Using secondary data and rapid ethnographic assessment, this paper examines how, side by side with poverty,subordinate caste status inhibit their transition from IDPs to settlers in postwar Jaffna society.

Social Profile of the Remaining IDPs in Jaffna Peninsula

The IDPs remaining in a total of 31 Welfare Centres or IDP camps in Jaffna Peninsula constitute a marginalised section of Jaffna society in terms of their ethnic, social class, caste and gender configurations. While all of them are Sri Lanka Tamil by official ethnic categorisation adopted in Sri Lanka, they represent the bottom layer of Jaffna society in respect of social class, caste and gender make-up of the long-term IDP population.

Basic information about selected IDP camps in various administrative divisions is given in Tables 1 to 6.

Table 1

Social Profile of IDP Camps in Tellipalai Divional Secretary Division (DSD), January 2016

Name of Welfare Centre	Number of families	Number of People	Caste
Pillaiyar WC	10	30	Pallar
Alaveddy	18	55	Nalavar
Konatpulam	300	676	Nalavar
NeethavanIilam	58	206	Nalavar
Coir Industry	20	60	Nalavar & Pallar
Urani	30	114	Nalavar
Total	436	1141	

Source: Population Information from Official Records, Jaffna Kachcheri and Caste Identity Established through Key Informant (KI) Interviews

Table 2

Social Profile of IDP Camps in Sandilipai DSD, January 2016

Name of Welfare Centre	Number of families	Number of People	Caste
Companypulam	10	18	Nalavar
Sandilipay CMCT	9	31	Nalavar
Kaddudai II	17	36	Nalavar
Total	36	85	

Source: Population Information from Official Records, Jaffna Kachcheri and Caste Identity Established through KI Interviews

Table 3

Social Profile of IDP Camps in Uduvil DSD, January 2016

Name of Welfare Centre	Number of families	Number of People	Caste
Ekkirani II	11	22	Nalavar
Pillaiyar	41	137	Nalavar& Pallar
Periyamadavan	24	99	Nalavar
Sapapathipillai	112	363	Nalavar
Kannaki	138	569	Nalavar
Neethavan	13	40	Nalavar
Elanthavady	29	75	Nalavar& Pallar
Allady	11	39	Pallar
Sinthu	11	23	Nalavar
Total	388	1367	

Source: Population Information from Official Records, Jaffna Kachcheri and Caste Identity Established through KI Interviews

Table 4

Social Profile of IDP Camps in Kopai DSD, January 2016

Name of Welfare Centre	Number of families	Number of People	Caste
Hindu College	33	61	Pallar
Illupaiyadi	78	120	Pallar
Krishna Kovil	56	217	Pallar
Yokapuram	60	178	Pallar
Selvapuram	16	74	Pallar
Total	243	650	

Source: Population Information from Official Records, Jaffna Kachcheri and Caste Identity Established through KI Interviews

Table 5

Social Profile of IDP Camps in Point Pedro and Karaveddy DSDs, January 2016

Name of Welfare Centre	Number of families	Number of People	Caste
Uduppiddy South	18	41	Karaiyar
Sinnavalai	41	164	Karaiyar
Nilavan	43	151	Karaiyar and Pallar
Palavi	50	194	Karaiyar
Anakkuddi	5	22	Karaiyar
Suppermadam (Theniyamman)	41	108	Karaiyar
KKS	10	30	Karaiyar
Total	208	710	

Source: Population Information from Official Records, Jaffna Kachcheri and Caste Identity Established through KI Interviews

Table 6

The Caste Background of the Remaining IDPs in IDP Camps in Jaffna Peninsula, January 2016

Caste	Frequency	%
Nalavar	2252	56.9
Pallar	719	18.2
Mixed	423	10.7
Karaiyar	559	14.1
Total	3953	100.0

Source: Population Information from Official Records, Jaffna Kachcheri and Caste Identity Established through KI Interviews

Thus among the remaining population in IDP camps in the Jaffna Peninsula, two Panchamar castes vastly outnumber other castes. As for caste composition, two lowest castes in Jaffna society, namely Nalavar (toddy tappers and fishers) and Pallar (manual workers and hereditary farm workers for Vellalar landlords) comprise over 75% of the remaining IDP camp

population in Jaffna, excluding IDP camps with residents from two different castes. In four of the six Divisional Secretary Divisions (DSDs) where IDP camps continued to exist as of January 2016, all the remaining IDPs belonged to these lowest caste groups in Jaffna society, namely Nalavar or Pallar. The inhabitants of most IDP camps belonged to the one or the other of these two caste groups. All the IDPs in Kopai DSD belonged to the Pallar caste. A total of four IDP camps had mixed populations drawn from Nalavar and Pallar castes. In Point Pedro and Karaveddy Divisional Secretary Divisions most remaining IDPs belonged to the Karaiyar caste, considered to be a middle level caste in Jaffna society. In one IDP camp in Point Pedro Karaiyar and Pallar lived side by side. Most of the remaining IDPs had been displaced from the fertile northern coastal stretch in the Peninsular also with some of the best fishing grounds in the country acquired by the military to establish HSZs for strategic security considerations. The caste configurations in the surviving IDP camps reflect a preexisting pattern of occupation-specific spatial segregation among castes in the Peninsular as well as a clear tendency among IDPs from each caste to share a common residential space reinforcing their prior community ties and a degree of identification with fellow castemembers in each camp. Even though the LTTE tried to dissolve caste identities in favor of a politically unifying ethnic identity as Tamils, in a pattern of 'deep horizontal comradeship' typical of nationalist movements,alaBenedict Anderson (1978), caste identities were resurfacing and new intercaste formations were emerging particularly among subaltern groups in the postwar era in a number of ways.

In one such mobilisation, some leaders of IDP communities established a Welfare Centres Management Committee (WCMC) representing the interests of all IDP camps vis-à-vis the government in 2015. Led by a dynamic person named Anthony Quinn, this organization sought to unify the residents of all IDP camps in a broad-based effort to negotiate with the government authorities regarding their problems. While this was an IDP organization representing the needs and grievances of the remaining IDPs in Jaffna Peninsula, because of the caste backgrounds of these collateral victims of the war and caste oppression in society it was also a mobilization of subaltern castes facing new challenges in postwar Jaffna society.As the leader of Sapapathipillai camp identified with the Nalavar caste, Anthony Quinn himself came from an ethnically and religiously mixed Karaiyar-Nalavar and Hindu-Catholic background and he was able to bring all IDP camps representing Nalavars and Pallars inTellipalai, Sandilipai, Uuduvil and Kopaidivisions under the umbrella of his organization. However, Karaiyar IDP camps in Point Pedro and Karveddy refused to join this organization claiming that this new organization does not represent their interests. According to the leaders of WCMC, this action motivated largely by caste considerations of Karaiyar IDPs in Velvetithurai seen as a Karaiyar stronghold and their refusal to treat lower caste IDPs as their equals let alone partners in a common struggle, served to dampen their common interests and their collective struggle for winning their rights as IDPs. While Nalavar and Pallar IDPs coming together for joint action may be seen as an important new

development in the light of their shared plight, the refusal of Karaiyar IDPs to join this collective organization points to the continuing social gap between Panchamars and those above them in the caste hierarchy even when it comes to matters of common interest to all IDPs.

Why Have the Long-term IDPs Failed to Move Out of the IDP Camps?

If the war affected everyone in Jaffna society irrespective of caste, class and gender, how do we explain the particular social and demographic configuration in the remaining IDP camp population in Jaffna Peninsula? One possible explanation is that the war did not impact the civilian population indiscriminately and the rich and the powerful were able to move to safety using their contacts and economic and human resources leaving behind the poorer, underprivileged and socially marginalized to experience the brunt of war during 25 years of armed conflict. While this explanation has considerable merit in clarifying the current demographic profile in Jaffna Peninsula (Silva 2012), it completely takes away the agency of the socially marginalised and their possible engagement in violent and non-violent collective action in order to advance their common interests and assert their rights. Also it completely disregard the possible role of the LTTE in targeting the Panchamars in the recruitment of its cadres and its diverse campaigns to create a level-playing field in Jaffna society and unify all Tamils in a caste divided society in its single-minded struggle against the Sri Lankan state. On the other hand, if the LTTE action and the shared common experiences of all displaced Tamils in IDP camps had any effect on creating a flattened Tamil society, one would not expect to find thatIDPs at the bottom of the caste hierarchy are the most numerous among those restricted to remaining IDP camps many years after the end of the war.

The failure of the Sri Lankan state to bring a closure to the IDP problem in Jaffna seven years after its military victory over the LTTE in spite of the efforts by a new political regime emerged in the centre in 2015to release some of the land under HSZs for their original owners can be attributed to a complex set of factors, including diverse pressures on the Sri Lankan state, the nature of centre-periphery relations and the limited influence the IDPs have over central and provincial governments. Thedisproportionate[3] Panchamar presence in the remaining IDP camps must be seen as a further complication resulting from the continuing barriers and social exclusions they encounter in joining the social mainstream. These barriers perhaps stemmed from their greater vulnerability to long-term

[3]. The estimated size of Panchamar population in pre-war Jaffna society ranges from 20 to 30% of total population in Jaffna society (Silva, Sivapragasam and Thanges 2009). Their relative strength in the population in the Peninsula reportedly increased during the war due to the large scale outmigration of Vellalar and members of middle level castes. Some authors have estimated that they comprise roughly about 50% of post-war population in Jaffna (Thanges 2015). Even if we go by these seemingly inflated numbers, Nalavar and Pallar are largely overrepresented in the remaining camp population.

displacement during the war, their specific role and engagement in the armed struggle, lack of representation within the political forces in post-war Sri Lanka and their inherited disadvantages in the local land market.

First, the lowest caste groups with fragile land rights and usually occupying interstitial spaces in the peninsula in between major population concentrations of the Vellallars, Karaiyars and other dominant groupswere probably more vulnerable to displacement during the war also because the Sri Lankan security forces often acquired these spaces, including the coastal areas where Karaiyar, Koviar and Nalavar fishermen were living, to establish the high security zones.Within the caste system in Jaffna society the lowest castes owned limited extents of land, compelling them to work for Vellalar landlords and even live on edges of land given to them free of charge by the Vellalar landlords who employed them (Pfaffenberger 1982, Bahiraty 2015). Further the Thesavalamai customary law outlawed the transfer of land from Vellalars to non-Vellalars, interfering with the establishment of a free land market that may enable possible transfer of land from the hereditary landlords to tenants or laboring castes. As is well documented in the literature on disasters (Silva 2015, Gill 2007), it is the people who occupy the marginal spaces who are more vulnerable to disasters, whether we are concerned with natural or human-made disasters.

Second, in some respects the LTTE was partial to the Panchamar castes who often constituted the foot soldiers of the movement. This was obviously resented by the Vellalars, but they opted to ignore it in fear of the violent reprisals by the LTTE. Even though the leadership of the LTTE came from Karaiyar caste especially from Velvatithurai, Panchamar communities appear to have been especially targeted by the movement in recruiting new fighters (Bahiraty 2015). In effect, they were also perhaps targeted in anti-LTTE operations of the security forces causing their frequent displacement. Once displaced, those at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, apparently looked up to the LTTE for their protection and even sustenance. Unlike the richer Vellalars who were displacedand who tried to use their own resources and contacts in order to move to safety out of the war zone, the lowest castes turned to the LTTE in order to face the consequences of the war, including displacement. The LTTE deployed the IDP camps with members of specific Panchamar groups for its propaganda purposes, including screening of films depicting heroic deeds of the LTTE fighters (Bahiraty 2015). As a result, the LTTE was keen to keep the IDP camps intact and, at times, discouraged the IDPs from going back to their original villages even when it was possible to do so using a combination of incentives and pressures. For instance, the land on which these IDP camps were situated was sometimes acquired by the LTTE from the original owners who were mostly Vellalar, especially when they had moved out to foreign destinations and ensured that the IDPs will not be evicted by the owners of these sites. For instance, the lands under the Sapapathy, Kanaki and PeriyaMathadevi camps in Uduvil DSD were reportedly owned by the LTTE having acquired them from the previous owners and this made it difficult for making onsite resettlement of the IDPs living there even after the end of the war (Rajasingham

2014). Following the military victory of the Sri Lankan security forces, the camp residents could not turn to LTTE anymore. The limited land resources they owned werein HSZs and the security forces reluctantly returned a selection of this land to the civilians since 2015 on a scattered basis. Further,unlike the upper caste IDPs who moved out to other areas and overseas destinations individually using their existing social contacts, the Pallar, Nalavar and Karaiyar IDPs remaining in the camps sought to move back to their original villages as a community, perhaps as a means of social protection within a larger social and political context where they experienced social rejection and discrimination on the grounds of caste and social class.

Third, the Panchamar IDPs had become victims of a power struggle between Tamil political parties and the GOSL. In trying to regain control over its Tamil constituency the political parties such as TNA and TULF try to represent the interests of the IDPs, even though the leadership of these political parties coming from theVellalar elite does not seem to represent or identify with these IDPs in any sense. In spite of the demographic shifts in the Tamil population in the Peninsula, the non-Vellalars do not seem to have adequate representation in these parties and in elected representation in the central government, Provincial Councils and even in PradeshiyaSabas largely controlled by TNA. In many ways the conventional Tamil political leadership in post-war Sri Lanka remains rather aloof to the needs of the underprivileged caste groups as they have been accustomed to in the pre-war era. Simultaneously, the remaining IDPs in the camps are a useful platform for the Tamil political leadership to demonstrate to the rest of the world that the central government has failed to complete the resettlement of IDPs, demand the dismantling of HSZs in the peninsula and campaign for greater political autonomy for the minorities. On the other hand, the Sri Lankan state and the security forces are hesitant to release land in the remaining HSZs and seem to be completely unaware that the remaining HSZs prevent sections of the most disadvantaged castes in Jaffna society from going back to their original habitats.

Finally, as will be elaborated later, the Panchmar IDPs do not have the resources to break the vicious cycle of poverty and displacement and move to some alternative sites on their own also due to the disadvantages they experience in the local land market controlled largely by the Vellalar land owners. Even though the absentee Vellalar landlords had allowed some Panchamar families to occupy their vacant houses particularly in islands off the Peninsula, transfer of land ownership across the caste divide has been rare or non-existent and considered morally unjustified by Vellalarlandlords (Rasanen 2015). This is a classic example where class inequality and caste inequality reinforce each other in ways that the IDPs become collateral victims of multiple forms of oppression and discrimination many years after the end of war.

Socio-economic Profile

The remaining IDP camps in Jaffna Peninsula are characterized by poor housing, congestion,

underserved conditions in relation to water and sanitation and vulnerability to natural and social hazards, including infections.

The one or two room housing units are made of tin sheets, wooden planks and cadjan. During hot summer there is unbearable heat inside these houses. During monsoon rains, roofs leak and the entire neighbourhoods get flooded as these camps are typically situated in low-lying areas in the peninsula subject to flooding. The neighbourhoods are overcrowded with so many shelters huddled on a limited space. For instance, in the adjoining Sapapathy and Kannaki camps in Uduvil DSD, some 932 people distributed in 250 families are huddled together in a land area of some 8 acres.

The provision of water and sanitation to the IDP communities remains extremely poor. Most camps have no running water[4]. There are one or two wells which often dry up during the periods of drought. The Vellalar communities in nearby villages are not willing to share their water sources, including wells, with people from the IDP camps (muham) due to continuing ideas about pollution and contamination. In one camp a population of about 400 people shared a total of 7 common toilets with one toilet shared by about 58 people. The long waiting time to use toilets was part of the daily ritual in the IDP camps.

The dry rations issued to IDPs by the Government of Sri Lanka with support from UN agencies stopped in 2011 reportedly due to the interest of the Rajapaksa regime at the time to impress upon the international community that the resettlement process of war-induced IDPs was over. On the other hand, the dry rations were not replaced with the state-run Samurdhi Programme targeting the poor, reportedly due to the need to be permanent settlers in an administrative division to be qualified for this assistance. Thus the remaining IDPs in the peninsula were recipients of neither dry rations meant for IDPs nor Samurdhi benefits meant for the poor. They were also disqualified from housing assistance for resettling IDPs such as the housing assistance provided by the World Bank and Indian Government on the grounds that they did not have title to any buildable land. In some ways they were double victims of caste blind and exclusionary ethnic policies of the state and international donors. In a curious reflection of their lack of political representation in the various political bodies, this blatant discrimination has not been highlighted by the upper caste Tamil political leadership in any of their representations to GOSL and various international agencies.

Access to religious centres controlled by the Vellalar families was also restricted to IDPs because of their assumed impurity and possible pollution of the sacred sites by their entry into the interior of these shrines.

The educational services were equally poor. Some IDP camps had primary schools with minimum facilities. According to one newspaper report, for IDP children "it was just a case of sitting in a makeshift classroom for a few hours, sometimes learning and other times

[4]A similar situation has been reported for a non IDP Panchamar community in Jaffna by AftabLall (2015)

chatting". If the IDP children wanted to go beyond primary education, they had to be transferred to better schools outside the community, where IDP children experienced a range of discrimination from fellow students from higher caste backgrounds as well as from teachers who were also typically from higher caste backgrounds. In spite of these limitations, however, a few bright children from these communities did manage to do well in studies and enter the university system.In summary, the IDP children rarely benefited from the free education system in the country and ended up with limited capabilities and merely suited for casual wage labour in the labour market.

For the most part, the IDP camps had become sources of cheap labour for commercial farmers and labour contractors in the surrounding areas. The daily wage for men was around Rs. 1000-1200 and for women almost half the daily rate for men. Often, they were not entitled to any of the fringe benefits like free food from the employers signifying an almost irreversible ending of the traditional patron-client relations in the labour market in Jaffna. Employment was available in commercial farms, construction sites, quarrying and informal sector food preparation and vending and rarely in the formal sector. In many places the workers from the camps were treated badly reflecting a combination of traditional prejudices against the low caste servants and downright exploitation of non-unionized labour with no proper labour contract.

Marginalization and Social Exclusion of the IDPs

The IDPs have so far failed to escape their plight due to a combination of factors, including their ethnicity, social class and caste and the policy framework in the country. The IDPs can be seen as collateral victims of processes emanating from an ethnic war, formation of a new working class with no property rights among the war-displaced population and a process of social exclusion stemming from the hereditary caste system in Jaffna society.

The IDPs are at the edge of the Sri Lankan society by virtue of their ethnicity, social class, caste and gender. They have not received their due share of the benefits of the Sri Lankan welfare state due to their marginality on account of all these factors. Moreover, they became ruthless victims of the war as they were mobilized by the LTTE in its ceaseless campaign of terror. Unlike the economically powerful upper castes, the Panchamars had no means to escape the armed conflict and, thereby, became directly engulfed in the war under the leadership of LTTE. Unlike the Vellalars who moved to Colombo and from there to overseas destinations where they gradually moved from refugee status to citizenship within a relatively short period, only a limited number of Panchamars had the capacity to escape to safety elsewhere in the country or overseas. On the other hand, having been instrumentalized by the LTTE for over two decades and having suffered the brunt of war, some of the Panchamars remain internally displaced people within their native Peninsula, which was in many ways the heartland of their liberation struggle, some seven years after the end of this long drawn-out war. In some ways this is a paradoxical situation that illustrates the failure of both state

policies and the liberation struggle on the part of the LTTE.

They have not been able to escape the IDP status because of their poverty and related inability to achieve on-site resettlement or move to either their old territories or new territories. On-site resettlement would mean that the IDPs will get title to land where they are 'temporarily' located at present. This has been mooted by some government and NGO actors and has the support of the military for obvious reasons. TNA has opposed to this option stating that it will go against the right of the IDPs to go back to their original land. As reported earlier, many of the land used as sites for IDP camps are owned or controlled by Vellalar landlords, some of whom migrated to affluent countries during the war. They want to reclaim their land and have prevented any moves for on-site resettlement of the IDPs as it would obvious interfere with their own land rights. Their response to such moves can be illustrated by a legal dispute relating to the ownership of 8 acres of land on which the twin IDP camps of Sapapathy and Kannaki are located. According to leaders of these IDP camps, the original Vellalar owners of this land migrated to Australia during the war. The LTTE supposedly took over this land following their migration to set up a farm. Subsequently the two IDP camps were established by the government on the same land and the LTTE backed away from this land infiltrating into IDP camps instead. During the war the original owners of the land did not try to assert their land rights obviously in fear of possible LTTE reaction. Some years after the end of the war a land survey team began to survey this land for the purpose of distributing the land among the IDPs for their on-site resettlement. At this point a TNA politician who was a member of a local Pradeshiya Saba came to the scene and tried to prevent the survey work saying that the owners of the land who are now in Australia are his relations and the land cannot be transferred to IDPs as it is still owned by the original owners. The survey work, however, continued reportedly under the pressure of the military. At this point the original owners filed a court case and the court gave a decision in their favor prohibiting any transfer of the land to IDPs and any permanent structures being newly erected on the land. This prevented the plans for on-site resettlement of IDPs. This case also illustrates how TNA interests merge with the interests of the Vellalar landowners rather than with those of the subaltern IDPs. The state of course has the right to acquire private land for designated public purposes, but so far the state has not pursued this option also indicating that the IDPs have limited influence with the state.

From the time of the temple entry struggles in Jaffna in the 1960s documented by Pfaffenberger (1990), it is well known that Hindu religious establishment in Jaffna has been a stronghold of Vellalar power increasingly resisted by the Panchamar groups also ideologically supported by the leftist intellectuals in Jaffna at the time. In this context, some of the postwar developments in IDP camps situated within or in close proximity to Hindu kovilsdeserve our attention. Several of the smaller IDP camps are located on land owned by local Hindu kovils usually at the edge of the kovilpremises. Pillaiyar camps in Uduvil and Tellipalai, Karikal Welfare Centre in Nallur and Krishnan Kovil camp in Kopai

are examples of such IDP camps. In all these instances the temple authorities who are invariably Vellalar have sought to evict the IDPs claiming that they are a threat to the preservation of temple premises. Recently the friction between temple authorities and IDPs has risen also due to possible acquisition of temple land for on-site resettlement of IDPs. Thus the on-site resettlement of IDPs is not a popular option with local politicians and landed interests who seek to preserve the integrity of their hereditary land holdings and domination over the subaltern caste groups as reflected in the reported land disputes.

Moving to new territories is hampered by their poverty and non-availability of capital as well as by their hereditary disadvantages in the land market because of the their caste status and unwillingness on the part of Vellalar land owners to sell their ancestral landholdings to their former casteservants even if the latter can afford to buy such land and welcome them into their high caste neighbourhoods because of their persistent caste prejudices. Of all the IDP families in Sapapathy camp, only one with substantial financial assistance from a related diaspora member living overseas had been able to purchase a land and house from an absentee Vellarlar landlord and this transaction occurred through an intermediary from Vellalar caste who reportedly informed the absentee landlord that the buyer is actually of Vellalar caste even though in reality the buyer was of Nalavar caste. While this was an exception, it confirmed that Vellalar landlords were not ready to sell their land to those at the bottom of the caste hierarchy even when they are absentee landlords with no plans to return to Jaffna at all. This also explains the many vacant lands and houses in the peninsular with newly built barbed wire fences and no occupants whatsoever while the IDPs were struggling to find some place on earth that they can call their home.

This is why the IDPs have been compelled to look for collective solutions coming from the state with the help of Tamil politicians, most of whom do not identify with the actual needs of the IDPs because of their own caste background.On the whole these war-displaced IDPs became long-term IDPs because of their social marginality as well as due to the relative neglect of their needs and concerns by the state and those who claimed to represent them, including the LTTE and the TNA.

For remaining IDPs, going back to their original land would obviously be the most desirable option, but here they encounter opposition by the state and the Sinhala nationalists who do not want the remaining HSZs removed due to fear of a possible regrouping of LTTE, if monitoring and surveillance by government security forces in the strategically important places are abandoned. Another complication is that a large number of remaining IDPs do not have title to land in HSZs or elsewhere. For instance, a survey carried out by Thanges in 2015 revealed that nearly 75% of remaining IDPs actually do not own any land, with the result that return of the land under HSZs to their former owners will not solve the land problem of many of the IDP survivors (Thanges 2015). In effect, the option pursued by Tamil political leadership, namely disbanding of HSZs and return of the land to the original

owners, though necessary, may not solve the IDP problem permanently.

Experiences with a Relocation Settlement for Residual IDPs

A new settlement called Nallinakkpuram (literally 'reconciliation village') established by the Ministry of Rehabilitation headed by a UNP Tamil minister from Colombo for a selection of IDPs was ceremonially opened in Valikamam North DSD inDecember 2016 for a total of 100 IDP families recruited from a number of IDP camps in selected DSDs. This is considered a relocation since the settlement was established in vacant crown land situated close to KKS beach. The houses were built by the military with funds from the Rehabilitation Ministry. The Tamil political leadership of TNA did not like this project because of the involvement of the military and also because the project was resented by the existing Tamil settlements and a number of Hindu kovils in the area. The residents of the new settlement, however, felt that they were not welcome in the area dominated by the Vellalar communities because of their Panchamar background. A primary school was newly established in Nallanakkapuram but the older children from the community experienced some difficulty in getting admission to an existing secondary schools and a common playground in a nearby village was reportedly covered by a fence in order to prevent the children from the new settlement using it.

Many of the new settlers were keen to start fishing, their traditional occupation, in the nearby sea but they were prevented from doing so as the area was considered a sacred site (punithabhumi) by trustees of nearby Hindu kovils who were essentially Vellalar. A local Tamil politician protested against the project claiming that part of the housing scheme is actually established on private land owned by his family.The new settlers were happy that they were able to get a decent house of their own, but they were complaining that they had not yet been granted title to the land even though it was promised by government authorities. Further they experienced a number of caste-based social rejections and opposition to the commencement of their traditional livelihood of fishing even though the fishing grounds are within their reach. Nallinakkapurama clearly points to the kind of difficulties that these subaltern low castes encounter when they move to new areas dominated by Vellalar landlords. Clearly the central government and military intervention was instrumental in opening this new settlement for a cross section of landless IDPs. However, it is quite clear that this state intervention was not informed by a sound understanding of caste dynamics affecting the remaining IDPs in Jaffna society.

The Politics of Resettlement of the Remaining IDPs and the Policy Options Available

The Tamil political elite has been lobbying for closure of HSZs in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, removal of military bases and progressive reduction of the military presence in these areas as a precondition for restoration of civilian life in the region. On the other hand, the government security forces has been pushing for a payment of compensation to

IDPs for the land lost to the HSZs and providing additional support to the IDPs to move to alternative sites or resettle in the existing sites. Neither party is willing to reach a compromise that would end the prolonged displacement of these last cohort of socially marginalized IDPs. Interestingly both the GOSL and the Tamil political elite purely approach the problem from an ethnic or political angle and in a caste blind manner. The Tamil leadership explicitly campaign for their resettlement in their original villages currently under HSZs. While closure of HSZs may be necessary in the long run, this is, however, not a pragmatic solution for all remaining IDPs as many of them reportedly do not own any land in HSZs or anywhere else. This means that only through a compromise solution acceptable to IDPs reached by the GOSL and Tamil political leadership the long-term suffering of these IDPs can be ended.

This may be one instance, where the conventional caste-blind policies pursued by the Sri Lankan state must be revisited in order to enable the remaining IDPs to overcome possible discrimination they face in the land market, education system and in regard to employment opportunities other than casual wage labour. Their successful reintegration with society depends not only on whether they as citizens of Sri Lanka will receive their due share ofland and other assistance from the Sri Lankan welfare state, but also whether or not they will be further subjected to discrimination on the part of the society at large, including their fellow citizens in Tamil society. Empowerment of the IDPs through their collective mobilization vis-à-vis ethnic, class and caste discrimination and enhancing their collective capacity to identify, resist and overcome such discrimination may be a prerequisite for enabling them to join the social mainstream.

On the whole this study illustrates how the war affected people differently depending on their particular social positioning in respect of ethnicity, social class, caste and gender. Far from being a social equalizer, wars accentuate and reinforce vertical and horizontal social inequalities in multiple ways.Well informed social policies that respond to complex social realities are clearly needed in order to reverse these trends and facilitate the process of post-war recovery in Sri Lanka.

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Citizenship Certificate: Transformation of Marginality in Nepal

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Abstract

This article explores the transformation of marginality in the Badi community, historically considered as a "prostitute" caste, inwestern Nepal.The Badi, who are treated as Dalit, had served as entertainers for small rajas and landlords in the past, and became increasingly dependent on income from women's sex work in the process of migration and urbanization in the 1960s. In the late 1990s, residents of the Badi community began to fight against historical discrimination and demanded legal rights for socially recognized marriage and family life. As many Badi women, historically, had unstable marriage, the identification of fathers of their children became the problem when they applied for birth registration and citizenship certificate. This study discusses how the long-standing social marginality of the Badi community has been altered, by examining the manner in which people engage the state through the production of formal identification papers to be recognized as "Nepali citizens."

Introduction

This article explores the transformation of marginality in the Badi community, historically considered as a "prostitute" caste, in the western region of Nepal.The Badi, who are treated as Dalit, had served as entertainers for small rajas and landlords in the past, and became increasingly dependent on income from women's sex work in the process of migration and urbanization in the 1960s. Badi women became identified as one of the "high risk groups" by HIV/AIDS prevention projects from the late 1980s when the WHO and international media predicted that the HIV/AIDS virus would enter Nepal from India through migrant laborers and sex workers. Although no Badi woman was found to be infected when more than two hundred women were first tested for HIV in 1991, the identification of specific target areas and groups in the AIDS prevention projects generated various rumors and accusations among other local residents, resulting in renewed discrimination and disputes over the questions of sex work, children's rights, citizenship, and property rights.

In the late 1990s, residents of the Badi community began to fight against historical discrimination and demanded legal rights for socially recognized marriage and family life. As many Badi women, historically, had unstable marriage, the identification of fathers of

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their children became the problem when they applied for birth registration and citizenship certificate. Badi activists and residents engaged in public campaigns to demand legal reform, arguing that birth registration and citizenship should be issued based on mother's identity. At the same time, they tried to transform the community from within through marriage practices, school education of children, and daily family lives. Community leaders and parents made efforts to consciously create a new generation, not only for better future of their children, but also for the collective efforts of Badi people to be recognized and treated as dignified Nepali citizens.

This essay discusses how the long-standing social marginality of the Badi community has been altered in particular historical circumstances, by examining the manner in which people engage the state through the collective efforts to obtain birth registration and citizenship certificate.Birth registration and citizenship certificates are documents through which states attempt to manage their populations. Das and Poole (2004) suggest that these documents bear the double sign of the state's distance and its penetration into the life of the everyday, and argue for the importance of looking at the margins of the state. The margins are places and populations that are managed but that also insert themselves in gaps and fragilities of context. They suggest that the ways "managed" populations work with strategies of control to claim citizenship are deeply informed by specific experiences of the state. Gupta (2012) also argues that structural violence against the poor can coexist with political and ideological inclusion, and their unique structural position gives them sharp insight into the injustices of the social system they inhabit. He points out the significance of the practice of writing and written materials in bureaucracy, and suggests that distinct forms of writing, including forms and registers, can tell us what is excluded just as much as what is included.

In the past, Badi people had never been the central object of the state regulation or the recipient of state services and protection. They had always lived in the margin of the Nepali society and experienced either mundane bureaucratic indifference or occasional violence.For Badi residents, it was during the AIDS related policy making and interventions that they were identified as the object of the state regulation for the first time.Badi residents, however, tried to distance themselves from the issue of AIDS, in which they tended to be portrayed as a "deviant group." Rather, they engaged the state through the production of formal identification papers to be recognized as "Nepali citizens."

Hangen and Lawoti (2013) discuss the manner in which identity movements, based on ethnicity, caste, language, religion and regional identity, have become increasingly significant in Nepal. In this political context, Folmar (2013) points out that Dalit groups and individuals have an ambivalent relationship with their identity, with regard to the question of sameness and difference. While Dalit is a collective political identity, it is composed of castes that are distinct from one another and from the high castes. When Badi community leaders made alliances with feminist and Dalit organizations in Kathmandu, they worked together on common agendas such as caste and gender discrimination and engaged in public

campaigns to change discriminatory laws and administrative practices, but they also developed their own arguments based on their distinctive experience with the state in the past.In the early 2000s, there was an effort to identify various Dalit groups for political representation and scholarship allocation. The government recognized only those castes that were formally identified (anusuci baeko). Badi leaders tried to get recognition of the Badi as a distinct group within Dalit representation, working with a lawyer to write about historical discrimination in the Badi community as a distinctive experience to be recognized by the government.

Community in the Margin

Thomas Cox (1992), one of the few scholars to write about the Badi community, argues that prostitution has become a social norm for Badi households as they have lost their traditional occupation as entertainers for the rulers of small principalities in western Nepal. While Cox suggests that Badi daughters are socialized to become prostitutes within their community and families, Cameron (1998) and Pike (2002) observe that prostitution is not regarded as a moral norm among Badi men and women.

Cameron (1998) provides a valuable ethnographic study of low-caste women in Bajhang District, and situates the social position and labor practices of Badi people in relation to high-caste families and other low-caste communities. She observes that the Badi are potters, entertainers, and prostitutes, and they are ranked at the bottom of the caste hierarchy among the low-caste groups. Holmberg (1989) and Guneratne (2002) suggest that, historically, the Nepali state was the principal agent in structuring relations between different ethnic and caste groups through the legal code and policies that attempted to organize the population on the model of the Hindu caste system (Hofer 1979; Burghart 1984). The Badi came to be ranked as the lowest untouchable caste in the enslavable category by the state, and this category was enacted in particular local histories under the small kingdoms in western Nepal which were given extensive autonomy until the abolition of regional rajas in 1961 (Regmi 1978, 1979, 1999[1972]).

Badi leaders collected oral histories of their elders and suggested that Badi people came to western Nepal from India eight generations ago. Until the 1950s, rulers of small principalities and wealthy landlords supported Badi families. The particular historical context of western Nepal was that the power of small principalities and landlords had been protected longer than other places. After Prithivi Narayan Shah's conquest of the Kathmandu Valley in 1769 and subsequent consolidation of the state of Nepal, a few principalities in the far-western hill region were incorporated into the Gorkhali empire by diplomacy rather than by force, as these areas did not have much military importance. Hill rajas were given the status of vassal principalities with a substantial measure of local authority. At the time of the commencement of Rana rule in 1846, these vassal principalities included Bajura, Bajhang, Jajarkot, and Salyan in western Nepal, and the raja of Salyan was given a contract for the

collection of revenue in Dang (Regmi 1978; 1979; 1999[1972]). After the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-16, Nepal lost the four westernmost districts of Kanchanpur, Kailali, Bardiya, and Banke to the East India Company accordance with the treaty of Sugauli in 1816. These districts were returned as Nepali territory in the 1860s after Jang Bahadur Rana aided the British during the Sepoy Mutiny. In these four districts, called Naya Muluk, Salyan raja gave Badi families to landlords who settled there in the form of gift.

From 1846 to 1951, Nepal was ruled by a succession of prime ministers from the Rana family. In 1854, Jang Bahadur Rana enacted a legal code called Muluk-i-Ain, which defined relations between diverse ethnic and caste groups based on the purity of their customs and practices within a single rank order, as an effort to create a uniquely Nepali polity. The Hindu lower castes such as musicians, minstrels, tailors, leatherworkers, blacksmiths were categorized as the lowest, and the Badi came to be ranked as the lowest among them as "water-unacceptable, slavable alcohol drinkers" (Hofer 1979).Vasily (2009) suggests that the Muluk-i-Ain of 1854 contained detailed and discriminatory parameters for social behavior, including restrictions of marriage practices, dress, commensality, and caste-based provisions for dealing with crimes, where discriminatory and particular harsh sentences were reserved for Dalit populations.

The Muluk-i-Ain of 1854 was replaced by a new legal code in 1963, based on the principle of modern democratic nation-state (Burghart 1984). The state no longer officially recognized the institution of caste ranking, although social inequality based on ethnicity and caste did not disappear (Guneratne 2002). Kisan (2005) points out that although caste discrimination and untouchability was prohibited in the new Muluk-i-Ain's article, there was no provision for punishment. In the same article, it is also stated that if someone disturbed the traditions of another person, there would be one year of imprisonment. Vasily (2009) argues that this provision created a loophole, effectively permitting caste-based discrimination by statutorily upholding traditional practices. She suggests that this provision ensured that the social condition of Dalits remained unchanged, in conjunction with the weak punitive measures for untouchability and caste discrimination.

In the 1960s, rulers and landlords in western Nepal lost their previous authority and were unable to continue their patronage of Badi families. Salyan raja was abolished in 1961 along with other rajas in Nepal (Regmi 1979). Cameron (1998) suggests that the kingdom's dissolution was tragic for the lower castes, because their most important patrons disappeared.

Badi people continued to provide entertainment, but the demand for dancing and singing had been declining in the 1960s and 1970s, as mass-mediated entertainment such as the radio, television, cinema, and tape players became available. Also, stainless and plastic utensils replaced clay plates and cups that Badi men used to make in villages[1]. Many families

[1]Cameron (1998: 97) also suggests that low-caste commodities have had to compete with mass-produced imports that have replaced many locally made products.

lost their means of living, as they did not own land and their low caste position hampered them from getting the opportunity for receiving education or taking up other forms of employment. Men migrated for work both within Nepal and to India, and women began to engage in sex work with increasing number of men. The growing reliance on sex work was encouraged in the mid-1960s by the growth of Tarai towns such as Tulsipur, Ghorahi, Rajapur, and Nepalgunj with diverse male population such as merchants, drivers, civil servants, engineers, policemen, students, agricultural technicians, and other men who stayed there temporary for a few days to several years because of job transfer.

Most of the Badi children who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s could not go to school because of severe discrimination.A few of them who managed to go to school became young leaders in the 1980s, and they, along with articulated women without education, got together to deal with frequent incidents of local disputes, rape, and violence. They found an opportunity to organize themselves in the early 1990s when many new non-governmental organizations were established throughout Nepal. In 1992, several Badi residents who had already played a leadership role in Nepalgunj decided to formalize their organization as an NGO, SAFE (Social Awareness for Education), with the objectives to fight for social justice and empowerment of the Badi community.

In 1993, a year after the establishment of SAFE, a large amount of foreign funding for AIDS prevention became available in Nepal. SAFE was chosen as a partner NGO by several international organizations, and Badi women were trained as peer counselors. In the early efforts to deal with AIDS in Nepal, "commercial sex workers" (CSWs) and their clients were intensively targeted for interventions, despite the massive labor migration of both men and women. Sexual transmission of HIV was equated with sexual relations outside marriage, and visual messages in the awareness raising materials differentiated between two categories of women, the safe wife and diseased prostitute. For many communities, simply to be targeted for an AIDS prevention project was frequently perceived as an accusation of collective immorality. Pigg and Pike (2001) suggest that perceptions of AIDS risks were disseminated and socialized in such a way as to promote a discourse of social differences and strengthen existing patterns of exclusion[2].

In February 1996, a large number of residents were evicted in the Badi neighborhood in Nepalgunj. In Gagangunj area, high caste residents in the neighboring communities launched a "Prostitution Eradication Campaign," supported by the police, local politicians, and

[2]Adams and Pigg (2005) suggest that HIV/AIDS intervention efforts in many places in the world have involved the creation of normativities as a biopolitical project. "Normal" sex is identified by way of its counterpart "deviances" as a means of pathologizing practices that are seen to be in violation of the moral standards of the nation-state. The project of classification is often seen as central to the intervention programs, disseminating a particular set of ideas about the sexual and reproductive body. These ideas take concrete form in the activities of health education and service delivery, and actually effect sexual behaviors and normalizing processes on the ground.

governmental officials. In the following weeks, a large-scale demonstration was organized by the CDO (Chief District Office), and all the 17 wards of the municipality participated in the rally to protest against the presence of the Badi neighborhood in Nepalgunj. During the "campaign," which continued for several months, only the legal house owners with marriage certificates were allowed to stay, and many families moved to Bardiya, Kailali, Dang, and Surkhet where their relatives lived. The eviction of Badi families in 1996, which received national media attention, was one among many localized responses to the new visibility of the Badi in public health reports and popular mass media.

In the middle of the "campaign," Badi community leaders consulted with their legal advisor and negotiated with high caste leaders. They argued that Badi residents themselves wished to stop sex work in the community, and thatthe evicted residents should be allowed to come back to the community and live in their own houses. After a long negotiation, the ward chairman demanded a formal paper to state that sex work would never been practiced in this neighborhood. Residents were required to present their marriage certificates in order to live in their own houses. In the following years, families who had stayed in other districts after eviction gradually came back to the community.

For many years after the "campaign," Badi residents tried to rebuild the community without sex work. They hoped to become a respectable community accepted by wider society. In the late 1990s, the practice of sex work was completely terminated within Gagangunj, and male residents were organized to protect the community and secure the safety of women and girl children. The creation of a new generation had been considered as a major goal and the only way to transform the community. With funding from aid organizations such as Save the Children Norway and UNICEF, SAFE provided scholarship to all the children to go to school.

In the early 1990s, many Badi children could not get admission at school because they could not submit birth certificates with fathers' names. SAFE established a primary school called ESP school (Education and Support Project) to educate Badi children who could not go to public school. Children were enrolled at the ESP school without birth registration. After they finished the fifth grade, they transferred to the public school with recommendation letters from the ESP school. Birth registration was not required for transfer, although it was asked for. Without birth registration, it was also difficult to obtain citizenship certificate, which was required for various official matters such as job application, land and house transaction, marriage registration, and opening a bank account.By the early 2000s, the problem of birth registration had become one of the major issues for the large-scale Badi movement.

Unregistered Children

In Nepal, legislation concerning birth registration was enacted as part of the "Birth, Death and Other Incidents (Registration) Act" in 1976. It was the first legislative measure to

address civil registration system to record birth, marriage, divorce, migration, and death. According to this "Registration Act," the head of a family or the most senior male member of the family should inform the office of the local registrar about the birth of a child in the family within thirty-five days[3].

In the case of citizenship application, it is required to submit the applicant's birth certificate and his or her father's citizenship certificate. In addition to the examination of these documents, a municipal staff visits the neighborhood of the father's registered address for community verification to see if the relationship between the father and the applicant can be certified by seven residents who agree to give their signature and citizenship certificate number. After the procedure at the municipal office, the applicant should bring the documents to the Central District Office (CDO), and a citizenship certificate will be issued there after the examination of the documents. If the relationship between the father and the applicant is still thought to be questionable, however, the file will be forwarded to the District Police Office for further examination of the identification of the father.

The requirement of father's identification in the procedure of birth registration and citizenship certificate made it difficult for many Badi children whose parents were not legally married. It often took several weeks or months to go through administrative processes for verifying fathers. For example, Poonan, a twenty-four-year-old woman, grew up in Dang district and moved to Nepalgunj after getting married with a Badi man. Poonan's mother married with a higher caste Newar man in Dang and Poonan was born. When she was still small, her father left Poonan and her mother and moved to Kathmandu. When she was studying at school, her mother applied for her birth registration and citizenship certificate. As her father's citizenship certificate could not be presented, the community verification process was required for her father's identification. Her neighbors all remembered Poonan's father, so they confirmed the relationship between Poonan and her father. It was still difficult, and Poonan's mother was asked for a lot of money at the municipal office and the CDO. It took several months until she finally got her citizenship certificate. In her citizenship card, her last name was written as "Shrestha," a Newari name, although she usually used the Badi name "Nepali." She was afraid of discrimination when she was studying at school, so she told her classmates that her father worked in Kathmandu although she knew that her father would never come back.

In the early 2000s, Badi community leaders engaged in public campaigns to demand legal

[3]In practice, however, there was no way to enforce at the local level, and many families delayed registration or did not register at all. It was only in the 1990s that increasing number of people registered their children. One of the major reasons was that birth registration became a mandatory requirement for children's enrollment in public school. As many people applied for birth registration, they also faced practical problems at the local registrar's office. One of the problems was that the father's citizenship certificate was demanded when the application was made. Although father's citizenship certificate was not mandatory in the law, the local registrar usually demanded it to fill in the form.

reform, arguing that birth registration and citizenship certificate should be issued based on mother's identity. Occasionally, they traveled to Kathmandu for national level campaigns and negotiation with governmental officials. As many residents had to go through a long and complicated process for the identification of fathers, Badi community leaders helped them with paperwork and negotiation with registration officers[4].

Badi residents also gave informal support to each other when somebody applied for citizenship. When a municipal staff came to the neighborhood for community verification of a Badiapplicant, neighbors who had citizenship cards immediately came to give their signature and citizenship certificate number. In Nepalgunj, the "Badi Neighborhood Improvement Committee" provided recommendation letters to the municipal office for those who faced problems. Amika, a secretary of this organization, angrily said, "After having married life for more than ten years, some men left their wives and children. They said their children were not theirs."

Citizenship Based on Mother's Identity

By the early 2000s, Badi community leaders had developed their capacity to make alliances with legal professionals, feminist organizations, and Dalit organizations in Kathmandu. Through various meetings and workshops, they claimed that the Badi had been discriminated by the state for long and deprived of the basic civil rights guaranteed by the constitution. Many womenwho worked as peer educators for AIDS prevention programs in the mid-1990s became outstanding leaders, andthey mobilized a large network of Badi women in rural areas and involved in national level Badi movement.In public meetings, they argued that although many Badi women were not involved in sex work, all the members of the community suffered from the label attached to them as a "prostitute caste." For Badi community leaders, the most important task was to change the public perception that equated Badi women with prostitutes. They demanded the government to issue a "ghoshna-patra" (declaration) to certify that the Badi was not a "prostitute caste."

Badi leaders' argument about the historical discrimination by the state was gradually recognized at the national level. In many meetings and workshops in the early 2000s, the responsibility of the state to the Badi community was discussed. In 2001, a number of lawyers and judges from Kathmandu and western districts gathered in Nepalgunj for a workshop on gender and justice, organized by UNIFEM, Judge's Society Nepal, and Pro Public (Forum for Protection of Public Interest). In the following years, Pro Public continued to work with Badi leaders to develop concrete languages to describe the history and present conditions of Badi people in order to achieve social justice and legal rights.

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[4]Along with collective efforts to increase birth registration in the Badi community, women also tried to get marriage registration. Women who could not get birth registration based on their fathers' identity would have a chance to obtain citizenship based on their husbands' identity.

In 2003, Pro Public filed a writ petition to the Supreme Court for the rights and welfare of the Badi community. This writ petition sought the Supreme Court to issue directive to the government to provide rehabilitation programs for women and guarantee citizenship rights to children. This case was filed as public interest litigation (PIL). It was not for individual victims, but for the collective rights of the Badi. The report submitted to the Supreme Court discussed the situations of caste discrimination, violence against women, and the problem of citizenship in the Badi community, and argued that Badi people should be treated as respectable human beings, and birth registration and citizenship certificate were the most important conditions for their "rights to life."

Badi leaders' effort to change the legal status of the Badi at the national level was also supported by Dalit organizations. In May 2004, a large number of Badi residents participated in the Fifth National Annual General Meeting of Dalit NGO Federation (DNF) held in Nepalgunj. Badi women marched with placards saying, "We are also Nepali citizens"; "Badi people have been deprived of the rights by the state"; and "Prostitution is not our wish, it is a compulsion." A 16-point Nepalgunj Declaration included the following statement: "In case of Badis, Federation demand the legal declaration to end their occupation of prostitution and provide them with the Nepalese citizenship and allow them to live a dignified life."

In September 2005, the Supreme Court ordered the government to provide citizenship to every child, even if his or her father's identity was not known. Although this decision was reported as a landmark verdict in the national media, several Badi activists, women, and youth expressed their concern that the court merely interpreted the existing law and did not allow them to obtain citizenship certificate on the basis of mother's identity. Even if a child, whose father could not be identified, gets citizenship, a remark "father not identified" would be written on the citizenship card. For many Badi women and activists, their demand for the rights to citizenship was not just a practical concern, but also a matter of dignity. They did not wish their children to carry citizenship cards with the remark "father not identified," which would imply that they were illegitimate children.

The Supreme Court decision on citizenship was made by interpreting the Article 9(2) of the 1990 constitution, which states: "Every child who is found within the Kingdom of Nepal and the whereabouts of whose parents are not known shall be recognized as a citizen of Nepal by descent until the father of the child is traced." Before this court order, Chief District Officers, who were authorized to award citizenship, used to interpret the provision on their own and deal with the cases of children whose fathers were not identified at their discretion. The new decision made it mandatory to apply this provision to all cases. When this provision was applied, a remark "buwa patta nabaeko" ("father not identified") would be written on the citizenship card. Badi women, youth, and activists knew the possibility of this provision, but they did not wish to carry citizenship cards with the remark "father not

identified." For them, obtaining citizenship certificate in this way was out of the question[5].

After the Supreme Court decision, journalists and organizations from Kathmandu came to Nepalgunj for interviews. Most of them expected to have happy responses of Badi residents. But women and youths who knew well the administrative processes at the local level were not happy and insisted that birth registration and citizenship certificate should be issued based on mother's identity without a specific remark.

In Kathmandu, feminist lawyers and women politicians in political parties had been arguing that it was gender discrimination to allow only fathers to register the birth of children. They pointed out that women were regarded only as daughters and wives, and the law did not give women the rights to pass on their nationality to their children. International organizations such as UNICEF and Plan International also suggested that women should be granted equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children, and the requirement of father's presence in the legal provisions on birth registration should be amended.

In his analysis of bureaucratic writing, Gupta (2012) argues that the practice of filling out a formis the essence of paperwork that often drives citizens to despair. Forms can be seen as categorizing the world, as they are organized in such a way that certain things are considered irrelevant and left out of a form. He suggests that forms may end up doing violence to individuals by deliberately excluding what is particular about the circumstances of applicants.By analyzing changes in family law, Tamang (2000) argues that the state and the law played central roles in the structuring of a "state patriarchy" in Nepal, with the increased power of the state to intervene directly into family relations.

Cameron (1998) observes that Badi women regularly violate the ideal codes of relationships that constitute the female person, and transgress the boundaries of patriline, caste, and gender hierarchy.In the 1990s, the emergence of HIV/AIDS concerns created the new social context for Badi people to claim the moral legitimacy of their families, challenging their marginality in relation to the dominant cultural values attached to the ideal Nepali family, which had been ideologically constructed in the project of making the modern nation-state through the codification of family laws, school textbooks, and development programs (Gilbert 1993; Onta-Bhatta 2000; Tamang 2000).

Concluding Remarks

In this essay, I have suggested that the problem of "family" became a terrain on which people

[5]Pro Public lawyers explained that they crafted their arguments strategically, convincing the court that the law did not have to be changed, but the existing provision should be implemented more thoroughly. A month before this decision, the Supreme Court, in response to a separate case, ruled that citizenship certificate could not be issued on the basis of mother's identity, reaffirming the validity of the 1990 constitution which kept a provision to provide citizenship only on the basis of father's identity. The Supreme Court decision in September did not contradict this provision.

challenged the previously accepted marginal status of the Badi in order to secure safe living environment and political inclusion as a minority community within the national society.For many residents and activists, a series of events following the prostitution eradication campaign in 1996 marked a turning point for the community, with the emergence of new collective actions and self-representations that transformed their marginality. In the process of rebuilding the community, many men and women began to portray themselves as people who seek to establish respectable families, and politicized the problems of unstable marriage and unrecognized children as the result of historical discrimination by the state.

After the global concerns with HIV/AIDS forced a renewed attention to the question of prostitution, international and national AIDS prevention projects produced particular representations through which reproductive practices of Badi families were evaluated and became the target for reform interventions.In South Asia, various forms of collective identity emerged out of, and actively engaged with, state and international HIV/AIDS intervention efforts in the 1990s and 2000s. Ghose (2012) suggests that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has created a unique opportunity structure for various sexuality movements. Collective identity formation allowed marginalized groups such as sex workers to impose themselves on the public sphere of civil society.

By the early 2000s, the rights of sex workers and sexual minorities had been recognized at least among Kathmandu-based activists and organizations. Badi activists, however, did not seek individual women's rights to choose or the sexual minority identity. Rather, they demanded their collective rights to live with dignity, claiming that they had always wished to form respectable families, but their higher caste husbands had treated many Badi women as mistresses and their children were not given citizenship by the state. The fact that many children could not obtain birth registration and citizenship certificate was repeatedly told and written as the evidence of long-term discrimination.

Badi activists were able to gain supports from wide networks of organizations and political parties by focusing on the constitutional rights to marriage and birth as strategies of citizenship. Since the reestablishment of democracy in 1990, pluralism had become a major political agenda, and minority groups intensified their activities to articulate their interests throughout the civil war ("People's War") between 1996 and 2006 (Gellner ed. 2002). Anticipating the end of the conflict and the drafting of a new constitution, Badi activists made a conscious effort to secure a minority status, and the problems of birth registration and citizenship were recognized as important national issues shared by law professionals, feminists, Dalit organizations, and political parties. As their own practices of marriage and birth became the center of public campaigns, Badi residents became reflective about their family situations. Women claimed their status as mothers and wives, while young men and women variously responded to the presence and absence of their biological father.

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The Re-interpretation of Caste Mediated by Meat Market
Struggles of Caste Ordained Butchers in Nepal

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Abstract

This study examines the process of marketization of meat and how it leads the re-interpretation of caste in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. I will focus on the Khadgi caste, who have historically engaged in slaughtering, processing, and trading livestock as their caste-ordained role. In 2008, Khadgi decided to leave governmental Dalit list, and insisted themselves as 'Adivasi Janajati (Indigenous Nationality)'. In the meat market, Khadgi negotiate with their business counterparts beyond their caste and ethnicity creating new norms and rules. On the other hand, Khadgi strengthen their caste solidarity. They formed their caste association "Nepal Khadgi Sewa Samiti(NKSS)". NKSS shifted its function from social service to mutual aid networks mediated by the meat market. Thus, I describe the bottom up process of how Khadgi negotiated their caste-images in the pastsix decades.

1. Introduction

1-1 Caste Identity in Newar Society

This study examines the process of marketization of meat and how itimpacts social mobility in the caste society in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. I will focus on the Khadgi caste, who have historically engaged in slaughtering, processing, and trading livestock as their caste-ordained role in Newar society. In 2008, Khadgi decided to leave governmental Dalit list, and insisted that they be recognized as 'Adivasi Janajati (Indigenous Nationality)'. I will describe the formation process of meat market, and shifts in Khadgi's caste identity.

The Newar are defined as the indigenous people of the Kathmandu Valley. In 1995, "Contested Hierarchies" was published by researchers on Newar society. In the conclusion of this book, Quigley mentioned that Newars are the product of groups of different origin who were absorbed into the society of the Kathmandu Valley at various periods throughout history (Quigley 1995:299-300).

Each caste in Newar society was incorporated into the vertical hierarchy by the State. Gellner stressed that as a kind of 'traditional' baseline from which to judge the present-day situation of the caste system, it is important to examine two sources in detail: the Muluk-i-Ain of 1854 and the chronicle known as the BhasaVamshavali (Gellner 1995, 266). According to

the BhasaVamshavali, Khadgi and otherswere defined as low caste in Newar society with corresponding restrictions regarding their clothes, houses, and ornaments in 14th century (Gellner1995, 268-269, 270-277). The Muluk-i-Ain of 1854 has been regarded as the first doctrine to introduce the Nepali national caste order. In the Muluk-i-Ain, from the Newar society, the Khadgis, Kapali, Dyahla, and Chyamkhalah were identified as low castes that cannot offer water to upper castes (Höfer 1979).

After the democratization movement in 1990, each caste in Newar society began to form its own caste association (Toffin 2007). Caste category was organized as a substantial source of identity. However, in contrast to India, Nepal did not introduce any system of reservation for SCs or OBCs until 2003. Toffin points out that the main purpose of forming caste associations was to protect the individuality of these castes and improve their public image rather than obtain reservations (Toffin 2007).

This aspect of caste associations has changed in Nepal since the democratization movements of 2006. By comparing voting motivation in the constitutional assemblies in 1990 and 2008, Gellner pointed out that a shift from party-based voting to caste-identity voting occurred. The shift became more dramatic in 2008 with the introduction of 60 percent proportionality and the appearance of many 'communal' parties with a realistic chance of obtaining representation in the national legislature (Gellner 2009). As such, the concerns of Nepali voters gradually shifted, centering on identity politics based on belonging, such as ethnicity and caste.

The identity controversy between Newar low castes began in 1997, when the Ministry of Local Development included the Khadgi, Kapali, Dyahla and Chyamkhalah castes as Dalit. In 2003, the Nepali Government introduced affirmative action, listing 18 castes, including the four mentioned above, as Dalit. Following the democratization movement of 2006, Khadgi and Kapali left the list of their own volition, while Dyahla and Chyamkhalah remained. Maharjan analyzed the logicbehind claiming non-Dalit status and pro-Dalit status (Maharjan 2012), concluding that the rationale for this identity politics was to consolidate their identities in the wake of a new constitution.

1-2 Shifts among the Inter-Caste Relationships Mediated by the Market Economy

Then, what kinds of effects the market economy has had on the caste society? In India, many castes had succeeded in gaining economic opportunity through caste-based reservations. For example, Shinoda (1997) and Searle-Chatterjee (1979) pointed out that the urban sweepers formed their caste association to demand their employment status as civil servants.

In Nepal, there was no reservation until 2003. Yeta shift can be seen in everyday life practices especially on inter-caste relationships. Through the ethnographic description on Newar

society, Ishii observed that the market economy enabled people to release themselves from the restriction of caste, and the shifts among inter-caste relationships had been brought about. For example, people from farmer caste, who have cometo have economic power following the improvement of agricultural productivity, have refused their caste based role in rituals organised by upper caste, and even resisted. The market economy enables people to earn their livelihood beyond the previous social system, and that brought the shift among the inter-caste relationships (Ishii 1980).

Furthermore, through the comparative study between 1970 and 1996 of same Newar village, Ishii concludes that the market economy enabled people to release themselves from the restriction of caste, but nonetheless, the occupational relationships involved are not freed from the relational basis of caste. The 'resumption' of the occupation of lower castes has been taking place by the cash economy. For example, many Kha?gihave 'resumed' their caste-based role as a meat shopkeeper. Ishii pointed out that caste system has shifted from the traditional inter-caste dependence to a division of labour based on caste mediated by cash economy (Ishii 2007:126).

In this paper, I will examine the process of marketization of buffalo meat and how it impacts social mobility in a Newar caste. Based on my fieldwork from 2005 in Khadgi community, I will investigate how the meat market has been formed, and how each Khadgi negotiates with Muslims, and other castes from Newar, and what kind of the re-interpretation of caste has been brought about through their caste association.

In section 2, I will show background information on Khadgi caste. Then, in section 3, I will describe the feature of the meat market in Kathmandu Valley. In section 4, I will showKhadgi'severyday-life business activities on buffalo meat market. Finally, insection 5, shifts in the strategies of Khadgi's caste representation are reviewed across four periods: the first period covers 1951-1970s, from the end of the Rana regime to the formation of the caste association, Nepal Khadgi Sewa Samiti; the second period runs from the 1970s until the democratization movement of 1990; the third period spans the 1990s through the democratization movement of 2006; and the fourth period focuses on 2006 onward.

2. Khadgi and the Newar Caste Society

Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, is situated in the Kathmandu valley, which is about 25 km wide. There are over 3 million people in this valley, and the number is still increasing. The Newar, who are indigenous people of Kathmandu Valley, consist of about 30 castes.

According to Khadgi's own description[1], the population of Khadgi in Kathmandu valley is

[1]NewaDeyaDabu had published the book titled newa samaj in 2008. The chairman of Nepal Khadgi Sewa Samiti (NKSS) writes the topic of Khadgi of the book. He wrote that the population of Khadgi is 125,000 within Kathmandu valley and 50,000 outside the valley.

about 125,000. They have their community in the periphery along the city wall. The main livelihood of Khadgi is selling meat, and besides that, they engage as shop keeper, taxi driver among others. Along with the increasing population of Kathmandu valley, the meat market is expanding rapidly. Thus, although Khadgi had suffered from the stigmatizing low caste due to the caste ideology, the category of caste has brought them a business opportunity to earn cash in the market economy.

In 1973, Khadgi formed their caste association, Nepal Khadgi Sewa Samiti (NKSS). NKSS spread its branches all over the country. In 2010, there were 58 branch offices of NKSS in 28 districts over the country. They have their own regulations, and hold national meeting once a year.

3. The Meat Market in the Kathmandu Valley

In this section, I will describe the process of the formation of the meat markets and inter-caste negotiations within the market. According to the official report of Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives of the Government of Nepal, about 270 buffaloes, 650 goats, 6300 chickens are brought into the Kathmandu valley every day. The trade union estimates that about 800-900 buffaloes are brought into Kathmandu valley every day. According to the official statistics, national production of meat in 2008 was 1.7 times higher than that of 1990. By the estimation of the Ministry in 2010, there are about 3300 meat shops in Kathmandu valley.

3-1 The Formation of Buffalo Market and Introduction of the Broker System

In the beginning of the 20th century, one family from Khadgi caste had got a phone line connection, and started to import buffalos from Uttar Pradesh in India, by placing orders to Muslim brokers living along the India/Nepal borders through the telephone. At that time, buffaloes were brought into Kathmandu valley in caravans. Since the 1980s, became the main means of transportation and the transactions of buffaloes increased massively. Nowadays, almost all of the buffalo meat consumed in Kathmandu is imported from India. After the transaction, the buffaloes are sent to the abattoir within Khadgi communities and slaughtered early the next morning. Since they do not have refrigeration facility in their shops, the meat must be sold within the day.Khadgis are the predominant wholesalers and retailers of buffalo meat. There are about 1000 buffalo meat shops within the Kathmandu valley.

3-2 The involvement of high caste into goat and chicken market

Until the 1980s, the farmer directly brought goats to Kathmandu, and consumers bought them directly from farmers. After trucks became the main transportation tools in the 1980s, the goat market was formed. Almost all the goats consumed in Kathmandu are imported

from India. Similar to buffaloes, the brokers from the Muslim community buy goats in Uttar Pradesh in India, and bring the goats into Kathmandu. There are about 1200-1500 goat meat shops in Kathmandu valley. Other than Khadgi, Hindu high castes have become involved in wholesaling and retailing of goat meats.

The shopkeepers of chicken meats have also become diversified in their castes. In the 1980s, one company started to grow the broiler variety of chicken. In 2010, three companies had occupied the market of broiler chickens in Kathmandu. In 2010, there are about 1000 chicken meat shops in the Kathmandu Valley. There is no abattoir for goat and chicken; they are slaughtered in each shop.

3-3 Involvement by Various Castes in the Meat Market

As it is evident from above, each market has a different distribution system. In the goat and chicken market, which was formed in the 1980s, though Khadgi is the majority group, Muslims, Tibetan, and Hindu high castes started to get involved. However, regarding buffaloes, which had formed a distribution system earlier in the beginning of the 20th century, the wholesale and retail are occupied by Khadgi. According to the door-to-door interview conducted by Kathmandu Municipality, in the Kathmandu city area, there are 758 meat shops and within that, Khadgis own 526 shops, the largest caste group in the meat market. Meanwhile, 76 shops by Muslims, 49 shops from other castes from Newar, 36 shops by Chhettri, and 14 shops are owned and run by Hindu brahmins.

4. The everyday commercial activities of Khadgi

In this section, I will describe how Khadgi are negotiating individually with other castes and ethnic groups in the buffalo market. In particular, I will describe the commercial practices of one Khadgi family living in the suburban area in the Kathmandu valley, involved in wholesale and retail of the buffalo meat. The family members are Anil[2], his wife, his daughter, his son Raju, Raju's wife and son. They purchase the buffalos in the market of Satungal, and slaughter them in the abattoir located at the first floor of their house. They sell the buffalo meat in the shop located in Anil's house, and in Raju's shop located in his mother's parental house in the central area, Sundhara.

4-1 The negotiation with Muslims in the buffalo market

Anil visits the buffalo market twice a week. The Muslims brokers, who regularly bring buffaloes into the market, are about 30-35 in number. Anil buys buffaloes from Karn every time. Immediately after arriving in the market, Anil usually calls Karn, and Karn shows him buffalos that he has brought. Anil chooses some buffalos and then asks Karn to bring them

[2] In this paper, I use fictitious namesto protect privacy.

to his house, and the business is completed. They communicate with each other in Hindi language.

One buffalo is sold for about 15,000-30,000rupees including transportation fee of about 3000-4000 rupees with 200 rupees as commission fee.

4-2 Practicing 'halal' in the abattoir

The abattoir of Anil is located on the ground floor of his house. They start slaughtering from 2:45 every morning. In their abattoir, 7 people are working, Anil, his wife, Raju, 3 Khadgis, Chhetri, Muslim. First, one man holds a buffalo, and then other man hits on the forehead of the buffalo with a hammer. The unconscious buffalo falls to the ground, then a Muslim cuts the throat in keeping with 'halal" practice. Finally, 2 men skin the buffalo and separate the meats and internal organs and keep them on the skin. The slaughtering and separation process are completed within 30 minutes per buffalo.

At 4:50 a.m., one woman from Chhetri caste and her son join the team. The woman engages in pushing out the marrow from the backbone and cleaning the intestines. Her son is engaged in separating the head into eyes, nose, brain, and tongue. By 6 in the morning, they finish all the slaughtering and separating works. On average, they slaughter 5 buffaloes per day; 2 of them are for Raju's shop in the central city area, 3 are for Anil's shop, remaining for meat shops and restaurants in their village.

4-3 The relationships with customers in the meat-shop

Immediately after the arrival of meat around 7 a.m., Raju's shop opens. He sells the meat by weight. Most of Raju's customers of are not families, but wholesalers' shops and restaurants. Raju usually gives a discount of 10-20 % off when customers purchase more than 10 kg of meat. The table below showsthe detail of sales at Raju's shop. His customers mentioned below regularly buy meat from Raju.

In the shop, there is a photo of mosque, with the sticker 'here halal meat is available'. The Muslim customer also buys meats from Raju every time to sell in his own shop. The Tibetan and Chinese, who are owners of the restaurants in Thamel, are also the regular customers. The restaurant which offers the traditional Newar dishes purchases the noses and intestines. By 8:45 a.m., all the meat has sold out, and Raju closes his shop.

Then, he goes back to his home and helps Anil's business. Anil's customers are mainly from Newar community in the village, and they buy meat for their domestic consumption. Anil opens the shop from 8 a.m.to 10 a.m. in the morning, and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., and it is a typical business hour of other meat shops in Kathmandu valley.

Table: Sales and its detail of Raju's shop in one day

Purpose of purchasing	Consumer's attribution	item	amount kg)
Retail	Khadgi	Meat	40
Retail	Khadgi	Meat	20
Retail	Khadgi	Meat	10
Restaurant	Chinese	Mincemeat	26
Retail	Muslim	Meat	50
Processing for Restaurant	Khadgi	Meat, nose, fat, intestine	10
Retail	Khadgi	Mincemeat	10
Retail	Khadgi	Meat	32
Retail	Khadgi	Meat	20
Processing for Restaurant	Newar (Sakya)	Meat	22
Processing for Restaurant	Tamang	Meat	26
Domestic consumption	Newar (Srestha)	Meat	10
Domestic Consumption	Newar (Srestha)	Meat	7
Domestic Consumption	Foreigner (INGO officer)	Meat	5
Processing for Restaurant	Tibetan	Meat	10

Source: interview and participant observation by author

4-4 Khadgi's Caste Solidarity in Processing Bones and Skins

In this section, I will investigate the process of Khadgi's collective movement mediated by their caste association NKSS, focusing on the Kankeshwari area where the biggest community of Khadgi is located. I will describe the employment of abattoir workers and the way of utilising sub-production such as bones, skins, and stomach and intestinal contents of buffaloes. In Kankeshwari, 150 buffaloes are slaughtered per-day. The practice of 'halal' is provided for Muslim customers. At 6 a.m., many trucks arrive in the abattoir to receive meats.

The bones are transferred to a bone meal factorysituated outside the Kathmandu Valley, which was established in 1960 by a Khadgi. Now, they collect about 10-12 tons of bones of 1000 buffaloes per day from the Kathmandu valley and other areas over the country.

The skins are collected to be taken to the factories in the Khadgi community, where they process the skins by rubbing salt on their surface so that the skins will dry for further processing. The buffalo skin processing industry started from the 1980s when 'panjabirango' the big species of buffalo from Panjab area of India was introduced to the Kathmandu valley. Before the introduction of skin processing industry, in the Newar traditional slaughtering style, they first cut the carotids and singed the buffaloes with skins, so as to eat them.

Since 2011, one Khadgi businessman has collected about 300 buffalo skins per day. He purchases the skins at the rate of 1300 rupees per one buffalo directly from abattoir, and sells the dried skins at 1500 rupees to the factories operated by Muslims and Indians located along Nepal-India border. Out of the profit per one buffalo of 200 rupees, he donates 10 rupees to NKSS. NKSS established the skin fund, which is utilised for the community well-being, such as making the women organisation and cooperative association. Thus, Khadgi utilise the sub-production of bones and skins from buffalo by managing them collectively within their caste membership.

5. Shifts in the Strategy of Khadgi's Caste Representation

5-1 Prior to the Establishment of NKSS

Before the establishment of NKSS, some Khadgi leaders were engaged in political movements protesting the Rana dynasty dictatorship. The narrative of Shrijana, a female activist from the 1950s, is insightful. Born in 1933, Shrijana's family led the local protest against the dictatorship.

> "My brother was an activist. He died in prison at the age of only 19 in 1952. At that time, many communists gathered to recover his body in order to give him a funeral ceremony in the traditional way, not as a criminal. Their gathering transcended caste and ethnicity. In 1948, my uncle was imprisoned, and released in 1951 after the end of dictatorial rule. He formed an organization named Samaj Sudhar Sewa in 1951. 'Sano jati' including Khadgi, Dyahla, Kusle and Dhobi joined.
>
> "We established four schools. At that time, it was prohibited to give education to the Dyahla caste. Even still, we taught them the concept of public health, washing hands, reading, writing, and making clothes. Since it was prohibited to teach in public space, we taught them in our house as private work. In 1954, we organized the mandirprabesh movement, which intended to protest against our exclusion from temples. As a part of this movement, we continue to fight the temples that low castes were prohibited to enter. This movement was led by Khadgi, together with the Damai, Kusle, Dyahla."

As this narrative demonstrates, people from the Khadgi caste established schools with other 'low caste groups' that pushed passed caste lines. The Communist PartyrecognisedShrinaja's brother as a martyr. The movement to recover his dead body was held for 'a compatriot of the communist party.' They acted under the name 'sano jati' or 'communists,' and defined their belonging according to their demands, such as entering temples, making schools, public health, education, and the like. They sometimes collaborated even beyond the restrictions of caste and ethnicity.

5-2 Establishment of Nepal Khadgi Sewa Samiti

The background of the establishment of the Nepal Khadgi Sewa Samiti (NKSS) differed from the anti-discrimination movements of Shrijana's experience. From the 1970s onward, disputes between Khadgi and Muslims, who are also brokers of buffalo meat, occurred repeatedly. The NKSS was formed in order to negotiate with Muslims collectively, rather than individually.

> "Since the 1970s, there had been trouble between the Muslims who bring buffalos from India and the Khadgi. Merchants from the Muslim community sell buffalos with a major profit margin. We could not profit, so we started to negotiate collectively. Our first meeting was held in 1971.
>
> In the 1970s, the government prohibited holding meetings in public space. Therefore, Khadgi gathered at their homes and shops in an informal way. In 1973, the NKSS was established as a social service organization, since political activity was limited at that time. At the beginning, around 100 Khadgi gathered. The political activists including Shrijana also joined at that time."
>
> (Narrative of Raju, a male in his 60s)

> "Police broke our signboard and trashed our restaurant. They said that because we are a water-unacceptable caste, we should not hold the restaurant. Therefore, we operated our restaurant with no signboard. After some time, we put the signboard up again. Even if the police come again and trash our restaurant, we continue to protest by putting up the board again and again."
>
> (Narrative of Bab, a male in his 60s)

The first project the NKSS engaged in was establishing a public water tank, through which they intended to protest 'water-unacceptability.' 'From the Khadgi family' was written on the surface of the tank so people could recognize their intention. In 1975, their first water tank was established in the bus park at the center of Kathmandu city. Subsequently, they donated water tanks to public spaces such as bus terminals and temples.

In 1975, the NKSS organized a blood donation program supported by the International Red Cross. They protested against caste discrimination by insisting that blood types are categorized beyond caste and ethnicity.

The main motivation behind forming the NKSS was to obtain an advantage in the commercial negotiation process. Since organized political activities were prohibited initially, the NKSS worked as a social service association, donating public water tanks and organizing blood donation programs. It can be said that the Khadgi's activities of the second period focused on protesting caste discrimination at the grassroots level.

5-3 The Era of Democratization and Marketization

The democratization movement of 1990 put an end to the panchayat system, and the multi-party system began in its place. The third period of 1990-2006 can be seen as a period of marketization, given the lack of control from above.

The meat market expanded rapidly at this time, opening the door to people other than the Khadgi to begin participating. It can also be said that individualization in the market proceeded during this period. At this time, rather than engaging in caste-based social movements, the Khadgi made individual efforts to increase income.

5-4 2006 Onwards

The democratization movement of 2006 brought an end to the monarchy. In 2008, Nepal became a democratic republic and the process of drafting of its constitution commenced. The main issue in this process was how to incorporate ethnicity and caste into the new constitution.

At this time, the Khadgi tended to act collectively as 'indigenous people' in league with each caste group within Newar. Khadgi first entered the identity politics debate by insisting on their indigenous nature.

In March 2008, the NKSS requested the National Dalit Human Rights Council (NDHR) to remove them from the Dalit list. National newspapers reported this incident. The government offered affirmative action to people listed as Dalit, thus resulting in many groups in Nepal being categorized as such. The NKSS, however, refused that recognition by insisting that they would strengthen ties within their own caste, instead. In essence, the NKSS chose to be categorized as indigenous.

In addition to these activities as 'indigenous Newar,' activists are engaging in a campaign to change their registered surname in the nagarikata (citizenship) from Kasai into Khadgi or Shahi, which is the term for their mother tongue. They insist that Kasai is not an original term, but a foreign pejorative meaning 'butcher.'

As outlined above, we can observe shifts in caste representations in these four periods. In the first and second periods, ties beyond caste lines are clear and the NKSS's activities focused on grassroots social service. In the third period, attention shifted to individual commercial activities to match the expansion of the meat market. In the fourth period, the Khadgi acted collectively once again as an indigenous group, using identity politics to remove the label of Dalit.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I investigated the process of the formation of meat markets in the Kathmandu valley and how Khadgi are negotiating their caste-images across four periods.

Though Khadgi have suffered from stigma as low caste, their caste-based roles brought new business opportunity in the market economy. After the expansion of the meat market since the 1990s, Khadgi have made new relationships as business counterparts with other castes who are also involved in the meat business. For example, Khadgi employ the Muslims in their abattoirs, and introduce the cutting ways of halal, so that they are successful in selling 'halal meat' to Muslims. Khadgi are also accepting the norms of other groups. The skin processing started with the introduction by Muslims. The skin processing was established in Khadgi community. Thus, the meat market is shaped by the various norms and values through the commercial negotiations beyond caste restriction.

However, on the other hand, Khadgi`s livelihoods are still based on their network within their caste membership. Under this situation, NKSS has shifted its function from social service to mutual aid networks mediated by the meat market.

Regarding the way of Khadgi's caste identity politics, in the first and second periods, they were engaged in grassroots activities opposing caste discrimination through donations. In the third period, NKSS activities were set back, and each Khadgi came to play an important role in the meat industry at the time. In the fourth period, the NKSS became active again in response to the offer of affirmative action as 'Adivasi Janajati', not as 'Dalits'.

The expansion of the meat market gave each Khadgi a firm economic status to manage their own business activities. Thus, the new social environment formed by the advent of the market economy instilled motivation towards mutual-aid networks hitherto restricted within the caste order. The dual roles of the NKSS, namely internal support for autonomybased on mutual-aid and external identity politics, represent the Khadgi caste's efforts to maintain their options for interpreting and managing their self-image. In doing so, they can represent their caste in various ways, as 'oppressed people' to 'indigenous people' to even 'trade unions' simultaneously.

Until now, everydaylife practices of ordinary people as secondary to identity politics.

However, as demonstrated above, they have broadened the horizons of identity politics from below by introducing 'mutual-aid' motivations reflected by the expansion of the market economy.

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Castes within Caste: Dilemmas of a Cohesive Dalit Movement in Contemporary East Punjab

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Abstract

Punjab houses the highest number of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in comparison to all other states in India and much higher than national average SCs population. Despite the common nomenclature - SCs, Dalits are sharply divided into thirty nine castes scattered over varied religions and Deras. This caste heterogeneity impacts their upward social mobility and political mobilisation in multifarious ways.

Introduction

Scheduled castes (SCs) in Punjab constitute 31.94 % of the population of the state,[1] which is largest in comparison to their counterparts in all other States of India and much higher than the overall national share (16.6%) of SC population. This share varies from 32.07%to 42.51% in many of the districts of Punjab. In majority of the districts in Punjab, SC population is one third or more.[2] The share of SC population in the State is more distinct in its rural sector(73.33% against 26.67% of urban SC population). Out of total 12,168 inhabited villages in Punjab, 57 have 100% SC population and in other 4,799 (39.44%) villages, their share is 40% or more.[3] Consequently, Punjab has 25% share in reservation against 15% SC reservation at the national level. However, this extraordinary numerical strength of the SCs does not manifest in the electoral performance of their own political parties (SCF/RPI/BSP)[4]. One reasons behind this dismal performance could be the division of SCs into numerous

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[1]All the SC castes population figures mentioned in this study are taken from Census of India (2011), *SC-14 Scheduled Caste Population by Religious Community (States/UTs),* Punjab. Online available at:<http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/SCST-Series/SC14.html> (accessed on November 1, 2016.).

[2]42.51% in Saheed Bhagat Singh Nagar, 42.31% in Sri Muktsar Sahib and 42.17% in Firozpur). In the descending order 38. 95% in Jalandhar, 38.92% in Faridkot, 36.50% in Moga, 35.14% in Hoshiarpur, 33.94% in Kapurthala, 33.71% in Tarn Taran, 33.63% in Mansa, 32.44% in Bathinda, 32.24% in Barnala and 32.07% in Fatehgarh Sahib.

[3]www.welfarepunjab.gov.in.

[4] Scheduled Castes Federation, Republican Party of India, and Bhaujan Samaj Party respectively.

castes scattered across varied religions,[5] Deras[6] and sects.Another possible reason could be the weak Brahminical influence on Punjab, due to the visible and hidden role of the transformative character of Islam and Sikh faiths (Ibbetson, 1970; Puri 2003: 2693), which unlike the Hindi region could not motivate the SC leadership to build their own strong political party. Yet another could be the accommodation of various popular SC leaders in prominent places within the mainstream political parties that might have also failed them to realise the urgency of having their own party and a unified Dalit[7] movement.[8]

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the constitution of Independent India and messiah of downtrodden, was of the firm views that the cause of Dalit emancipation could not be achieved until SCs have their own political party, which he thought could only become possible through the provision of separate electorate for them. Though he was able to acquire separate electorate for SCs from the British administration during the London Round Table Conferences, but the same could not had been implemented for the stiff opposition of M.K. Gandhi. Eventually, under the Poona Pact, the system of separate electorate was transformed into joint electorates. It is under the joint electorate system that the mainstream political parties have successfully been managing to manipulate the SC votes against Dalit political parties while luring and accommodating the prominent Dalit leaders across varied SC castes.

Like elsewhere, the SCs of Punjab are not a homogeneous category. They are divided by the same logic of graded inequality that separated them from the various categories of upper castes as per the Brahminical social order epitomised by the Varna system.[9] In the Varna hierarchy, where obedience flows in a bottom up ascending order and command runs in a top down descending order, the last Varna is considered to be lowest on the scale of social status. In the social hierarchy of the Varna order, SCs were placed further down the line;

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[5] SCs in Punjab are affiliated with Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and recently formed Ravidassia Dharm. Apart from these five religions, SCs in Punjab are followers of a large number of Deras/Sects across the State. According to a general estimate there are about 9000 Deras of one or another sect (Tehna *et al* 2003).

[6]Dera literally implies a holy abode free from the structural bindings of institutionsalised religious orders and is the headquarters of a group of devotees owing allegiance to a particular spiritual person who is reverently addressed as Sant/Guru/Baba/Mahraj.

[7] The term Dalit (literally, grounded/oppressed/broken) is the "politically correct" nomenclature, which came to be used by the Mahar community in the late twentieth century for the untouchables(the people who have traditionally been placed at the lowest rung of the Hindu caste hierarchy). The term includes Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Castes (OBCs). However, in current political discourse, Dalit is mainly confined to SCs only.

[8] I am indebted to Pritam Singh for helping me formulate this viewpoint.

[9]The four-fold hierarchical division of the Hindu society in Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras.

even lower than the Shudras (various artisan caste like carpenters, blacksmiths, tailors, masons, goldsmiths, barbers etc.).[10] In fact, SCs were not included at all within the Varna social order. They were devalued into several detestable social categories known by varied nomenclatures such as *ati-shudras, chandalas, antyajas, pariahs, Nichi Jati, dheds, panchamas, avarnas, namashudras, aspristhas,dasus*, *dasas* and *anairyas*. Dalits in Punjab were also known by various native derogatory titles like *maell khaney log* (dirt-eating people), *chumm* (leather people) *dhed* (scum dweller), *jooth* (living on left-over) and *vaddhi-tukki jat* (broken castes) (Puri, 2008, 321).

Legal categories of Depressed Classes/SCs and the patronage category of *Harijans* (children of god) are yet another set of nomenclatures attached to ex-untouchables. The legal categories of Depressed Classes and SCs were coined by the British administration, whereas the patronage category of *Harijans* was the outcome of M. K. Gandhi's approach to the question of untouchability in India. The legal category of SCs became the standard term for the general depiction of ex-untouchables in public discourse since India's independence. The ex-untouchables are not only confined to Hinduism. After their conversion to other religions, supposed to be free from caste hierarchies, the ghost of caste discrimination continued to afflict them even in their new avatars. Those who embraced Islam condemned to be known as *Mochi*, *Musalli*, *Kutana, and Paoli.* The converted ones to Christianity were/are distinctively called *Masihs* and those who entered into the fold of Arya Samajbecame *Chaudhary* and *Mahashas*. Those who converted to Sikh faith, came to be known as Mazhabi, Ranghreta, Ramdassia, Ravidassia, Rai and Sansi Sikhs.

All the above-mentioned lower caste terms were coined pejoratively by the upper castes as symptomatic of the degraded and socially excluded locus of the ex-untouchables. In the first half of the twentieth century, some more lower caste terms – *Achhuts* and Dalits – were coined partially in response to the Hindi and Marathi translation of the census category "Depressed Classes" and partially as an effort by some of the Hindu social reforms movements to introduce caste reforms in the society (Basu 2017: 33; Ram 2004a: 331-334;Rawat 2015:335-355). It was during this time of the initiation of limited democracy in the country that Dalitsalso became active in some states, perhaps for the first time in the history of lower castes struggle,to strive for their long due share in the structures of power. This gave rise to the emergence of various Dalit movements under the generic title of "*Adi*" (indigenous/native) movements- Adi-Andhra, Adi-Dravida and Adi-Karnataka in South, and Adi Hindu and Ad Dharmin North-West India. In Maharashtra, the Labour Party of India (LPI), founded by B. R. Ambedkar, navigated the Dalit movement at the grassroots.

[10] In some States the demarcation of some castes into SCs (Ati Shudras) and Backward Castes (BCs) is problematic. For an instance, at one point of time Mochi and Rai Sikhs castes were listed in the category of BCs but later on shifted to SC category.

Though the Adi movements were quite successful in highlighting the cause of the lower castes in some parts of the colonial India, the struggle led by them could not become an all India phenomenon.In Punjab, the Adi movement, popularly known as Ad Dharm (Juergensmeyer, 1988), however, gave birth to a new term "Ad Dharmi" to identify varied ex-untouchables castes under a single broader socio-religious category. To begin with, originally it emerged as a separate distinct Dalit religion - Ad Dharm (native religion) - officially recognised by the British Administration in 1931. Eventually, it got metamorphosed into another Dalit caste named "Ad Dharmi" and came to be identified only with the Chamar castes - one of the most numerous Dalit castes in Punjab. Though 'Chamar' and 'Ad Dharmi' are listed as two separate Dalit castes within the list of 39 Scheduled Castes in Punjab, the term Ad Dharmi is often used as a respectable nomenclature not only for both of them but for all other former untouchable castes too. Moreover, it had gained wide currency over the category of *Harijans*, which is now almost turned extinct under the radical teachings of B.R. Ambedkar. Though Balmikis, another equally numerous Dalit caste in Punjab, remained indifferent to the Ad Dharm movement because of its being led by the leaders from the Chamar caste, this movement led to the emergence of a new Dalit identity under the native nomenclature of Ad Dharm/Dharmi.

Quite interestingly, none of the above-mentioned caste categories except "Ad Dharmi" were coined by the ex-untouchables themselves. Even the categories of *Achhuts* and Dalits that became instantly popular among the ex-untouchables during the 1930s and 1970s respectively were also coined by the upper castes.However in the due course of time the only blanket SC castes category that became most popular among the lower castes is that of Dalit. Though, as mentioned above, came into existence in 1920s in Maharashtra, present Uttar Pradesh and Punjab[11], it was made popular by Dalit Panthers, a lower caste organisationfounded by some ex-untouchables in Bombay in 1972, who were inspired by the Black Panther Party of the United States(Satyanarayana and Tharu, 2013, 55 and 64).For themit signified a bright future for the former untouchables. Eleanor Zelliot argued that the term'Dalit' 'was not only to be interpreted as "the oppressed", but also as the "the proud, the defiant"', who are eager to become rulers rather than be ruled by the upper/dominant castes (Zelliot 2001: v).Though the term Dalit gained priority over all other termsfor lower caste categories mentioned above, it was the legal category of 'SCs' that has gained deep legitimacy within the administrative domain of Independent India.

Though SCs, former *Avarnas* (beyond Varna) or *Achhuts* (Untouchables),[12]are also often addressed as Shudras, but in reality they differ from the latter. SCs live in separate and

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[11] For instance the presence of *Dayanand Dalit Udhar Mandal*(Hoshiarpur) and *Achhut Udhar Mandal*(Lahore) in Punjab in 1920s (Ram 2004a: 331-333).

[12]*Ati* literary extreme. Thus *Achhut* means extremely discriminated people. This term was coined by 19th century social activist Jyotirao Phule (2002).

segregated Dalit localities away from the mainstream villages wherein Shudras were/are allowed to stay along with the peoples of the upper three Varnas of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas(Ram 2016a: 33-35). It is in this context that Shudras can be clearly distinguishedfrom the territorially segregated SCs what JotiraoPhule called Ati-Shudras(Phule: 2002). Even in the cities, SCs live mostly in separate neighbourhoods (Gorringe 2016: 165). Though in general parlance SCs are called Shudras, they differ from them in that the latter are not considered untouchables. Though Shudras and Ati-Shudras were engaged in manual labour jobs as against the non-manual labour occupations of the three upper Varnas, they were distinguished from each other in terms of the degree of filth attached with the manual labour/occupation they undertook (Judge 2012: 266). Since Ati-Shudras were engaged in unclean/dirty/polluting manual labour, their touch was allegedly considered polluting, which consequently turned them untouchables (Coffey et al 2017: 60-63).

Though Shudras and Ati-Shudras are distinguished from each other on account of degrees of pollution, both of them face discrimination from the upper three Varnas - also called *dwijas* (twice-born) *or Savarnas*. The upper three Varnas, unlike the Shudras (fourth Varna) and the *Ati*-Shudras(*Avarna*/non-Varna category),are free from inner caste divisions that provide them with solid in-group strength vis-a-vis the latter, who are sharply dividedinto various castes within each of their Varna. *Tarkhans* (carpenters), *lohars* (blacksmiths), *ghumiars* (Potters)**,** *nais*(barbers), *chembas* (tailors) and *jhewars* (water-carrier) within the Shudras; and Chamars (cobblers), Chuhras (sweepers) and *Julahs* (weavers) within the Ati-Shudra, to name a few,constitute distinct castes. As per caste rules, all Shudras and Ati-Shudras are endogamous. *Tarkhans* marry only with *tarkhans* and *jhewars* with *jhewars*. So are the Chamar and Chuhras. But this is not the case with the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas. They are free from similar caste divisions within their respective caste categories. In other words, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas do not have different castes within their respective cstes like that of the Shudras and Ati-Shudras.

All Brahmins are known by a singular caste nomenclature - Brahmins. So are the Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas. It would not be an exaggeration to mention that in the case of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas, the categories of ‘Varna’ and ‘caste’ coalesced into one. In other words, the categories of ‘Varna’ and ‘caste’ become synonymous and complimentary to each other. Even, if at all, some form of caste hierarchy does exist within each of them, it is not much known to the outsiders (Judge 2015: 55-56). There is no obvious system of in-built caste hierarchy within the upper three Varnas except the existence of different *gotras* (sub-castes). But *gotras* are not castes in the strict sense of the term. They are some sort of clan-based social classifications with reference to the genealogy of mother and father. Each caste has its own comprehensive list of respective gotras including the varied SC castes.

Thus, unlike the intra social homogeneity within the upper three Varnas, SCs are highly segmented along endogamous multi-castes layers with distinct social identities and varied economic levels. Jodhka and Kumar note (2007: 21, emphasis added) that "Notwithstanding the growing appeal of the *blanket*term dalit for self-description across caste communities and the continued use of the category scheduled castes by the State agencies and popular media, the internal differences among different communities continue to be as important as they would ever have been". Inter-caste marriages among varied castes within SCs is still a taboo (Judge 2003: 2991; cf. Bathran 2016: 31). Moreover, they also observe hierarchy of high-low social status among themselves. Almost everyone locates herself/himself above someone else. The caste divisions and the practice of high-low status criterion among the SCs in the State has led to formation of various caste-based social cleavages, which in turn has not only made the process of consolidation among them a herculean task but also pushed them into the whirlpool of various protracted intra-Dalit social conflicts. This study intends to explore how caste-based cleavages led to the dilemma of dalit consolidation among the SCs in contemporary East Punjab with serious implications for a cohesive Dalit movement in the State.

Castes within Caste

SCs in Punjab have been categorized into thirty nine castes[13] of varying numerical strength, geographical spread, religious and political affiliations, social mobility, status and identity, economic conditions and cultural outlook. Among them Ramdasias, Mazhabis, Rai Sikhs, and Sansis follow Sikh religion. Balmikis are primarily Hindus. Ravidassias and Ad Dharmis have recently founded their separate Dalit religion – Ravidassia Dharm. Though Ad Dharmi and Ravidassias have established their separate religion, many of them still practice Sikh rituals and follow the social-spiritual philosophy of various Deras/sects along with their Ravidassia identity. They are mostly concentrated in the Doaba region (comprising Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala, and Nawan Shahr districts lying between two rivers, Beas and Sutlej)of Punjab. Their percentage is very low in the Majha region (between Beas and Ravi rivers). Mazhabis are mainly settled in Majha and Malwa region (south of the Sutlej River, also known as Cis-Sutlej during the British period). Ramdasias and Rai Sikhs are largely concentrated in Malwa, and Balmikis in both the Doaba and Malwa regions (Judge 2015: 60).

In terms of political affiliations, SCs in Punjab are also highly heterogeneous. Chamars and Balmikis are generally considered to be closer to Congress whereas Mazhabis, Ramdasias, Rai Sikhs and Sansis to the Akali Dal (Judge 2012: 274). However, political affiliations remain mercurial. They keep on shifting the sides in accordance with the grammar of electoral politics. But what has remained stable with the SCs in Punjab over the last many

[13]As per Punjab Government Gazette, regd. no. CHD/0092/2006-2008, no. 45. Available at punjabrevenue.nice. in/pdf/jagir_1.pdf (Accessed on 15 September 2016).

decades is their division on account of social and political considerations. Before articulating SC caste cleavages in terms of social and political context, let me focus on some broad layers of caste clusters among them.

All the SC castes can be arranged into four caste clusters. Out of the 39 SC castes,the four major castes of Chamar (23.45%), Ad-Dharmi (11.48%), Balmiki (9.78%) and Mazhabi (29.73%) constitute 74.44%of the total SC population in Punjab.These four major castes belong to two broaderethnographicumbrella caste categories of Chuhra[14] (sweepers) and Chamar (leather workers) castes[15].These two umbrella castes are generally referred to as two distinct clusters of Chamar and Chuhra castes. Among them Mazhabis are largest in numbers followed by the Chamars, Ad Dharmis and Balmikis. The restof the 35 castes putting together constitute less than one third (25.56%) of the total SC population in the State. They are equally heterogeneous and can be further divided into two clusters of17 SC castes of *Vimkut Jatis*[16]& Depressed Castes,[17]and of 18 SC castes, which can be termed as peripheral/invisible castes.For a proper understanding of the formation and operation of caste cleavages among the SCsand its implications for the consolidation of a cohesive Dalit movement, a brief paraphrasing of all the four caste clusters mentioned above will be in order.

Chuhra Caste Cluster

The Chuhra caste cluster (39.51%) clubs together two major castes of Balmikis[18]and Mazhabis.[19]They are also known by several other names in different states across the country as *Bhangi*,*Thotti*, *Paki*, *Mang*, *Madiga*,*Mehtar, Hela* and *Lalbegi*(cf. Sharma 1995: 200). In Punjab they are traditionally called Balmikis and Chuhras. However, left to themselves, they prefer to be known as Balmikis, which they consider a respectable title in comparison to the derogatory nomenclature of Chuhra. Balmikis are characterised as Hindus. They are basically sweepers/scavengers and consider *Sant-Kavi* (spiritual poet) Maharishi[20] Valmiki

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[14] Also locally called Bhangis.

[15] Before the inclusion of the Rai Sikhs community into the SC category in Punjab, the two major SC caste clusters in the State used to enjoy 83.9% share of the total SC population in Punjab. As per 2001 Census figures Chuhra caste cluster had 42.8% and Chamar caste cluster had 41.1% of the total SC population.

[16] Vimukt Jatis are denotified tribes branded by the colonial administration as criminal tribes (Singh 2010: xii-Iix).

[17]DSCs consisted of smaller and most marginalised communities among the SCs in the State, which have been grouped together by the Punjab government for providing special assistance under the various developmental schemes.

[18] Also spelled as Valmiki.

[19] Also spelled as Majhbi or Mazahabi.

[20] Also known as Bhagwan Balmik.

their Guru. Though sweeping and scavenging look similar profession, they differ in term of intensity of pollution attached to them. Sweeping refers to cleaning streets whereas scavenging implies cleaning dry latrines while manually removing human faeces. Many Balmikis are still engaged in their hereditary occupation of sweeping and scavenging both in rural and urban settings.

In the urban sector,Balmikisweremostly engaged by the city municipalities as scavengers to clean the dry latrines. In some of the cities, where dry latrines are still in operation for absence of sewerage system, many of them continued to work as scavengers. The scavengers in the citiesmanually clean the dry latrines and carry the night-soil in baskets on their heads even after seventy years of India's independence. However, in villages the sweepers, counterparts of the scavengers in cities, mostly worked as landless agricultural labourers though some of them clean the open drainage system (cemented as well as non-cemented)in villages[21].Though traditionally, the rural sector had been spared ofthe evil practice of physically disposing of human excreta,thanks to open defecation, the construction of in-house pit latrines over the last few years,under the various rural sanitation schemes,[22]has led to theinstitutionalisation of a sort of scavenging evenin villages. The latrine pit needs to be cleaned regularly at some intervals lest it overflows causingstinking smell and water-borne diseases. Given the alleged highly polluted nature of the scavenging occupation, it is again the Chuhras/ Bhangis who are mostly being engaged to clean the in-house latrine pits in the rural areas (Coffey *et al* 2017:61-63).Thus, the involvement of the Balmikis in the newly emerged occupation of 'emptying the latrine pit' has vindicated the continuation of the insidious practice of occupation based social exclusion and oppression, wherein not only the upper castes but also various other non Balmiki castes within the SCs refused to identify themselves with the Balmikisin term of common social Dalit identity (Raksha 2014: 147-48).

However, over the last few years, a new social and political consciousness has emerged among the Balmikis in rural and urban regions. They have been actively drawn towards the teachings of Bhagwan Balmiki and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Valmiki-Ambedkarite identity has been taking roots within many sections of the Balmiki community. Maharishi Valmiki with a pen in his hand along with the inspiring slogan of Dr. Ambedkar 'educate, agitate, organise' embossed over the picture of the latter is the logo of this recently formed Valmiki-Ambedkarite identity that aimed at disseminating education and critical consciousness among Balmikis – one of the highly low educated SC castes in Punjab[23]. This has led them not only

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[21]The open drainage system consists of uncovered sewerage channels on both sides of the streets/lanes/ by-lanes in villages that carry the dirt of the houses towards a pond or pit in the western part of the village.

[22] The Total Sanitation Campaign, the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan, and the Swachh Bharat Mission.

[23]Based on author's conversation with Darshan Ratan Ravan, the protagonist of 'Valmiki-Ambedkarite identity' and founder head of the *Adi Dharam Samaj*, a socio-cultural and religious organisation of the Balmiki community in Punjab, during an academic event at R.S.D. College (Ferozepur), 17 March 2015.

to realise the potential of the agency of education for their upward social mobility, but also the futility of nurturing antagonism with their rival Chamar caste cluster.[24]

The Chuhras who embraced Sikhism are called Mazhabis. The Mazhabis are also called Ranghretas. While defining Mazhabi, Ibbetson writes "Of course a Mazbi will often have been returned as chuhra by caste and Sikh by religion; … Mazbi means nothing more than a member of the scavenger class converted to Sikhism" (Ibbetson 1883, rpt. 1970: 294). However, Niranjan Arifi in his *Ranghrehtian da Itihas* (History of Ranghretas) traced the origin of Mazhabis/ Ranghretas to the inter-caste marriages among the Hindus of all castes across *Varna* hierarchy. In his views, Mazhabis/Ranghretas are the descendants of the intermingling of different castes. Because of their mixed castes birth, they were given new caste titles (Arifi 1999: 177-200). Similarly, another Dalit Sikh historian, Shamsher Singh Ashok, was of the opinion that the Mazhabis/Ranghreta Sikhs are superior to Chamars in that the former abandoned eating meat of dead animals. He further argued that they also differentiated themselves from Chamars and other SC castes while completely distancing from the Brahminical ceremonies of birth and death (Ashok 2001: 53-54). Another factor that enhanced their social status could be their entry into British army as soldiers of the exclusive Mazhabi regiments(Cohen 1969: 460).

Mazhabis are mostly concentrated in Majha and Malwa regions of the State wherein they are currently engaged in fierce violent struggle over their claim on the Panchayats' common agricultural lands for self-cultivation (Dhaliwal 2015; Khanna 2016). At the district level, they are largely concentrated in Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Faridkot, Mansa, and Bhatinda districts of Punjab. They outnumber other SCs in Faridkot and Ferozepur districts (Gosal 2004: 26-39). Despite their highest numerical strength, they are the most deprived section among the SCs with the lowest literacy rate (42.3%). Majority of them (52.2%) are still languishing in low wage agricultural farm jobs. Though the *Siris* (attached labourer) system has ceased to exist in the state, but in the Malwa region some of them still work as *Siris*(Jodhka 2002: 1816). However, over the years their position have improved particularly after they have been granted 50% of the SC reservation quota and come to enjoy some clout in the state politics (Jodhka 2000: 394).

Chamar Caste Cluster

The Chamar caste cluster (34.93) consists of two castes of Chamars and Ad-Dharmis. Chamar is an umbrella caste category. It includes Chamars, Jatia Chamars, Rehgars, Raigars, Ramdasias, and Ravidassias. Though this cluster is largely confined to the Doaba region of the Punjab, Chamars are also numerous in Gurdaspur, Rupnagar, Ludhiana, Patiala and Sangrur districts. Traditionally, Chamars were condemned as polluted and impure because of their occupational contact with animal carcass and hides. But they consider themselves

[24] I am indebted to Pritam Singh for reminding me of this current dimension of Balmiki social mobility.

chandravanshi by clan and claim to enjoy highest social status among all the SC in the State (Deep 2001:7). In the mid-1920s, some of them established a prosperous leather-business town (Boota Mandi) in the outskirts of Jalandhar city. They were also the main force behind the emergence of the famous Ad Dharm movement in Punjab in the mid-1920s (Juergensmeyer 1988). In the Census of 1931, many of them registered themselves under the then newly declared religion of Ad Dharm and came to be known as Ad Dharmis (Ram 2004b: 5-7). After India's independence, Ad Dharm, the Dalit religion, was squeezed into a SC caste – Ad Dharmi.

Ad Dharmis and Chamars are ahead of the all other SC castes in almost all spheres. They are "on the top of virtually every parameter – education, urbanisation, jobs, occupational change, cultural advancement, political mobilization, etc." (Puri 2004:4). They are also the main beneficiary of the State reservation policies in education, government jobs and legislature. Some of them have established their strong hold over the leather business, surgical industry, and sports goods (Ram 2004b: 5-7;Yadav and Sharma nd. 10 & 34-35). Many of them have also migrated to Europe, North America, and the Middle Eastern countries that further contributed tremendously towards their upward social mobility.They have not only excelled in business and multiple skilled labour professions, but also established their separate caste identity through a strong networking of social organizations, international Dalit conferences, Ravidass Sabhas and Ravidass Gurdwaras.

Though Ravidassias and Ramdasias are included within the larger Chamar caste, over the years they have acquired their distinct social identity and considered themselves socially higher than all other castes among SCs in the State.Though for non-SCs,Ravidassias, Ramdasias and Chamars are one and the same, Ramdassias considered themselves superior to all other castes among SCs. Thedistinction between Ramdasias and Ravidassias is primarily traced to their diverse occupations. The leather working sections of the Chamar caste (cobblers) is called Ravidassias and the weavers (Julahas)[25]who converted to Sikhism came to known as Ramdasias. While making a sharp distinction between these two occupationally distinct classes of the single main caste of Chamar, Sir Denzil Ibbetson cogently argues, "[t]he Ramdasias are confused with Raidasi or Rabdasi *Chamars*. The formers are true Sikhs, and take the *Pahul.* The latter are Hindus, or if Sikhs, only Nanakpanthi Sikhs and do not take the *Pahul*; and are followers of Bhagat Rav Das or Rab Das, himself a Chamar. They are apparently as true Hindus as any Chamar can be, and are wrongly called Sikhs by confusion with Ramdasias" (Ibbetson, 1883, rpt. 1970:300).

Julahas are also known by various names in in different districts of Punjab. In Anandpur Sahib, Rupnagar (also spelled Ropar/Rupar), and Fatehgarh Sahib, Julahas are called as

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[25]Julahas are also called Kabirpanthis and are listed as a separate caste within the SC caste list of Punjab at Sr. no. 19.

"Khalsa."[26] In Ferozepur, Moga, Muktsar, Faridkot, Bathinda, Mansa, Sangrur, Barnala they are known as "Rahtias" (devout followers of Sikh code of conduct). In the villages of Patiala, Dhuri and Nabha they are popularly called "Baune Sikhs" (weaver Sikhs). In the cities Patiala, Dhuri and Nabha "Baune Sikhs have their distinct neighbourhood. In the Doaba region of Punjab, Julahas are mostly called Ramdassias. They came to be known as Ramdasias after their conversion to Sikhism.[27] It is also important to mention here that they got reservation for the first time in the form of reserved posts in Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee in 1925 (Bambiha Bhai 2011: 42-43).In many places, especially in the Doaba region of Punjab, Ramdasias have built their separate Deras/Gurdwaras. Ramdassia Deras at village Johlans in Jalandhar and village Thakarwal at Hoshiarpur are among the most popular Dalit Deras in Punjab.

Majority of Ramdasias are Sahajdhari Sikhs – those who do not observe the Sikh *Rahit* (social code of conduct). Kanshi Ram, founder of the Bhaujan Samaj Party (BSP), was a clean-shaven Ramdasia Sikh of the Ropar district of Punjab. Many Ramdasia Sikhs, like him, are still clean-shaven. Ramdasias were also known as Khalsa *biradar* (brother).[28]

Though Ramdasias are Sikhs among Chamars, they are still included within the larger Hindu caste category of Chamar in the SC list of Punjab. As far as social status is concerned, they consider themselves superior to all other SC castes in the State and strictly follow endogamy.

Ravidassias (leather worker) like Ramdasias (weavers)also consider themselves superior to all other SC communities in Punjab. They worship Guru Ravidass[29] andconsider his teachings and *bani* (spiritual poetry) as their sacred scriptures.[30] Often confused with Sikhs, for some of the them keep beard and unshorn hair like the baptised Sikhs and worship *Guru Granth Sahib* (the Sikh sacred scripture),[31] they still do not identify themselves as Sikhs. However, a large number of them assert that they are neither Sikhs nor Hindus but followers of a newly established separate Dalit religion – Ravidassia Dharm (Ram 2016: 371-83).They

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[26] For an instance Bimal Kaur Khalsa, Basant Singh Khalsa etc. etc.

[27]They converted to Sikhism during the time of Guru Ram Dass, the fourth Guru of the Sikh faith, and since then called Ramdasias (based on author's conversations with a large number of the members of the Ramdasia community).

[28]Based on author's conversation with K.C. Sulekh, a senior Ambedkarite and prolific writer, Chandigarh.

[29]The most popular 14th -15th century Nirguni Sant of the north India Bhakti movement who unleashed a non-violent social protest tirade against the social evil of untouchability (Ram 2008).

[30] After the shooting incidence at a Ravidass temple in Vienna, Ravidassia Samaj was transformed into a distinct religion and the poetry of Guru Ravidass was compiled into a holy book called *Amritbani Shri Guru Ravidass Maharaj* (Ram2016).

[31]Though, strong links do exist between the Sikh religion and the Ravidassia sect, the latter has been declared a separate Dalit religion (Ravidassia Dharm) on 30 January 2010 (Ram 2012: 696-700).

are very particular about their distinct faith and often assert their separate social identity rather vociferously. But in official records, they are bracketed with Chamarsand counted among the Hindus. However, in sociological terms, they are a group apart and are different both from the Hindus and Sikhs.

Vimukt Jatis and Depressed Castes Cluster

The Vimkut Jatis& Depressed Castes cluster includes thirteen Depressed Schedules Castes of Punjab (hereafter DSCs) and seven Denotified Tribes/Vimkut Jatis. Rai Sikhs (5.83%)arealso included in this cluster. Thus thirteen DSCs, four Vimkut Jatis, and Rai Sikhs together formed a cluster of eighteen SC castes, which constitutes 16.53% of the total SC population in the State. Vimukt Jaits are the denotified tribal communities(Singh 2010a), which were declared Criminal Tribes by the British administration under its notorious Criminal Tribes Act 1871(Major1999: 657-688). After India's independence, they were relieved of the colonial stigma of criminal tribes by the Denotified Act of 31 August 1952. DSCs and Vimukt Jatis are the most marginalised communities among the SCs of Punjab. However, their common denominator factor of extreme marginality does not preclude them from being highly segmented across caste lines. All of these varied castes are strictly endogamous and observe high-low levels of status among themselves (Singh 2010 : 73).

Rai Sikhs, the erstwhile Mahatam, are the fifth largest SC community (5.83%) in Punjabafter the four major castes of Chamar, Ad Dharmi, Balmiki and Mazhabi. The colonial administration first included them in the list of Depressed Classes in 1931 and subsequently brought them under the British Government of India (Schedule Caste) order 1936. However, the Kaka Kalekar Commission declared them as Most Backward Class in 1953-54 (Kumar 2015: 97). But after their long struggle to be designated as Schedule Caste, they were included in the Punjab list of Scheduled Castes at Sr. No. 39 under the Constitution (Schedule Caste) order (Amendment) Act 2007 of Government of India[35].

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[32] Bazigars (2.72%), Dumnas/Mahasha/Doom (2.29), Meghs (1.59%), Baurias/Bawarias (1.41%), Sansi/Bhedkut/Manesh (1.38%), Pasi (0.44%), Od (0.36%), Kori, Koli (0.28%), Sarera (0.16%), Khatik (0.16%), Sikligar (0.13%), Barar/Burar/Berar/Barad (0.10%), Bangali/Bangala (0.05%), and Banjra (0.04%). Out of these thirteen Vimukt Jatis four (Bangala, Bauria, Bazigar Bhanjra, and Sansi (1.38 %) are also clubbed with the Denotified Tribes/Vimukt Jaits (Singh 2010: xI). However within the DSC category Bazigar and Bhanjra are listed as separate castes.

[33] Bangala (0.05%), Barad (0.10%), Bauria (1.41%), Bazigar Bhanjra (2.76%), Gandhila/Gandil Gondola (0.04%), Nat (0.04%) and Sansi (1.38%). Three Vimukt Jaits, which were not included in the DSCs category are of Nat (0.04%), Gandhila (0.04%) and Barad (0.10%).

[34] They are one of the Criminal Tribes declared under the Criminal Tribes Act 1871 (Major1999: 682-686). Recently declared as a SC caste, they were not included within the categories of Denotified Tribes/*Vimkut Jatis* and DSCs.

[35]*Times of India*, August 17, 2007.

In terms of social hierarchy, Raiwere considered almost at par with formerly untouchable castes. Though they were denotifiedin 1952, but the scar of the stigma of the criminal tribe continued to harass them even after almost seven decades of India's independence (Singh 2000). They are strictly endogamous and practice clan exogamy. Their traditional occupation was rope making. They are mainly concentrated in the Ferozepur, Kapurthala, Jalandhar and Ludhiana districts of Punjab. In the Ferozepur Lok Sabha constituency, they constituted 42.2%of the total population, which is the highest in Punjab and the second highest in the country. They had good presence in 35 Assembly and seven Lok Sabha segments of Punjab and have been pressing for reserve seats in the state legislative assembly and in the parliament.

Peripheral/Invisible Castes Cluster

This caste cluster consists of eighteen most peripheral and almost invisible SC castes[36] consisting of less than 10% of the total SC population in the State. The numerical strength of some of them like Chanal, Perna and Pherera castes is less than 100 persons. Except the Dhanak caste (1.01%), the numerical strength of all other castes is less than 1%. Many of them have moved to cities and got engaged in informal private sector manufacturing units as manual labourers. Given their miniscule strength of population and outmodedness of their occupations (like transportation of timber by rivers in case of Darains; toys and fan making of reed by Dehas; weaving by Dhanaks and Kabirpanthis/Julahas; snake catching etc. by the Sapelas; and mat making from grass reeds in case of Sikligars)[37] and the goods they used to produce, almost all of people belonging to these castes are not only invisible but also erased from the common parlance about caste discourse in the State. These castes appear only as titles and figures in the Census records. Thus, these eighteen castes just inflate the total numbers of SC castes in Punjab, but in terms of political configuration do not matter at all.

Caste Cleavages and the Fractured Dalit Movement

Along with various castes and caste clusters, some sharp cleavages have also emerged among the SCs of Punjab over the years. The prevalence of cleavages may not only reflect on the presence of steep heterogeneity among them but also unravel some of the causes behind their failure to emerge as a unified and cohesive Dalit political force to guard their interests. Another equally important dimension of the Dalit question in Punjab is that the rise of the cleavages among the SCs, in addition to the factor of caste heterogeneity, emanates from the meshing of religion and politics, and the divisive politics of SC reservation policy in the State. The two major SC clusters of Chuhra and Chamar caste categories are sharply divided in terms of their affiliation to different sects and benefits/disadvantages they drew

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[36]Batwal/Barwala, Chanal, Dagi, Darain, Deha/Dhaya/Dhea, Dhanak, Dhogri/Dhangri/Siggi, Gagra, Kabirpanthi/Julaha, Marija/Marecha, Perna, Pherera, Sanhai, Sanhal, Sansoi, Sapela, Sikriband and Mochi.

[37] For details see Jodhka 2000: 400-401.

from the SC reservation policy of the State. Though these two clusters constitute almost three fourth of the total SC population in the State, their divergent cultural and religious outlooks and highly differentiated educational and economic backgrounds pitted them against each other.

Ad Dharmis and Chamars are ahead of all the other SC castes. They are the main beneficiary of the State reservation policies in education, government jobs and legislature. Some of them have established their strong hold over the leather business, surgical industry, and sports goods. Many of them have also migrated to Europe, North America, and the Middle Eastern countries that further contributed tremendously towards their upward social mobility. They have not only excelled in business and multiple skilled labour professions, but also established their separate caste identity through a strong networking of social organizations, religious bodies, international Dalit conferences, Ravidass Sabhas and Deras/ Gurdwaras. They take pride in publicly flaunt their distinct social identity markers and keen interests to promote their community cultural heritage.

Another equally populous, rather slightly more numerous, SC castes cluster is of Chuhra caste group. In comparison to Chamar caste cluster, it is highly backward in terms of educational, governmental jobs and ventures abroad. It often blames Chamar caste cluster for its obvious backwardness and neglect while cornering a major share in the reservation policy. Though this cluster is sharply divided within its own purview between Balmiki (Hindu) and Mazhabi (Sikh) castes, it has been able to forge a common front against the Chamar caste cluster and secured special reservation within reservation. The 25% SC reservation in Punjab got bifurcated into two equal shares of 12.5% each between the two Balmiki and Mazhabis castes and the rest of the thirty seven SC castes. The cleavage of reservation within reservation thus does not only further reinforce the religious, social and cultural divide between the Chuhra and Chamar caste clusters, but also forge unity between Balmiki (Hindu) and Mazhabi (Sikh) SC castes.

Both these clusters have their distinct sects, gurus, pilgrimage centers, shrines, iconography and sacred scriptures. If Dera Sachkhand Ballan at Jalandhar and Sri Guru Ravidass Janam Asthan Temple at Seer Goverdhanpur at Varanasi have become the most sought after pilgrimage centers for the Chamars and Ad-Dharmis, the Valmiki Tirath Dham at Amritsar carries the same spiritual value for the Balmikis and Mazhabis. What sacred scripture ‘Amritbani Sri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj’ is to Ravidassias; *Yog Vashisht* is to Balmikis. If Guru Ravidass is Shiromani (patron) Sant (preceptor) of Ravidassias; Maharishi Valmiki is the Adi-Guru for the Balmikis and Baba Jiwan Singh for the Mazhabis. The shrines of Ravidassias are called ‘Deras,’ whereas Balmikis called their religious places *Anant* (Adi Dharm Temple). Ravidassias accost each other with *Jai Santan Di* and summarise their religious ceremonies while uttering ‘Jo Bole So Nirbhay, Sri Guru Ravidass Maharaj Ki Jai’; the Balmikis’ prototype of the same is ‘Jai Valmiki’ and ‘Jo Bole So Nirbhay, Srishtikarta Valmiki Dayavaan Ki Jai’.

The mainstream political parties to supplement their political capital often exploit the above-mentioned cleavages between the Chamar and Chuhra clusters. Both the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) supported the Balmikis and Mazhabis against the Chamars and Ad-Dharmis on the contentious cleavage of reservation within reservation.The political support extended to a particular cluster often sharpens the inter-cluster division among the SCs in Punjab with serious implications for an overall Dalit solidarity for the larger community interests. Chamars/Ad-Dharmis' failure to get the support of the Balmiks and Mazhabis during the struggle of the historic Ad Dharm movement and the latter's indifference towards the *Talhan* (Ram 2004c: 906-912), *Meham*(Ram 2007: 4072) and Vienna(Ram 2012: 696-700)skirmishes are a few instances of open division between Chuhra and Chamar caste clusters. A heated verbal duel between the Balmiki-Mazhabi and Ad-Dharmi-Chamar factions of the INC during its Chandigarh conclave recently over the allotment of a Rajya Sabha (Upper House) seat to Shamsher Singh Dullo (an Ad Dharmi) against Hans Raj Hans (a Balmiki) is a current case of sharp heterogeneity among the SCs of Punjab.[38] Dalit solidarity in Punjab is also often threatened by the cleavages of the denotified tribes who vehemently contest their inclusion in the Schedules Castes list of Punjab (Singh 2010a: XIX). They proudly consider themselves the descendants of Rajputs who took to vagrant life styles as a strategy of their fight against the Mogul and British rulers.

Clarification

All the terms associated with the traditional caste terminology (like historical caste names, etc.) are used as ethnographic categories in the article for academic analysis. Any offence caused by such an exercise is deeply regretted.

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Understanding Diversity and Continuities in Religious Traditions: A Case of Nihangs in Sikh Faith

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Abstract

The paper explores the world of Nihangs generally identified with the Sikh orthodoxy, for they seem to represent the typified image of the 'Khalsa Sikh'. However, their origin within the Sikh tradition is only tentatively described in the existing literature. As a result the paper looks into the already existing religious traditions in Punjab outside the fold of Sikh religion. Certain unique characteristics of the Nihang deras seem to suggest that there could be certain positive connection between them and the Shavite Naga Sadhus.

For a reasonable period of time we have been witnessing the articulation of Indian society as characterized by unity in diversity at public platforms and in numerous sociological works. Indian diversity is multifaceted and could be observed along any axis. This article is an attempt to underline and investigate two important aspects of religious diversity by undertaking the analysis of the Nihangs - a distinct sect within the Sikh community. First, all traditions within the religion do not necessarily culminate into the formation of distinct communities, though there is a greater possibility of such an occurrence. Second, there is always a likelihood that when a religious tradition emerges it borrows from other already existing traditions. A community in the present context could be understood as an endogamous unit confining the kinship within its boundaries transgression of which may be resented and punished. However, it does not ignore other bases of endogamy, such as race and caste. Unlike Europe wherethe institution of inquisition tended to make religion a moral community, India remains considerably eclectic so far as the religious persuasions of the people were concerned. Oberoi (1994: 418) rightly points out, "From the 'peculiar' nature of religion in Indian society there flowed an important consequence: religious categories such as 'Hindu', 'Muslim', and 'Sikh', were ambiguous and fluid, they did not possess a pure form". One may point out that there could be numerous sacred traditions within the framework of one religion.

Sikh religion is nowadays identified with certain symbols and practices apparently indicating that it is monolithic religion. However, it seems implausible to accept such a position in the light of empirical reality. Oberoi (1994: 420) identifies followers of Sikh faith known by fourteen different names[1]. The existence of uniformity among the Sikhs today has also

[1] "Udasi, Nirmala, Khalsa, Nanak-panthi, Ramraia, Baba Gurditta, Baba Jawahir Singh, Guru Bhag Singh, Nihang, Kalu PanthRam Dai, Nirankari, Kuka and Savaria.

been challenged by Takhar (2014), as she identifies four sects outside the fold of the dominant Sikh identity. Among all the diverse communities and distinctsects within the broad religious tradition of Sikhism, the Nihangs stand out. They look exotic, are an enigma and the object of curiosity for people in general.In the everyday life of the Sikh community, the Nihangs are treated as outsiders, though their visibility is acknowledged and taken as normal on certain auspicious occasions at certain historic gurdwaras associated with specific events in the lives of the Sikh Gurus. The word Nihang conjures up an image of a Sikh armed with traditional weapons and attired in a loose blue top almost touching his knees, long (generally white) breeches, and a turban of more than normal length height. Their sheer appearance arouses curiosity with a number of questions among people and most of the times they are understood as the orthodox Sikhs with medieval dress and weaponry. The prevalence of numeroustraditions and practices in the Indian religious landscape makes it possible for the Nihangs to pass for just another group with a distinct identity.

The present article is divided into two broader parts. The first part is largely a description of the world of Nihangs covering various dimensions of their existence and practices by outlining their closeness with and distinctness from the contemporary Sikh orthodox establishment with the defined rules and practices common to all the religions. The second part covers the analysis of the location and probable origin of the Nihangs by way of conclusion.

World of Nihangs

Terminology

Any writing on Nihangs, thus, should begin with the original meaning of the word *nihang* and a definition. The word *nihang* has multiplemeanings. According to 'Pall'(2007, 32), it is a Persian word which means an alligator, and there is also a similar word in Sanskrit meaning fearless and courageous. 'Pall' further adds another meaning of the Sanskrit word *Nihasanka*, which means"an enlightened one or one unattached to the worldly materialistic aspects". For Nabha (1999, 704), Nihang means alligator, sword, fearless, impartial and enlightened (*atamgyanai*). Nihangsare a community (*firka*) among the Sikhs which wear blue dress, keep five weapons as well as a conical turban (*dumala*) and loose piece of cloth stuck to the turban called (*farrah*) ('Pall' ibid.). However, it is difficult to characterise them as community because most of the Nihangs remain unmarried and it is not expected that the sons and daughters of Nihangs would follow him.It is alleged that Nihangs are *akalis*- the ones who have conquered death - and they are always prepared to sacrifice their life.They are entirely self-sufficient as they always keep necessary things with them.The term 'Akali Nihang' was also used for them in the 18th century (Jaggi, ibid.). Historically, their bravery, particularly during the reign of Ranjit Singh (1801 – 1839), has been well recorded by the historians(Nabha, 1999, 704 and Jaggi, 2005, 1070). Singh (1999, 207) has mentionedtwo Nihang leaders, Phula Singh and Sadhu Singh, "for their devil-may-care

attitude" and he underlined the fact that "Ranjit Singh owed many of his victories to the desperate valour of the Nihangs".

Steinbach, who was an officer in the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, has described Nihangs as 'Akalees' with a degree of dislike and informs that they were a part of the Lahore government's irregular cavalry and numbered about three thousand. He characterizes them as 'religious fanatics', lawless and could commit robbery, and also informs that more than once they attempted to assassinate Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Steinbach comments, "They are, without exception, the most insolent and worthless race of people under the sun". Nevertheless, he further adds "They, however, fight with desperation, and are always employed upon the most dangerous service" (1846, 104-105).

Origin

The history of the Nihangs is marked by increasing diversity and development into a complex tradition which is itself a part of the composite tradition of Sikhism. Little is known about them in scholarship. The public's knowledge about them too is made up mostly from hearsay. Their relative isolation from mainstream society (Saharai, 1992) makes their history and practices relatively inaccessible. Some call the Nihangs a *samparada* (community), but one must remember that: (1) they are largely males and symbolize the image of men warriors carrying weapons,(2)some of the groups are on the move throughout the year – the reason they call their Dera *shauni* (cantonment), and(3) most of them remain unmarried. The Nihangs who maintain gurdwaras/Deras, when most of them are on the move, are married and known as *Bhujangi Singhs*. The word *bhujang* literally means snake and *bhujangi* the son of snake and tradition reveals that Mughals called Sikhs as snakes and Guru Gobind Singh accepted the terminology by saying that the Sikhs were snakes for the 'evil tyrants' (Singh and Kaur, 2011, 89). The continuation of the Nihang tradition depends upon the recruitment to their rank and file from the mainstream society. The origin of the Nihangs could be traced back to during or after the Guru period. Legends and narratives give an insight into how the Nihangs might have come into existence.

According to Nabha (1999), there are three narratives of their originlinking the Nihang *panth* with the tenth Guru. First, once Sahibzada Fateh Singh entered the court of Guru Gobind Singh by covering his head with a piece of [blue] cloth. Commenting on his dress the Guru said that there would be a Nihang *panth* with such kind of dress. Second, while referring to Bhai Santokh Singh, Nabha (ibid.: 704) informs that when the tenth Guru abandoned his blue dress and burnt it, he kept a piece of cloth which he tied with his small sword (*katar*) from which originated the blue *panth*. The blue dress signified his elevated position of *pir*a saint in the Islamic sufi tradition.Jaggi (2005), however, informs that Bhai MaanSingh tore a small of piece from the dress and stuck it on the turban. 'Pall (2007:34) adds that "Some other persons followed suit and started wearing such type of piece on the turbans, which came to be known as Dumala. This wearing of Dumala gave birth to a class of

persons, who were the forerunners of Nihangs".Third, Nabha claims that many Nihangs say that the tenth Guru initiated the tying ofthe piece of blue cloth on their heads as a symbol. Still another narrative as stated by Nabha (ibid.) is that Baba Naina Singh, instead of carrying a flag in the battlefield, initiated tying a blue piece of cloth on head as symbol of bearer of the Sikh army as well as to keep the hands free as a warrior.

Most of these narratives indicate that the origin of Nihangs should be traced back to Guru Gobind Singh and secondly, the narratives are superfluous in the sense that the kind of combination of discipline and insubordination as well as hard life the Nihangs live requires years of consistent internalization of a certain way of life and ideology. It is reasonable to suggest that such a life could come from living in forests due to the fear of persecution added to a strong desire to sustainreligious identity. Therefore, isolation from the mainstream society was one of the central features of the Nihangs during their earlier period. By the time the Sikhs established their supremacy andthe Nihangs came out of their isolation, they had already developed their rigid routine and modes of worship along with contempt for the settled communities. Instead of mingling with the Sikhs in general, they chose to establish their own *deras*/gurdwaras and continued the tradition they had developed during their isolation. Singh and Kaur (2011), in their illustrated description of Nihangs, argue that there was continuous interaction between Sikhs, the rulers and the Nihangs. They describe them as "mystic warriors" and referring to the observation of Rev. Joseph Wolff, they are characterized as a kind of "army of Mahraja Ranjit Singh and highly respected by the Sikhs". While referring to James Coley, Singh and Kaur (ibid.) also inform that the Nihangs were regarded as "demoniacs" having tremendous influence over the people. However, it is wrong to assume that all Sikh warriors were Nihangs. There is still another possibility and the one which this article aims at exploring: there is also a likelihood of the conversion of a group, which already lived the life similar to Nihangs, to the brotherhood created by Guru Gobind Singh through the Khalsa identity.

Terminology of Headquarters

Diverse nomenclature is used to signify the headquarters or the places of residence of the Nihangs but four names are popularly used with different emphases. First of all there is gurdwara and this is common with the Sikh gurdwara in general. The distinctiveness of the Nihang gurdwaras lies in its high regard for Dasam Granth in addition to the Guru Granth Sahib and their rightful locations within the gurdwara. There is also a distinct space in the gurdwara where *sukha* - a drink made of cannabis - is prepared. The second name is *Dera*, which subsumes the existence of gurdwara, but also houses a number of Nihangs living and practicing martial arts as well as taking of daily chores of maintaining the precincts and cooking food and looking after animals. The third name is *shauni* which has both symbolic and real meanings and relevance. As mentioned earlier, literally speaking it means cantonment

– a place where soldiers are located. Nihangs regard themselves as *Guru ki fauj*(the army of the Guru) and tend to be always ready to proceed to the 'war front'. *Shauni*is a place where they keep horses and look after them. Not only that certain Nihang groups claim to be *Chalda Vaheer* (mobile band) but they also call their places as *shaunis*. The fourth name is *akhada*. Traditionally, the word *akhada* is used to denotethe place where training in wrestling and martial arts is imparted and it is linked with the Naga Sadhu tradition of India. Ghurye (1964, 103) is of the view, "It is better to render akhada buy the military term regiment". Ghurye (ibid., 103) further identifies six well-known *akhadas* of the Naga sadhus implying that the word *akhada* could be used as the groupings among the Naga sadhusand each *akhada* is a demarcated place for different groups of Sadhus to take holy dip into the river at the time of Kumbh Mela. In the case of Nihangs, an *akhada* is a place commonly located within the Nihang gurdwara/*dera*, where the training in the use of arms is imparted. Unlike Udasis where the name *akhada* could be the specific name of a particular gurdwara, such as Braham Boota Akhada in Amritsar, the *akhada* among Nihangs is a designated space for training into martial arts.

Divisions

There are four divisions among the Nihangs: Budha Dal, Taruna Dal, Ranghreta Dal and Bidhi Chand Taruna Dal. The last two are *less prominent*. Not much is talked about the Ranghreta Dal and it consists of Nihangs exclusively belonging to the Mazabi caste, whereas the Nihangs identified with Bidhi Chand, a devout follower ofthe sixth Guru of the Sikhs, are confined to village Sur Singh in Tarn Taran district to which he belonged. The prominent Nihangs groups are the Taruna Dal and theBuddha Dal. As their names indicate, there is a general impression that the Taruna Dal has something to do with youth, whereas the Buddha Dal is a group of elder Nihangs. It is not the case. Both groups have young and elder Nihangs in their ranks. No nomenclatural change occurs if the head/chief of a group turns elder with time. It is quite likely that these divisions occurred quite early over the issue of leadership.There is a reasonable basis to argue that in the early 18th century the Dal Khalsa had split into two groups.According to 'Pall' (2007,95), "We do not find any term as Buddha Dal, on the pages of Sikh history, till the year 1734, when S. Kapur Singh, after becoming Nawab, took the historic decision to divide the entire Sikh force into two parts on the basis of age, known as Buddha Dal and Taruna Dal". There is no answer to the simple query as to why Nawab Kapur Singh created two groups. One of the conjectures could be that due to culture of insubordination to the political power, it was thought proper to divide them so that they did not pose the challenge to the formation of Sikh state. However, the possibility of the existence of *akharas* prior to their embracing Sikhism could also be taken into consideration.Within these two broader groups there are numerous divisions and each group exists and works independently. However, as and when a new group is established its chief must have the blessing of the elder chief of the original group.

Singh and Kaur (2011) have identified fourteen major groups of Nihangs of which three are Buddha Dals and 11 are Taruna Dals. Each Dal is headed by a *jathedar* and under him are a large number of gurdwaras. It is claimed that the headquarters of the Buddha Dal are located at Talwandi Ber Sahib gurdwara, whereas Baba Bakala is the location of Taruna Dal's headquarters. Although they are claimed to be fraternities, there seems to be great competition among them and each Dal seeks to expand its influence. The distinctive feature of the Buddha Dal is that one of the Dals has its headquarters at Nanded (Maharashtra) at Mata Sahib Devan gurdwara. Nihang and Singh (2008) have written a detailed history of the Sikhs of Hazoor Sahib, Nanded. All the heads of Nihang Dals are addressed as "Baba" and they consciously or unwittingly use it as prefix to their names. The most important aspect is the number of gurdwaras each Dal controls and has constructed over the years. There are also stories of Nihangs forcibly occupying and taking the control of gurdwaras. It is relevant to note that various Nihangs Dals are not the only actors engaged in such acts, but also the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (henceforth SGPC), the management committee created through the Act of the British government in 1925, has also been indulging in such forcible occupation of gurdwaras regarded as having historical importance.

It is important to clarify the contribution of the Nihangs to Sikh history. It is interesting to note that most of the books on the Nihangs do not distinguish the Khalsa, fighting Sikh and the Nihang. All are treated as synonymous in the narratives of the history of Nihangs. As such there is no history of Nihangs except for the occasions when they either confronted the state or collaborated with it. In 1739, Bota Singh and his companion Garja Singh who started collecting toll near Tarn Taran and finally killed in fight with the forces of the state (Singh, 1995, 387-388) is one of the few examples of how the Akalis were treated as coterminous with the Nihangs. From the early misal period to the Ranjit Singh's reign (1801 – 1839) the Nihangs joined forces with him. Among the notable Nihangs, Akali Phula Singh is perhaps the most prominent. Therefore, the Nihangs do not seem to have much of history; instead there are narratives of actual feats of bravery in some realistic sense and thus cannot be equated with Don Quixote's fight with windmills which have, however, been exaggerated. It is therefore more fruitful to focus on the contemporary (twenty-first century) Nihang experience.

Everyday Routines

The Nihang Dals follow two routines: everyday and annual. They strictly observe the everyday rituals irrespective of whether they are stationed at the *Deras* or they are moving to any destination according to their annual calendar. Daily routine corresponds to the general Sikh principles applicable to the Khalsa Sikhs excepting certain distinctive practices confined to the Nihangs. For example, getting up in the last quarter of the night called *amrit vela* is a common element and part of the Khalsa*rahat maryada*as well as taking a bath and reciting *gurbani*. However, in contrast to the Sikhs who exclusively regard the Guru Granth Sahib

as the eleventh Guru and their recitations are confined to it, the Nihangs have two other sacred texts, namely Dasam Granth, and Sarabloh Granth. Kang (1997, 228) provides an interesting description of Nihangs' sacred world thus

> ..... Besides the Guru Granth Sahib, the Nihangs accord high place to the *DasamGranth* in their religious ministration. They reserve special veneration for the Sarab Loh Granth, which depicts in primordial symbols the eternal fight between good and evil – in this instance between Sarab Loh, All-Steel incarnation of God, and Brijnad, the king of demons. Likewise, they are attached to Guru Gobind Singh's poem *Chandi di Var*, describing the titanic contest between the gods led by the goddess Durga and the demons, and they daily recite it with deep fervour to recreate for themselves that martial tempo.

The Nihangs' sacred world is inseparable from the composite and ancient Hindu religious tradition, so distinguishing them from the monolithic tradition established by the Tat Khalsa in the beginning of the 20th century and continued by the SGPC wherein Sri Guru Granth Sahib is the single sacred book of the Sikhs.Nihangs' responsibilities are collecting fodder and looking after horses. Similarly, practicing martial arts is a part of daily routine. Nihangs have a common kitchen and preparation of the *langar* is assigned as a duty. The most notable aspect of their daily life is consumption of *sukha*, which is known by many names. Singh and Kaur (2011: 45) give the following recipe for what they call *shardai*: "— five leaves of cannabis are ground with almonds, cardamom seeds, poppy seeds, black pepper, rose petals, melon seed —-". Three names corresponding to the ingredients, are: *sarbati deg* (low dose of cannabis), *shaheedi deg* (high dose of cannabis), and *mureedi deg* (without sugar). Unlike baptized Sikhs who are mostly vegetarians, the Nihangs are largely non-vegetarians and meat curry is the best dish (*mahan prasad*).

Annual Calendar

The Nihangs strictly adhere to the annual calendar in a definite pattern in their movements. Despite the fact that all Nihangs are not always mobile, they tend to reach the destination by quick means of transport and wait for the mobile group known as c*halda vaheer*. They travel to sites connected with the life events of the Gurus for anniversaries. Gurdwaras have been constructed at these locations. One way to map their movement in terms of time and space is to describe it according to the Gregorian calendar. On the day of Maghi (the first day of the month Magh in the Bikrami calendar), which generally falls on either 14th or 15th January, the Nihangs reach Muktsar Sahib. It was here that Guru Gobind Singh blessed forty Sikh warriors with immortality, hence their designation as *chalimukte*(forty liberated ones) . The second destination is Anandpur Sahib on the occasion of Holi (Holla Mohalla), generally in the month of March. It is alleged that the tenth Guru was fond of playing Holi. The third destination, on the occasion of Vaisakhi on April 13, is Damdama Sahib (Talwandi

Sabo). Here Guru Gobind Singh took rest after leaving Anandpur Sahib and dictated the entire Sri Guru Granth Sahib to Bhai Mani Singh and Baba Deep Singh. The fourth destination is Baba Bakala, where (according to tradition) Guru Tegh Bahadur was recognized as the ninth Guru of the Sikhs on the day of Rakharh Puniain the month of *Bhadon*(July-August).

In the month of October (*Kartik*), on the festival of Dussehra, the Nihangs come together at Chamkaur Sahib and at Hazoor Sahib in Nanded, Maharashtra. Many of the Buddha Dal groups travel to Nanded. Whereas Chamkaur Sahib is the place where two of Guru Gobind Singh's sons were martyred while fighting with the Mughal army, no particular event took place at Hazoor Sahib, although Guru Gobind Singh spent his final years there. Nihangs celebrate Diwali in the month of October-November (*Kartik*) at Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, as it was on Diwali that Guru Hargobind reached Amritsar after his release from Gwalior prison. Diwali is also named as*Bandi Chhorh Diwas* on account of the release of imprisoned kings by the Mughal Emperor allegedly on the insistence of the Guru. The last destination is Fatehgarh Sahib at the Jorh Mela in the last week of December. It is the place where two of the sons of Guru Gobind Singh were martyred. The Buddha Dal calendar also shows the arrival of Nihangs on the birth anniversary (*gurpurab*) of Guru Nanak Dev at Sultanpur Lodhi where he lived as a young man and tradition reveals that he used to meditate under a Ber tree on the bank of Kali Bein (a rivulet) from where he disappeared for a few days and returned as the enlightened.

Generally, the Nihang Dals claiming to be c*halda vaheer* move from one place of sacred importance to another, though on the auspicious day(s) most of the Nihang Dals make it a point to reach the specific destination. They become part of the procession and their presence makes it quite colourful and attractive. For the Nihangs in general it is an occasion to demonstrate and exhibit their skills in handling arms. Swordsmanship (*gatka*, also performed with long stick) is the major attraction along with many other demonstrations of their martial art. The Nihangs do not have much authority over these places, as they are controlled by the SPGC or other bodies.

The major transformation among the Nihangs has occurred in their mode of movement and the decline in conflict with the local population. Earlier whenever the Nihangs used to move from one place to another, they would invariably force the local population to give them fodder which was scarce for the people. In the process they would come in clash with the local people. Stil such incident happen but the number has gone down. Despite the fact that horses still constitute the mainstay of the prestige of a Nihang Dal, they have mostly shifted to motor vehicles. The transportation of groceries and other required items has become easier. Earlier, their overnight stays resulted in conflicts with the local population due to the need for animal fodder and other things. Now each Dal has constructed a place known as *shauni* where the mobile Nihangs can stay and take proper rest.

Distinctive Features

The Nihangs are distinguished from others in their manner of speech, behaviour and dress pattern. Three distinctive features make the Nihangs stand apart. The first is their dress and particularly their turbans. According to 'Pall' (2007), the Nihangs get up at three in the morning and take four hours to get dressed. While this might be an exaggeration, considerable time is taken to tie the turban and in some cases the turban weighs twenty five to thirty five kilograms. Their usage of certain words with different meanings has made the Nihangs an object of special interest. According to Sekhon (1997), there is definite pattern in the way they used certain words. Generally, it involves positive exaggeration of one's condition and undermining the opponent's strength. Sekhon (ibid., 229) writes, "One with empty stomach would call himself maddened with prosperity. Taking a meal of parched gram of necessity a Nihang would describe himself as eating almonds. Even … onions for Nihangs are silver pieces, rupees on the other hand mere pebbles, and a club the repository of wisdom". Most of the weapons adorning the Nihangs are outdated and a Nihang looks like a warrior burdened with too many of arms. Cumulatively, their peculiarities have made the Nihangs the object of humour.

Interaction with Society and Contestations

The interactions of the Nihangs with Sikhs as a whole, with wider society and with the state are an interesting area of investigation. Earlier it was stated that most of the Nihangs are men and very few marry, but there is no strict rule governing their conjugal ties. Various legends as well as various accounts of historical events suggest that the Nihangs accepted no ruler and lived by observing their own traditions and rules. At the time of Mahraja Ranjit Singh they participated in many battles and helped his army to score unprecedented victories. Many scholars have pointed out their marginalization during British rule. Since India's independence in 1947 the Nihangs have been mainly indifferent towards political processes. However, on many occasions some of the groups have collaborated with the political party in power. One such case was the construction of the damaged structure of Akal Takht after the Operation Blue Star in 1984 when the chief of the Buddha Dal, Baba Santa Singh took over the responsibility on the request of the Congress leaders. He was criticized and excommunicated from the Sikh Panth. Baba Santa Singh was readmitted into the panth in 2001.

During the period of Sikh militancy between 1978 and 1993 the Nihangs remained aloof from the issue of Khalistan. Only two Nihangs turned militants, namely Avtar Singh Brahma and Pipal Singh. The Taruna Dal chief, Baba Ajit Singh Puhla[2] collaborated with the state against the militants and it was alleged that he was responsible for the elimination of the

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[2]Interviewed by the author on January 26, 2001.

family of a militant Joga Singh of the Khalistan Armed Force at his village Khanpur in Amritsar district. Kahan Singh, the chief of one of the Taruna Dals, was killed by the Sikh militants in 1988 in Nanded.

There have been two contexts of differences and contestations between the Nihangs and the SGPC. The first is related to the sacred texts. Whereas the SGPC acknowledges only the Sri Guru Granth Sahib as the living Guru of the Sikhs, all Nihang Dals also treat Dasam Granth and Sarb Loh Granth as sacred. The Sikhs in general have high respect for the Dasam Granth, but it is not recognised as the sacred book on a par with Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The second contestation is confined to the claims of the Buddha Dal. The Buddha Dal claims to be the fifth mobile throne (*panjwan takhht*). There are five *takhts* (thrones) in Sikhism, namely, Akal Takht (Amritsar), Patna Sahib (Patna), Kesgarh Sahib (Anandpur), Hazoor Sahib (Nanded), and Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sahib). The Buddha Dal claims that Damdama Sahib is not the fifth Takht. Though the claims of the Buddha Dal have not generated any serious conflict within the Sikh community, yet they have the potential to do so.

During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Nihangs maintained their independent existence, but participated in many battles he fought. The Nagas participated in battles on the side of a king. One major difference between the two is that the Nagas are ascetic, while there is no ban on marriage for Nihangs. As such there is no ban on marriage. However, the Nagas are not expected to practice celibacy. The Nihangs are strongly embedded in the Sikh tradition and would refuse to deviate from the tradition set for them.

The Nihangs may seem to be combination of medieval traditions, but they are great consumers of modernity. Alongside their mastery over traditional weapons, they are not averse to using modern firearms. Similarly they may use modern means of transportation and international travel has become quite common for some Nihangs. Baba Nihal, the present head of Taruna Dal Harian Velan, is married to a Punjabi Sikh who is a Canadian citizen. Baba Nihal Singh has also founded a college in Chabewal in Hoshiarpur district. Baba Santa Singh ('Pall', 2007, 90-91) established the Baba Buddha Dal Public School at Patiala. The Budha Dal has established other schools at Samana and Nihalgarh, Paonta.

Kang (1997, 228) writes "The Nihang today lives in his own world of past memory, not divorced from fancy. Besides his traditional investiture, his tall pyramidical turban, the ensemble of weapons he carries on his person and his lanky horse, what helps him to sustain him in his isolated domain is the magniloquent patios he has acquired". Thus the future of Nihangs seems safe. The Nihangs are not the only distinct group within the Sikh tradition. There are many such groups, Udasis, Nirmala,Nagas, Jogis to refer to a few which have been existing for centuries in India without being transformed into settled communities simply because they have kept on receiving new members. Some of the Nihang chiefs have

been revered as saints. Various Nihang *deras* control a large amount of land and so they are economically viable even if people do not visit their *deras*. However, their isolation from mainstream Sikh society and their distinctive life style may continue to be the reason for their being objects of humour as well as symbolizing the diversity in Sikh tradition.

Understanding Sacred Traditions

It is important to analyze and contextualize the Nihangs in the broad socio-religious spectrum of India. Before the advent of Islam in 12th century, religion in India was also characterized by plurality of beliefs. Interaction among numerous sects and interactions of various traditions including Buddhism took for granted the coexistence of differences. The Sufi tradition of Islam had all the features which could coexist with the already prevalent plural tradition. The Nihangs present a departure from the composite tradition of Sufis and Jogis. There are many features of the Nihang way of life which are similar to the Hindu warrior ascetics, the Nagas. The Nagas combined the roles of warrior and *sadhu*.The Nihangs fit into the tradition of fighting sadhus with certain distinct features resulting from their being part of the Sikh tradition. The most common feature of the Nihangs, which connects them to the *sadhus*, is their consumption of cannabis or marijuana but with the difference that the Nihangs do not smoke it. The word *akhara* used by the Nihangs signifies the place where they aretrained to wieldweapons and this usage is similar to the use of the word in Hindu tradition to denote wrestling ground. The Buddha Dal tends to argue that the tradition of Nihangs is ancient, but it remains a contentious issue, particularly after the claim of Nidar Singh, a Nihang living in United Kingdom, that he is the last in the "sanatan tradition" of learning the *shastravidya* (education in wielding the arms). Nihang and Singh (2008, 316) define *shastravidya* as "Indian science of weapons and warfare.There is a reasonable basis to argue on the basis of Sarb Loh Granth and *Chandi di Var* that the Nihangs might have been part of the Shaivite warrior ascetic tradition.Nihang and Singh (ibid., 316) describe Shiva as "The traditional Sikh martial arts revere Shiva as the *Adi Akhara Gurdav*, the primordial grandmaster. In the *Sarbloh Guru Granth Guru*, Guru Gobind Singh refers to the form of his Khalsa as being *Shiv-saroop*. To this day, Akali-Nihangs are known as *Shiv-saroop Maha-kali* Singhs in honour of Shiva". Notably, Chandi di Var begins with "*De Shiva war mohe ahe, shubh karman se kabhun na darroon*" (O Shiva! bless me so that I have no fear while doing good deeds).

However, the most important issue is that of weapons which makes both the Nagas and Nihangs almost coterminous. Murphy's (2009: 317) following comments opens the way for our understanding the warrior ascetic and the Sikh notion of Sant Sipahi[3] thus

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[3]Literally means saint and soldier.

> Weapons and religious power associated with them were thus generally "a part of a *shaktiyoga* repertoire that centred on harnessing supernormal forces both within and beyond human body", and were central to the growth of warrior asceticism in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, to the degree that "by 1800 armed ascetics were a familiar and valued component of the military economy on northern India". Such weapons and symbols of war not only valued when associated with the Guru, even in the Sikh context; the worship of weapons and standards were commonplace in Punjab overall.

It is quite clear that the tradition of keeping and worshipping weapons, and training in wielding of weapons precedes the Nihangs and the establishment of the Khalsa. Going by what Ghurye (1953) says it seems that the Naga sadhu tradition is older than what Murphy thinks; it is older than 18th century. It may thus be stated that the Naga sadhu warriors who were located at Punjab might have come under the influence of Sikhsim and in the process invented their origin from the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh. Such a process could be observed in the case of certain other sects also. For example, the Udasis (Ghurye ibid.) in India are a part of sadhu aristocracy within the Hindu tradition. Notwithstanding their connection with the first Sikh Guru, as Sri Chand the founder of Udasi sect was son of Guru Nanak, the Udasi typically represent Hindu tradition. However, various Udasi deras in Punjab have moved towards Sikhism (Singh 2016).

The uncertain and porous religious boundaries about which Oberoi (1994) has convincingly argued could be understood from the narrative of the great love ballad of Punjab, namely *Heer*. It is interesting to note that in order to meet Heer after she gets married in her husband's village, Ranjha becomes Hindu Jogi duly ordained into the sect by the Jogi Bal Nath. Ranjha is a Muslim and his becoming a Hindu Yogi has never raised any issue of concern despite the obvious contradictions. However, despite his becoming Yogi he remains a Muslim as the subsequent narrative of *Heer* shows (Judge2008).[4]

In the end, it is important to point out that understanding religious communities and traditions in multi-religious societies requires a different domain assumption and methodology. Religious identities do not exist as exclusive and neat categories whereby it becomes possible to separate them. In the process the localised realities and traditions enmesh with religious discourses and give rise to identities without boundaries. The likelihood of the warrior Naga Sadhus turning to Sikhism after the valorisation of the Khalsa tradition by the tenth Guru of the Sikhs is quite high. However, in the process of embracing Sikhism the Naga Sadhus also carried with them the old practices and nomenclature.

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[4]Heer is also the name of the main character in the narrative. When reference is made to the text it is in italics.

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In Search of the 'Nomadic': Methodological Explorations

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Believe that what is productive is not sedentary but nomadic
(Foucault 1983:xiil).

While search for a research methodology is as old as the history of Social Science, in this paper we argue that emergence of Forced Migration Studies (FMS) as a field calls for – not just a new methodology - but also a new *understanding* of methodology[1]. The new understanding of methodology, as we will see, also makes it imperative on us to re-define such concepts as 'space', 'State' and 'sovereignty' etc. that are otherwise very commonplace to diverse Social Science disciplines. The first two parts of the paper revolve around these two critical themes of methodological understanding and redefinition respectively, while the third seeks to address the question of research ethics that one is required to follow as one engages in forced migration research. The third part is predicated on the assumption that the search for a methodology will have its obvious ethical implications for social research. Elsewhere we argued (2000:48-57) that FMS as a field is vast and is as complex as the variety of factors (such as conflict, development, disaster and so forth) inducing forced migration. Methodology or even methodological understanding and ethics suitable for researches on one kind of forced migration may not be as suitable – if at all – for other kinds. For obvious limitations of space, this paper does not propose to bring in such issues as vastness and complexities involved in FMS. Instead, it highlights some key issues in broad terms in the light of some of the current researches in the field and develops albeit an extremely tentative and preliminary argument, which of course leaves scope for further debate and discussion.

Sedentary Methodologies

Notwithstanding Foucault's timely caveat against the sedentary, social research continues to be firmly ensconced in sedentary methodologies as much as most of the hitherto existing methodologies seem to be biased in favour of the settled and the sedentary. While Social Science methodologies have a preference for studying objects in their stationery or frozen state, the mobile is always held as chaotic. In the words of Creswell, "Mobility seems a chaotic thing - chaotic in the sense that moving things are often chaotic in the way we

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[1]An earlier draft of this paper was presented to the seminar on 'Frontiers of Political Theory' organized by the Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal University on 9-10 January, 2014. I particularly thank Niraja Gopal Jayal and other participants for their comments. Lapses, if any, are however mine.

experience them. Stationary, sedentary life, on the other hand, is hard to see as chaos" (Creswell 2006:6).

As a corollary to it, the settled and the sedentary are always regarded as true as much as the moving and the mobile are regarded as too contingent and chaotic to be true. In simple terms, our methodologies have also been methodologies of truth, albeit stable and enduring truth – whether by serving as a means of verifying, refuting or falsifying our conjectures with truth claims till the truth is established or by seeking to understand the mechanics of truth production in society. Indeed, the quest for truth, we are constantly reminded, is both tiring and arduous and one cannot afford to rest till it is finally discovered.

In the Positivist trajectory of truth-seeking, the emphasis has invariably been laid on exploring the infinite possibilities of truth through the processes of verification or falsification. Partition (1947), for instance, is regarded as not only the foundational moment in the evolution into States in the subcontinent, but the beginning of forced displacement of population in the region. One can further argue that forced displacement thanks to Partition also marked the beginning of the post-Independent States in the region (Das 2004:151-172). The debate on whether the Indian National Congress was responsible for the Partition or the Muslim League is yet to come to an end. The widely known Tara Chand's 'official' history of freedom movement[2] accuses the Muslim League of having been instrumental in creating Pakistan much against the will of the Muslim masses and even some of its provincial factions and of being responsible for the human tragedy that accompanied it. By contrast, a section of Pakistani scholars holds the Indian National Congress responsible for the great human tragedy that accompanied the Partition.

The multi-volume work of Walter Fernandes et al. on the state of population displacement in different Indian states between 1947 and 1997 may be illustrative of the first. Their work subjects all 'official truths' about forced migration – particularly the one induced by the commissioning of dams and other development projects - into meticulous scrutiny and verification. A new and unknown truth with much greater claim to 'truthfulness' albeit with hugely disastrous consequences for social life is discovered in the process of such scrutiny and verification. They have recently conducted a study on West Bengal published with the title - *Progress for What?* (2012). The book declares to have contested the official 'truth' of the State.[3] The 'official' truth makes us believe that development is essential for us and displacement that it triggers in consequence is regarded as its necessary cost to be borne by the society. He and his team have been engaged in the search for an alternative truth for

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[2]Tara Chand was vested with the responsibility of writing the multi-volume, 'official' history of the freedom movement in India. The first volume was published in 1961 (Chand 1961).

[3]We use the word 'State' with capital 'S' to refer to the Union Government while the word 'state' with 's' in small is used here to refer to the state governments constituting the Union of of India.

long – presumably since the late 1980s till they hope to establish it beyond any doubt. They make a fervent plea for establishing certain parity between what one loses in terms of land and livelihood and what one gains by paying the price of development calculated in terms of such loss. It is important that unless the parity is achieved, the losers are fairly compensated for what they are forced to lose and made the equal stakeholders, development may be said to have been achieved - but only at the cost of justice.

While the 'Truth', according to the Positivist framework, is assumed to be *one* with capital 'T' and researchers are urged to discover it relentlessly till it is finally discovered, a new awareness that truths are produced at multiple sites has developed particularly in recent decades. Since there is a plurality of truths, there is no way we can privilege one over the other. This awareness forces us to rule out the possibility of any singular 'Truth' with 'T' in capital establishing itself by effectively 'subjugating' a host of others. While the Positivist framework is geared to the understanding of the possibilities of knowledge, the latter flags its limits. Yet for both of them, truth – whether singular or plural – is potentially knowable. A series of Partition Studies brought out by the feminist collective called 'Kali for Women' particularly since the 1990s and other feminist publishing houses seek to retrieve these 'subjugated' truths from the hitherto silenced voices and brittled pages of history. The works of Menon and Bhasin (1998) and Butalia (2000) focusing on ethnographies of thousands of women who were abducted and then 'recovered' by the respective State authorities during the post-Partition era illustrates the paternalism of the Indian State. It took upon itself the role of the protector and benefactor and insisted on determining where the women and their children would belong. For women who were dislocated, impoverished, widowed, and collectively described in policy terms as 'unattached' or even 'liability', the State stepped in as the surrogate pater familias more often than not subjecting them to another round of dislocation and displacement ironically in the name of rehabilitating them. This marks the State's attempt at recapturing its control over *its* women and their bodies. Urvashi Butalia (2000) retrieved the stories of 'smaller, often invisible players: ordinary people, women, children, scheduled castes' and underlined the need to look at how people remember partition (Butalia 2000). These authors have contextualized the individual narratives and while Menon and Bhasin (1998) give a gendered reading of Partition through memories of the affected women, Butalia (2000) focuses on the marginalized, that is, on Partition memories of women, children, and lower castes.

Ross Mallick (1999) points out that back in the erstwhile East Pakistan the near total departure of the Hindu upper-caste landed elite and urban middle classes meant that communal agitation had to be directed against the Hindu untouchables who were left behind. Later refugees therefore came from the lower classes mostly the Namashudras (a ritually low, but numerically vast landless, cultivating caste), who lacked the means to survive on their own and became dependent on government relief. Lacking the family and caste connections of the previous middle class refugees, they had to accept the government policy

of dispersing them to other states, on the ground that there was insufficient vacant land in West Bengal. By doing so the Congress government effectively broke up the Namasudra movement and scattered the caste in refugee colonies outside Bengal – in the far-off Andaman Islands, in the arid land of Dandakaranya in central India, thereby enhancing the dominance of the traditional Bengali 'tricaste elite' (of the Brahmins, the Kayasthas and the Baidyas). However, the land the untouchable refugees were settled in in other states was hostile to human habitation – mostly forests in the traditional territory of tribal people, who resented the occupation of their habitat. The conditions in many resettlement camps, according to reports, were deplorable, and grievances led to resentment and movement, which began at Mana group of camps in Dandakaranya and the refugees decided to launch a wider movement for resettlement in the deltaic islands of the Sunderbans in southern West Bengal. Refugees began to settle at Marichjhapi Island in the Sunderbans, after the Left Front government came to power in 1977, but the government was not ready to tolerate such settlement, arguing that it had violated the Forests Act. It is debatable whether the CPI (M)-led Left Front government placed primacy on ecology or merely feared that this might eventually trigger an unmanageable refugee influx from the surrounding states with the consequent loss of their political support.

These studies conducted in recent years, in other words, point to the other sites of truth production beyond the great power game played by such well-known agents as the colonial rulers, Indian National Congress, the Muslim League and even the local leaders etc. These - albeit *partial truths* - continue to leave their heterotopic traces in the social and political life, which remain dormant but surely are not dead and what is called the settled and the sedentary is forced to suffer the scars and bruises of all these partial truths. A genealogical exploration into the processes of truth production must concentrate on these faint traces, the scars and bruises that are hardly noticed by the historians and social scientists. As Foucault observes:

> Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things; its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present, that it continues secretly to animate the present, having imposed a predetermined form to its vicissitudes. Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people. On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that give birth to these things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents (Foucault 1977:148).

What happens, according to Foucault, ‘subjugates’ what does not and perhaps what cannot be and the current events imply ‘a series of subjugations’ that constantly seek to shape these events through their interruptions. Thus to cite an instance, Samaddar argues that Partition is not really a reconstruction of the past, it is a recording of a continuous present. In that sense Partition is an enduring fact, living in the present as much as in the past. The importance of Partition for modern times has been called to attention by many scholars. It is argued that even if the event goes back to the forties, it has remained a reality, a deep metaphor for violence, fear, domination, separation, ‘a metaphor, in one word, for the past, one that goes on making the present inadequate’ (Samaddar 2001:105). Samaddar considers Partition an event of the past and a sign of the present time; he writes: ‘Partition lives on in post-colonial time to such an extent that we should truly prefer the phrase “partitioned times” to the more common “post-colonial times”’ (Samaddar 2001:105).

The Positivist methodology being the methodology of Truth institutes what in Political Philosophy is called metaphysics of presence - whether of the State or of capital or both in their collusion. In the articulation of this metaphysics, the forced migrant – maybe a woman or a *dalit,* a child or otherwise – who stands resolutely as a *supplement* - always refusing to dissolve into the official *T*ruth of the nation-state that came into being as a result of Partition - and constantly destabilizes it from within. The violence that the presence of this ‘official’ Truth of the nation-state does to the other smaller and partial *t*ruths for its own institution and establishment is always inadequate, always negotiating with itself and perpetually seeking to come to terms with its ever fragile and perennially unstable foundation. As Sweetman puts it, the presences are touched and produced by the absences and inadequacies of smaller truths, but are “not themselves it” (Sweetman n. d. 238). While this new methodological awareness focuses more on *what* she and her absence do to the *T*ruths circulating in the society, much less is said about *how* her agency is established not by announcing and establishing her presence – which is unlikely to become successful - but by marking her absence. Since the absence is to be marked, it cannot but be active. Nietzsche’s aphorism that as one ‘walks’, one hits ‘thoughts’ of ‘value’ turns our attention away from what to how, to the very act of ‘walking’, to *walking as a methodology* of Social Science and the art of how one walks into thoughts that are of ‘value’. The art of walking is important, for, not all walks enable us to be informed by valuable thoughts.

The Productivity of the Nomadic

In the epigram cited at the beginning of this paper, Foucault calls for privileging the ‘nomadic’ over the ‘sedentary’. Or to return to Nietzsche’s aphorism that ‘thought reached by walking are of value’, how does one walk, if one were to walk into ‘thoughts of value’, as he would have argued? Not so much by making her final arrival at any given location, by fixing and freezing her at any given moment, and thus announcing another presence as Positivist methodology would have us believe. Positivist methodology, as we argued, strives for

establishing the Truth of the forced migrant in place of the official Truth of the endless path of development. Walking, as Nietzsche seems to remind us, is hardly linear departing as it were from a point of origin to one of destination, but resembles an iteration that makes one stand perpetually at a node from where a multiplicity of paths opens - not to any one destination - but further to a variety of nodes. In the famous nonsense rhyme 'Thikana' (Address) in Sukumar Ray's *Abol Tabol*, Jagamohan, on being asked what the address of Adyanath's uncle is, replies:

> If you need address, listen patiently, in the intersection of the Amratala Mor,/Three paths move towards three directions and you follow one of them,/You head on following your nose keeping your eye on the right –/As you go you will see that the path takes a bend./You will see, many roads have opened there on your right and left,/You better move about following them for a while like in a maze./Then you bend rightwards and turn abruptly,/ Again you return leaving three lanes on your left./Then only you can come back again to the intersection of the Amratala Mor,/Then you go wherever you want, get lost and do not disturb me! (Excerpted and freely translated from *Thikana* by Sukumar Ray).

This albeit futile effort of finding out one's destination is exasperatingly circular as Ray points out here – perhaps more so in our age of globalism.[4]

We argue that in the existing literature the absence of the forced migrant is always pitted against the presence of the settled and the sedentary. Her absence is thus made subservient to the presence of the settled and sedentary and is as it were involved in an endless and albeit unsuccessful battle against this presence. If the migrant were to exercise her agency it could only be by absenting her presence, by hiding her, by suppressing – if not erasing - her presence, by carefully avoiding the otherwise elaborate processes of refugee detection, identification and surveillance, even by faking and misidentifying herself in order to evade torture, arrest, deportation or death. Doesn't this in part explain how thousands of refugees cross international borders without being detected or sail across the high seas braving all odds?

Let me cite an example from my own ethnographic work. It was an exceptionally humid and sultry afternoon as we hit the tip of Akheriganj on the Indian side of the banks of the Padma separating her from Bangladesh. We saw a barge slowly floating towards us and a middle-aged man with his bicycle stationed on the platform was the first to get down from it as the barge approached the ghat. I came to know subsequently that he was Sohrab Ali and I eventually

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[4]I have discussed it in my valedictory address to the Tenth Winter Course on Forced Migration organized by the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group on 1-15 December 2012. The forces and processes of globalization have led to an acceleration of this kind of migration.

struck a conversation with him as the crowd on the barge got down without making any noise and thinned out quietly and the lone BSF patrol faded away. The entire area looked deserted and Ali confides that he is returning from the nearby bazaar across the border where he sells egg and earns his livelihood. He is the only earner in a family of six members and price of egg varies on both sides of the border and Ali ekes out a living by taking advantage of differential pricing – thanks to the border that separates the two nation-states. How else would Ali live, I wonder, if there were no border? For, border gives him the comparative price advantage and offers livelihood opportunities to him and his family of six souls. On the other hand, he can avail himself of the comparative advantage only when he crosses the border as he does it daily and of course at grave risk to his life.

I remember Sohrab Ali telling me that people like him who live on the border are like husk isolated from the paddy. Like husk, they are of no use to the nation. The paddy have for long deserted the husk in their journey for greener pasture - to Nashipur, Bhagabangola, Lalgola, Kolkata and even Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune – the new face of globalized India - where they work as zari-workers, goldsmiths and construction labourers etc. Those who are left here do not have even the means of migrating to these areas. We spoke for far too long and I became thirsty. He said that he could offer me water of the Padma that he and his family were forced to drink as the entire groundwater in the area was contaminated by arsenic – caused perhaps by the overuse of fertilizers and pesticides – thanks to the Green Revolution in West Bengal initiated in a large way by the former Left Front Government. Sohrab has no hesitation in admitting that people like him prefer to go to the Government hospital in Rajshahi than to the one in Murshidabad when they fall ill and are need of medical attention. The hospital in Bangladesh offers better medical facilities at a cheaper price. Earlier he used to own land large enough to feed his family. But as the river swings and shifts its course, his land has by then become part of the Bangladeshi territory. Even then he continued to cultivate the land, but could not reap the harvest as one day he discovered that 'the goons of Bangladesh' had looted his harvest at night. Sohrab Alis live their life only by suppressing their presence.

If Sohrab Ali is required to establish his absence by suppressing his presence from the peering eyes of the border police on both sides in order that he lives and his family is not ruined or decimated, there are also examples of forced migrants who register their presence by marking their absence, by constantly inscribing the sense of loss on their presence – a loss writ large in their presence but can never be made good by any means. To cite an example, some empirical studies on the forced migrants – particularly the Partition refugees – drive home the point that as they settle themselves in the new country they name their 'colonies' and newly settled villages, the names of markets and sweetmeat shops etc. after the names of the villages they left. Ghosh (2013: 22-44) has extensively worked on the colonies of North Bengal named after those of the ancestral villages of the settlers from East Bengal/Pakistan. He cites the examples of Rajshahi colony and Pabna colony in

Haldibari, of Mymenshingh Para in Jateswar, Dhakeswari colony, Dhaka Udbastu colony in Bhaktinagar and Dhakeswari colony in Hamiltongaunge. He also points out how the Partition refugees sought to rebuild solidarities by way of establishing Sammilanis or congregations across West Bengal. He also refers to the widespread practice of mentioning the name of the district and even village in the advertisements seeking matrimonial alliances. Thus in the presence of absence, there is always the conflation between home and destination and the migrant is called upon to make constant back-and-forth movement between them, between the past and the present in order to make the past come alive in the present. The past is *re*lieved not in the way it used to be, but in the new locale, at a different space and time. Insofar as the forced migrant exercises an agency by registering the presence of her absence, she weaves a history – contra-history as one may call it – by telling us what the history could have been, but never had been in reality – a contra-history that she also desperately seeks to imagine into existence.

Space, State, Sovereignty: Shifting Terrain

Foucault in his Preface to *Anti-Oedipus* by Deleuze and Guattari points out how 'walking' as a methodology calls for a re-definition of such concepts as 'space', 'state' and 'sovereignty' that are central to our understanding of migration in general and forced migration in particular.

> Withdraw allegiance from the old categories of the Negative (law, limit, castration, lack, lacuna), which Western thought has so long held sacred as a form of power and an access to reality. Prefer what is positive and multiple, difference over uniformity, flows over unities, mobile arrangements over systems (Foucault 1983:Xiil)

In a world where there is endlessly circular churning of population, it becomes difficult to keep track with people and their identities. Anonymity becomes the rule. Earlier, population displacement used to take place on a space in a linear fashion from a point of origin to a point of destination usually defined with reference to push-pull factors. Now it is the space that moves, not the people. As Deleuze and Guattari observe: "It is the earth that deterritorializes itself, in a way that provides the nomad with a territory. The land ceases to be land, tending to become simply ground **(sol)** or support" (Deleuze & Guattari 2010:45). The space that has hitherto remained striated thanks to the establishment of territorial States and similarly territorialized administrative units preventing thereby the free entry and exit of migrants across their borders has become flat and smooth so much so that it is possible for one to migrate from one country to another, from countries of the Global South to the North – to countries of Europe, New Zealand, Australia and the USA of course at grave personal risk. At a time when large masses of people move and there are mixed and massive flows of population without any home to return, it is the earth - and not a section of people

- that 'deterritorializes' itself in a way that provides the migrants with a space for such movement.

Thus to cite an instance, a study on women's trafficking in North Bengal conducted by the University of North Bengal (2012), for instance, points out how swiftly the women from some of the backward districts of the region are trafficked away from the villages to the nearby towns, to the neighbouring countries, to Kathmandu, Bangkok and Copenhagen and such places through a network in which the victims are constantly on the move not knowing what their next port of call would be and the middlemen and the agents work without having any idea of the routes and paths of these trafficked women. When the space moves, there is churning of population and people hardly know each other as they move and settle albeit momentarily in course of their endless journey. I described Siliguri – the largest town of North Bengal – not as a city of migrants although it has been the largest recipient of the migrant population since its birth in the early twentieth century, but as a town constantly in transit. I wrote the following:

> Siliguri's slow insertion into the ever-expanding global network hardly leaves room for any transcendence. For, it simultaneously takes away from us our ability to comprehend and make sense of not so much the city per se as it happens in Los Angeles, but its connectedness and nodes – the deep mechanics of the network of which it is only a part - in its totality. You never know whether one who jumps into death and commits suicide from the terrace of a highrise is your next-door neighbour or the lower middle-class girl next door is the one who suffered bullet injury while entertaining her guests inside a hotel at night. The network has taken away from us our known identities and constantly pushes our sensory perception to its limits. Familiar faces now become unfamiliar while ever-unfamiliar faces keep adding on to the city (Das 2013:38).

The State is mapped on an equally sedentary metaphysic with a stable Centre from where power spreads out towards the border and turns into an apparatus of capture of its subjects and citizens by setting up the borders as the container of its power. Power is bound to fade out as it spreads towards the fringes and the territorial borders. The resistance put up by the migrants to the codification and enumeration of life by the State often reflects expression of positive desire not to become sedentary, coded, classified or fixed in space and time. These are the people who follow a form of movement without the possession of any territory. Similarly, the concept of sovereignty is also reconceptualised. Sovereignty today is a type of power that the apparatus of capture is least comfortable with, as the forced migrant constantly escapes, creates, morphs and moves, and therefore keeps herself in a perpetually fluid state. In other words, the nomadic lens offers us a terrain in which our commonplace

concepts and theories look unrecognizably distinct from what they conventionally appear before us.

The Ethics of Research

Does research on forced migration make it imperative on our part to be guided by any kind of ethical obligation? One may argue that forced migration being a source of destabilization turns against any ethical discourse and threatens to eject the researcher out of the ethical loop. While such an extreme eventuality is not uncommon particularly in cases of displacement induced by war and ethnic conflicts, empirical studies cited above underline the importance of closely understanding the processes through which the forced migrant exercises her agency by constituting and literally living her absence. For the purpose of convenience, we will confine ourselves at this point to an analysis of the phenomenon of displacement induced by ethnic conflicts.

The researcher is caught as it were between two mutually opposite worlds: While at one level it is only natural on her part to develop complete empathy and identify with the displaced, she is also required by the Positivist framework to be as ‘objective’ as possible in her research. In case of conflict-induced displacement, for example, the researcher often turns into a party to the conflict so much so that her ethical obligation runs the risk of becoming synonymous with ethnic obligation. Either of the two, as the following two subsections point out, does not seem to help us in any way.

The Eth[n]ics

Ethnic conflict at its most heightened phase splits the society in a way that the researcher is obliged to take a side and become a party to the ongoing conflict. Being ethnic gives one as it were a licence to kill the *other* with impunity and without any remorse. Examples of researchers being dragged into or getting entangled in ethnic conflicts that they decide to work on and losing their life in effect are by no means rare. More often than not the researcher is dragged into the conflict against her will. Mahanta in his recently published book (2013) regrets that the middle ground has been lost in the otherwise conflict-ridden society of Assam. He is reportedly advised to stay away from making such statements in public after the book was released. Herder, the great romantic thinker, for instance, argues that cosmopolitan ethics that a researcher is urged to follow particularly in situations of heightened ethnic conflicts is nothing but a sham. As he maintains:

> Neither our head nor our heart is formed for an infinitely increasing store of thoughts and feelings, our hand is not made, our life is not calculated for it. Do not our finest mental powers decay, as well as flourish? Do they not even fluctuate with years and circumstances, and relieve one another in friendly context, or rather in a circular dance? And who has not found, that

> an unlimited extension of his feelings enfeebles and annihilates them, while it gives to the air in loose flocks what should have found the cord of love, or clouds the eyes of others with its ashes? As it is impossible, that we can love others more than ourselves, or in a different way, for we love them as part of ourselves, or rather ourselves in them, that mind is happy, which, like a superior spirit,, embraces much within the sphere of its activity, and in restless activity deems it a part of itself: but miserable is that, the feelings of which, drowned in itself, are useful neither to itself nor others. The savage, who loves himself, his wife and child, with quiet joy, and glows with limited activity for his tribe, as for his own life, is, in my opinion, a more real thing, than that cultivated shadow, who is enraptured with the love of the shades of his whole species, that of a name. The savage has room in his poor hut for every stranger, whom he receives as his brother with calm benevolence, and asks not once whence he comes. The deluged heart of the idle cosmopolite is a hut for no one (Herder 1968:75-76).

He exhorts the researcher to live up to the commitment to her community – in his case her nation. The problem with this formulation is that it erases the middle ground in a society where there is 'war of all against all' and the researcher by taking a position plays a role in its perpetuation. Ethical concern, as we see it, is to deterritorialize the ethic in a way that it 'escapes or departs from a given territory' (Patten 2015:4) or ethnicity. This is what Deleuze calls the 'counteractualization' of phenomena: such philosophical redescription enables us to see things differently or to see them as they might become rather than as they currently are. The protagonists of *eth(n)ics* who think that 'ethics' and 'ethnics' are essentially the same do not however mind if a justification for ethnic warfare is made through their research and such warfare continues unabated resulting in grave human tragedy.

The Challenge of being 'Objective'

By contrast, there is the argument that more distant the researcher keeps vis-à-vis the conflict, the more she is likely to succeed as a researcher without adding to its intensity. The distance is a function of objectivity in Social Science. The classical statement in favour of objectivity comes from Max Weber. Being 'objective' in Social Science research is understood to mean assessing instrumentality or what he calls appropriateness of the means to the ends. As he writes:

> All serious reflection about the ultimate elements of meaningful human conduct is oriented primarily in terms of categories "end" and "means". We desire something concretely either "for its own sake" or as a means of achieving something else which is more highly desired. The question of the appropriateness of the means for achieving a given end is undoubtedly accessible to scientific analysis (Weber 1949: 52).

Weber however subjects his instrumentality principle to a couple of conditionalities: First, if the means that are considered as appropriate are not available then one becomes ‘indirectly critical’ of the end and asks for bending and compromising it. (b) If the deployment of means considered ‘appropriate’ in the pursuit of one end implicitly introduces compromises – if not dislocations of other ends considered as equally or even more important - then the society is to determine the relative ‘predictable consequences’ of such compromise.

Objectivity understood as instrumentality principle a la Max Weber poses two sets of problems: (a) observance of objectivity is likely to amount to ‘objectification’ of the researcher and (b) the principle has a tendency of turning live social actors into mere ‘objects’ of research. My experience as a researcher in the otherwise highly conflict-prone area of India’s Northeast testifies that all others and not just my respondents have always been very nice and decent to me across the board as much as I have been nice and decent to all of them. Being an outsider my respondents and interlocutors often became overtly concerned about my safety and security. At a time when I was yet to pick up fluency in Assamese, many of them advised me not to take public bus where I would be required to communicate in the same and it would be possible for others to make out my identity as I would fumble over my Assamese. Now I must make the anecdotal confession that the imperative of being nice and decent to others often holds me from expressing my ethical position on any of the ongoing conflicts. As I strove hard for becoming ‘objective’ I could realize that I was as it were exercising control over my own self in my attempt at becoming what I am *not* – at turning against my very being. At the end of the day I discover that I become in the process a product of my doctoral work and the doctoral work is not a product of mine (Das 2002:4-6).

What social scientists delineate as social reality is the product of the tools, instruments and categories that they employ in order to make sense of and/or change it. They define social reality as a ‘field’ that they consider worthy of their investigation and research. Thus, social reality is made synonymous with the field. We are made to believe that there is no social reality outside the field. Social science tools, instruments and categories in other words, contribute to the construction of the field. The gaze of social science could be excruciatingly painful as it might take a toll on human life. Chuni Kotal – the first lady graduate amongst the Lodhas of West Midnapore (West Bengal) – classified by the colonial authority as a ‘criminal tribe’ – who took admission into the postgraduate Department of Anthropology of a state-run University in West Bengal - committed suicide reportedly because of the gaze that was cast on her by the overenthusiastic teachers and students. Chuni’s brother observed in disgust: “why do they [the researchers] visit us? To see how we walk, eat, drink, dress and defecate?” Unable to take it any longer, as his brother writes, she took her life.

The Ethics of Life

Ethics of social research on forced migration obliges the researcher to bring home the 'absence' of the displaced by way of observing how it gets registered, to see how she 'endures' with her resilience and lives. By registering her absence, whether through the presence of absence or through the absence of presence, the forced migrant opens up 'new possibilities of being' – different from what 'takes place' - and unless what takes place is implicated with the possibilities of 'taking place differently' the reality cannot release these possibilities. The researcher is called upon to remain committed to bring out the implications and be 'attuned to' these new possibilities. As Dillon argues:

> … [T]aking place necessarily … allows and requires … revisionary practices of the (political) self. These are concerned with responding to the continuous insurrectionary call of Justice that arises within the self, as well as between selves, to the self. Such practices, while depending upon the possibility of imagining and knowing ourselves differently, recall the very reality of having imagined and known ourselves differently. They do so in order to keep open the possibility that we may continue to imagine and know ourselves differently. It is how this responsibility is assumed — not the *essentia* of a what—which ultimately decides the question of identity. Hence, the more unity, uniformity and immutability demanded of the self, the more ethical dissolution and irresolution is produced; and the more the self is fragmented into competing egotistical solipsisms, incarcerated within equally fragmented and desiccated worlds (Dillon 1996:203).

Ethics of research in FMS therefore is about resilience – not victimhood, about life – not death, about living life dangerously. The living body refuses to make itself available for the forms and technologies of governance as it fears death and develops a stake in the practice of life. The potential of body as a living organism never completely exhausts itself by surrendering to the call of death, but constantly interrupts the forms and technologies of governance. As Rosi Braidotti aptly sums up: "What is ethics, then? A thin barrier against the possibility of extinction. Ethics consists in re-working the pain into threshold of sustainability, when and if possible: cracking, but holding it, still. It is a mode of actualising sustainable forms of transformation" (Braidotti 2006:141).

Let us cite an example from our own ethnographic work. We conducted a series of such studies and interviews in Gerukamukh area in Upper Assam – the hub of anti-dam protest in the Northeast - organized by Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) and a few other organizations. While recent violence in Lower Assam is predicated primarily on the demand for homeland - whether for driving out the 'outsiders' or against being driven out by them - the movement in Gerukamukh marks the arrival of a new subject in the wake of a series of

developmental policies initiated since the early 1990s. The interviews were conducted across various age groups and communities like the Mishings, Dewris, Ahoms, Assamese, Nepalis, Hajongs, Bodos and other Tea tribes like the Kurmis etc.

Most of our respondents extend unflinching support to the anti-dam protests – although not all of them actively take part in them. When asked why they support it all of them have been unequivocal in pointing out that the issue is integral to 'security of their life' (*jiwanar suraksha*). They argue that unless their life is not secure, development becomes 'unthinkable'. What will they do with development if they are not alive? Economic development or for that matter any other kind of development has no meaning unless there is security of life, which according to one respondent, cuts across the ethnic boundaries and is 'greater' (*brihattar swartha*) than economic development for any 'particular' community. When collective survival is under threat, it is imperative that all people irrespective of their ethnicity, creed and community identity come together and put up a joint (*ekeloge*) resistance and collective (*umaihotiya*) struggle. It is important that 'the public' (*raij*) across ethnicities and nationalities work together as a collective (*ekgot*). Haren Saikia – a medical practitioner based in Narayanpur – observes: "This is a movement with which the interests of all classes and the public are tied up." Construction of dams will make them vulnerable to natural disaster which – if it ever happens in a seismically fragile region – will not discriminate between classes and ethnicities. The collective survival of the people in common will be under threat (*bhabuki*). Ensuring the security of life is therefore the topmost priority for them.

Life for them is understood in broad and collective terms. Another reason cited by them while explaining their support to the anti-dam movement is ensuring the 'security of Assam'. Construction of dam in an otherwise ecologically fragile region will pose threat to the territorial integrity of Assam so much so that the 'map of Assam' will be 'decimated' (*salani*) and a part of it might be permanently wiped out. In the words of a local journalist who was also one of our respondents: "If we cannot make our immediate living space (*thai*) and our future generation survive, then what will we do with autonomy?" The movement, according to Sarat Dewri – a student leader of Bhimbar Nagar, again a respondent - is a desperate attempt at upholding 'the geographical existence of upper Assam' (*ujani Asomar bhougalik astitwa*). While autonomy pertains to any particular community in exclusion of another, the protest against construction of dams is inseparably connected with 'the interest of the larger nation' (*brihat jati*). Nation here is understood as 'the people of Assam'.

While a whole diversity of groups and communities constitutes 'the people of Assam', the coming into being of 'the people of Assam' as a collective is a complex task as envisaged by our respondents. *Thai* in Assamese is a word used popularly to refer to one's immediate dwelling place and neighbourhood as distinguishable from homeland. It is interesting to

note that a distinction is made between one’s identity as a dweller in a particular *thai* (like Gogamukh) on one hand and one’s identity as a member of a particular ethnic community. An ethnic community within an area is spread across many such *thai*s – each *thai* in effect has its own importance for those who inhabit it. Thus, Leeladhar Doley – a commoner from Gogamukh, one of our respondents – argues that his identity as a dweller of *thai* prompts him to unite with others and fight against the dam that threatens to wipe out the *thai*, while his identity as a member of the Dewri community makes him ask for Sixth Schedule status for the Dewris. His proposed disjunction between ethnic and immediate spatial identities should not escape our attention. It is true that security of life, according to our respondents, is again closely interconnected with the question of territorial integrity of Assam, but Assam as a territory consists of many groups and ethnic communities each with its own congeries of *thais* etched in its map, important for the survival of those who inhabit it. Security of life is connected with the issue of territorial integrity. While autonomy disunites people and privileges one community over another, the anti-dam protest unites all of them.

Insofar as threat is perceived as ‘real’ by all of them, the body refuses to make itself available for the forms and technologies of developmental governance as it fears death and develops a stake in the practice of life. The potential of body as a living organism never completely exhausts itself by surrendering to the call of death, but constantly interrupts the forms and technologies of developmental governance. Never before in the history of the Northeast has physical body become so much of a security concern for the people as it is now. This is not to say that physical body of a human being has never been under threat in region’s history. The recent violence in Lower Assam (July-November 2012) points to how physical existence particularly of the common people was under threat. But the important point is that for every life lost, an epitaph is written by the particular community that loses its member and therefore there is mourning and pledge to revenge for her death. Processions were taken out with the dead bodies of those who lost their lives as a result of the ethnic violence. The dead is remembered as a martyr. But when a dam bursts and washes out communities and groups, there is life that is lost ‘without being sacrificed’. The catastrophe leaves no one for mourning the dead.

The living life of the forced migrant does not register its presence; it registers its absence through a variety of means and opens up new possibilities of ‘taking place’ and keeps alive the counteractual only in hiding. The challenge of any methodological exercise is to introduce the figure of the forced migrant – a living and enduring body - to bear on what her absence means for FMS and does to the presence of the already settled and the sedentary by continuously trying to come home, but without ever reaching there, by being always on the move and thus constantly walking into ‘thoughts of value’.

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Kitchlew – the Soldier of National Unity

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Abstract

The present paper seeks to analyse the role of Saifuddin Kitchlew for national unity during freedom struggle of India. Through his fiery speeches, Kitchlew strived hard to effect national unity among Hindu, Muslim and Sikh fellows. He considered national unity as a key to the freedom of our nation. Ever since he had launched Tanzeem movement, it was alleged that he had become communalist but he clarified that the movement was non-political and non-communal in nature and was meant for regeneration of Muslim community. Moreover, similar movements already existed among the Hindu and the Sikh communities. He opposed partition, which when happened, he chose to stay in India near Delhi. An analysis of his speeches presents Kitchlew before us as the soldier of national unity.

"Even for the smallest trifles we must show that India is united" are the words of Saifuddin Kitchlew which reverberated through the galleries of our nation during the national movement. A 'fearless and uncompromising freedom fighter', popularly known as, the'hero of Jallianwala Bagh', Kitchlewwas an eloquent public speaker who possessed not only masterly oratory skills but also indomitable patriotic zeal and enthusiasm to arouse the sentiments of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs alike to stand for national unity, which according to him, was a key to the freedom of our nation.

Born at Amritsar in 1888, Kitchlew completed his secondary school education in the home town. He graduated at Agra and Aligarh before he went abroad for higher studies. He received his B.A. degree from Cambridge, Bar-at-law from London and Ph.D. from Germany.[1] He returned to Amritsar in 1915 where he settled down as a lawyer and became keenly interested in social and political activities of the town. Here he began to organize youth, foster national unity and make efforts to liberate India from British yoke.

Kitchlew, a patriotically dutiful leader, gave an early call of national unity in a speech at national meeting of Muslims on 13 February 1919. Comparing a nation with a human body, he remarked that just like different limbs have to unite together to constitute a body, the Hindus and Muslims must unite together to constitute the nation.[2]

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[1]The Tribune, Oct. 10, 1963.

[2]No.21. 'Translation of a speech in on the 13 Feb 1919 in Amritsar at National Meeting of Mohammedans'. Amritsar Conspiracy(leaders') Case, 13 Feb 1919, Index no. 172: 142-43,144. (Microfilm)

He condemned Rowlatt Bills as *kala nag* which were meant to bring only destruction. He warned that if those Bills were passed, Indians unitedly would stage such a powerful agitation with which laws "more stringent and rigid" could be rejected by them.[3] Spearheading Anti-Rowlatt Bills agitation in Amritsar in March 1919, Kitchlew offered himself for silent agitation and Satyagraha as Mahatma Gandhi. It never mattered to him that he was sent to the jail because he was ready to go through the punishment with delight and pleasure. Under the Bills, if there was a charge against an Indian suspect, his trial was to be held in camera, no evidence could be placed before him and in short, he was to be given a "short shrift".[4] Kitchlew questioned the sagacity of British authorities in framing the Bills and asked them fearlessly if they could point to any country in the world where the penal code or the criminal procedure code embodied provisions like those proposed in India.

Despite protests, one of the two Bills was passed into law named, Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919. This enabled 'anarchical offences' to be tried by a court of three high court judges with no right to appeal and it also enabled continuous confined detention of 'dangerous characters'.[5] The provincial government of Punjab too was given liberty to search a place, arrest a suspect without warrant and keep him in confinement on its own terms and conditions. Kitchlew organized a mass protest against the Act by way of passive resistance which, he was sure, would not injure anyone though it would bring hardships to the Indians. While addressing the masses he appealed to them that they must take Satyagraha vows as described by Gandhi and stand united as a nation at that hour of time.The masses must be ready to keep fasts and oppose the government through non- violent methods. He assured them that the government could not arrest them as it lacked accommodation for so many prisoners in jails and their bungalows. Indians were wrong to hope that they would be granted self-government and that both Hindus and Muslims would reign over the country. Owing to the diplomatic manoevres of the British Government, all their hopes had been frustrated to ground and turned into dust.[6] Several protest meetings were held in Amritsar between 31 January and 29 March 1919, which according to Kitchlew, were all constitutional and his speeches delivered there were 'moderate and sober' with no intention of intimidating or inciting the Hindu, Muslim crowd.

Gandhi gave a call for a nation-wide *hartal* on 30 March in protest against Rowlatt Act. The date, however, was postponed to 6 April due to short notice. Since news of postponement of date did not reach Amritsar on time, a meeting was held in the town on 30 March where

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[3]No.22. 'Protest Meeting against the Proposed Bills in Viceregal Council', Hayat-e-Dr. Saifuudin Kitchlew (Urdu), 15 Feb 1919: 45-46. (Sharif Ahmad Mahrevi Microfilm)

[4]No.23. 'A Mass Meeting of the Mohammadens of Amritsar was held in Katra Garbha Singh', Amritsar Conspiracy(leaders') Case, 21 Feb 1919, Index no. 172: 93-94. (Microfilm)

[5]Statement Exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and the Condition of Indians during 1919: 22.

[6]No.30. 'Verbatim Report of the Meeting', Amritsar Conspiracy(leaders') Case, 29 March 1919: 117-22.

the masses were addressed among other leaders by Kitchlew. He exhorted them not to resort to an act of violence. Yet another meeting of much larger size of about 40,000 people including men and women, Hindus and Muslims was held on the same day in the afternoon at Jallianwala Bagh. Kitchlew in the chair moved the resolution against Rowlatt Act which was passed unanimously. The editor of 'the Waqt' praised the national unity seen there. The concluding remarks of Kitchlew during the meeting were, "We will be ever prepared to sacrifice personal over national interests . . . All countrymen should become prepared for resistance." (Punjab Disturbances,1976, p.45)

Apart from Amritsar, important centres of Kitchlew's political activism were Jalandhar, Lahore and Gujranwala.In order to present a united national resistance against unjustifiable acts of the British, Kitchlew called out for Hindu-Muslim unity at a Conference at Jalandhar on 1 April 1919. Before the audience, he presented himself as a Hindu and a Muslim at the same time. He claimed that he was a Hindu because his ancestors were Kashmiri *Pandits* and he was a Muslim because they took up Islam some generations back. To quote Kithlew, "We are one descendants of the same Bazurgs (ancestors) no matter what religion we have now adopted. For the interest of India, we should not forget that fact that we are all Indians and real brothers to each other, irrespective of religious differentiations and unite in the noble cause of India."[7] The fact of the British ruling over Indians suffocated him the most. He remarked, "Look at me, I am a Kashmiri Brahman, my blood, my bones all belonging to this soil where the foreigner rules. This is my home but he is its master?" (Datta,1967, p. 61). As a member of local branch of Congress party, Kitchlew attended All India Congress Committee's session at Delhi and extended invitation to hold its session at Amritsar. His invitation was accepted.

Responding to Gandhi's call of *hartal*, all shops in Amritsar were closed down on 6 April and the entire business of the town was suspended. A meeting was held in the afternoon at Jallianwala Bagh where resolutions against Rowlatt Act and against restriction on public speeches of Kitchlew and other leaders were passed. The *hartal*here was a complete success. The national unity here had become an established fact. Ram Naumi day here on 9 April was celebrated as 'National Solidarity Day' under the leadership of Kitchlew and Satyapal. Both the leaders were arrested and deported to Dharamsala which provoked and angered the masses. While they were marching peacefully from Hall Bazar to Deputy Commissioner's residenceto demand the release of their leaders, they were stopped at a picket and fires were shot at them which killed some. This led the masses to resort to violence. Telegraph lines and railway stations were attacked, railway goods yard was stormed and a few Europeans including Guard Robinson, Stewart and Scott were beaten to death. Besides some buildings and godowns were set on fire. British authorities panicked and made arrangements to shift

[7]No.32. 'The Punjab Political Conference', Amritsar Conspiracy(leaders') Case, 1 April 1919, Index no. 172. (Microfilm)

their families from civil lines to the Fort for the cause of their safety. The incidents of violence were soon followed by Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy in Amritsar on 13 April, 1919.The tragedy occurred following the orders of General Dyer of indiscriminate firing on the crowd at Jallianwala Bagh with people having hardly any means of escape. Hundreds of men, women and children were killed and more than twelve hundred people were wounded in the tragedy.

On the question of Khilafat, Kitchlew gave a call of national unity under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. Kitchlew involved himself actively in Khilafat movement since 1919. Central Khilafat Committee with its several branches in the country had been championing the cause of the Khilafat. It pleaded that dismemberment of the Khilafat be prevented and its position be maintained for protection of holy places of Islam. A Khilafat committee had been formed in Amritsar. Speeches were made and resolutions were passed in favour of the Khilafat. According to a resolution passed at Khilafat Conference held at Amritsar in December 1919, a deputation of Hindu and Muslim representatives was sent to meet the Viceroy which asked for Khilafat settlement. The Viceroy was informed categorically that if peace terms did not favour the "Muslim Religion and sentiments they would place an undue strain on Muslim Loyalty." (Mitra,1924, pp. 149-62) Kitchlew along with Gandhi toured several cities and towns of Punjab and delivered speeches, more particularly in Amritsar and Lahore, to popularize the Khilafat movement. Both worked for maintaining national unity among people of various communities. Commemorating the first anniversary of Jallianwala Bagh on 13 April, 1920, Kitchlew addressed the assembly in these words, "This is that blessed day which laid the foundation of Indian Nationalism. Hindus and Mussalmans are not two."[8] Kitchlew along with leaders such as Gandhi, Moti Lal Nehru and others had earlier issued a joint statement proposing that Jallianwala Bagh should be converted into a Park where simple memorial be erected to perpetuate the memory of the deaths and the commemoration of Hindu-Muslim unity. (Kitchlew T., 1999, p. 89) Kitchlew moved non-cooperation resolution which was passed on 28 May 1920. For him it was 'the test of self-respect for the community of Mussalmans of India and the test of the preservation of the prestige of nation and country, and the Hindu brethren'. His resolution was accepted by Central Khilafat Committee. Soon he got engaged in organizing Khilafat agitation and nurturing spirit of national unity. To him Khilafat question was not merely a question of Mussalmans, but it had become a question of thirty- three crores of Hindustanis. Seven crores Muslims stood united with 22 crores of Hindus before national government and the whole world on Khilafat question.[9] The Khilafat agitation merged with non-cooperation programme. Non-cooperation, according to him, was not only against the government but

[8]No.40. 'Jallian Wala Bagh Anniversary', Hayat-e-Dr. Saifuudin Kitchlew (Urdu), 13 April, 1920. (Sharif Ahmad Mahrevi Microfilm)

[9]No.67. 'The Historic Trial of Ali Brothers – Dr. Kitchlew etc.' Proceedings in lower court, 9 July, 1921: 19-26.

also against those people who did not support the nation.[10] Kitchlew had founded Punjab Swaraj Ashram in Amritsar with a prime object of attaining Swaraj by peaceful means and one of the objectives of the Ashram was to promote unity between Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and other communities composing the nation.[11] Kitchlew held the view that the religions of Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs do not allow them to preach hatred against anyman. Hindus and Muslims had to struggle hard not for their own sake alone but for all the countries to win freedom.[12]The minds of the masses, both Hindus and Muslims, were for the unity.[13] The leaders of Khilafat movement were busy making boycott programme a success and as such it led to the relegation of the Khilafat agitation.

In May 1923, Kitchlew proposed, in a memorandum, a new dynamic scheme or the programme for uplift of Muslim community seeking cooperation of Jamait-ul-Ulema and Central Khilafat Committee. The aim of the scheme was to help the community achieve a respectable place by organizing Muslim *jathas*, taking up social activities for them and establishing an independent Muslim organization.[14]

For practical implementation of the said scheme, Kitchlew in 1923-24 inaugurated Tanzeem, an organization and a movementwith the publication of an Urdu daily, Tanzeem. Since the Hindus and the Sikhs already had their respective organisations, Kitchlew felt the urgent need to start Tanzeem among the Muslims to further their interests. He admitted that Tanzeem was a counter-movement against Sangathan of Madan Mohan Malaviya. His Tanzeem movement borrowed some organizational aspects from the Akali movement. The movement had been launched to develop popular resistance against the British rule by uplifting the Muslims socio-economically and culturally thus transforming them into conscious and competent force in national movement(Kitchlew T.,1999, p.9). The steering of Tanzeem movement by Kitchlew does not suggest that he left the agenda of propagating national unity. In fact, he was often pained to find the Hindus and the Muslims at mutual disputes. He argued that the real cause of Hindu-Muslim disputes was economic, rather than religious because the entire trade and a majority of services were in hands of the Hindus. Tanzeem was an attempt to bring Muslims to the level of the Hindus so that both availed equal opportunities in trade and other services. Tanzeem, according to him was essentially a non-political and non-sectarian movement meant for economic and social elevation of the Muslims. It aimed at opening *Maktabs* as well as schools, colleges, technical institutes for

[10]No.51. 'Council Boycott',Hayat-e-Dr. Saifuudin Kitchlew (Urdu), 18 Nov, 1920. (Sharif Ahmad Mahrevi Microfilm)

[11]The Tribune, February 1921.

[12]The Tribune, Sept. 16, 1921.

[13]Urdu Milap, Aug. 17, 1923.

[14]Home Dept, Political, Note, Para I, 4 Oct 1924: 12-13.

all round education of Muslims, reorganizing mosques, encouraging Muslims to take readily to trade and commerce, establishing cooperative societies for them.[15]For successful realization of the said aims, Kitchlew conducted Tanzeem tours in different parts of the country as well as in Sri Lanka.

Looking at Kitchlew as a protagonist of Tanzeem movement should not lead us to conclude that he had become a communalist and that communal interests became paramount to the national interests for him. In fact, he reiterated the assertion that Tanzeem was a non-political and non-communal movement. (Kitchlew T., 1999, 287-88, 291) It was meant for regeneration of the Muslims infusing in them a spirit of humanity so that they could fulfil national duties. The movement, however, caused resentment among Hindus as it aroused their suspicions due to the fact that it took up the issue of Muslim identity whereas such issue was vital among Hindus and was already being talked about. Be it as it may, Tanzeem movement was protested by leaders like C R Das, Moti Lal Nehru and Madan Mohan Malaviya. But these protests never deterred Kitchlew from making appeals for national unity. He asked Hindus and Muslims to work for their respective communities without injuring the cause of unity or of ultimate nationalism.[16]

Kitchlew continued to espouse the cause of national unity by stating the fact that he was a Hindu by birth, a Muslim by faith and a Sikh by declaring Sikhism as his religion.[17]After his release from the jail in 1923, he whole-heartedly supported the Akali agitation for reform of Gurudwaras. He made a nation-wide appeal to “all the Hindus and Muslims to imbibe their (Akalis’) true spirit.”[18] He asked the Akalis to join civil disobedience movement of the Congress. He happily informed that the Sikhs had started civil disobedience and also the *jatha* processions. At Cocanada Congress on 26 December, 1923 he asked the Hindus and the Muslims to unite with the Akalis in their cause. He thus addressed, “We Hindus and Mussalmans and others who call this our land cannot sit with folded hands looking at the difficulties our brethren are put to . . . If you give me fifty or twenty thousand Hindus or Mussalmans, all over India not the cause of the Akalis would be won, but your own victory, your own independence, your own freedom will be won in no time.”[19]

After having been elected as Honorary General Secretary of All India Muslim League in 1927, Kitchlew participated in various unity conferences held from 1927 to 1928 where he made many statements on several vital issues including Hindu-Muslim unity.His views on All Parties Conference were influenced by his faith in common sense of both Muslims

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[15]The Tribune, June 17 and 19, 1926.

[16]The Tribune, July 8, 1926.

[17]Punjab Press Abstract,Vol XXIV, No. 35, 1923: 665.

[18]The Tribune, Sept. 4, 1923.

[19]Home Dept, Political, File No. 152, 1924: 3-4.

and Hindus though heading the said position, he was naturally forced to negotiate for safeguards for Muslim community.(Kitchlew T., 1999, pp. 11-13)Kitchlew attacked the Muslim Separate Electorates at Punjab Political Conference at Lyallpur in 1933 and in the capacity of President of All India Congress issued a circular in this regard to the Congress committees. Between 1934and 1935, he was very vocal in his attack on Communal Award. According to him, preference to nationalismover religion was a water mark at a stage when the nation was facing challenges from communalist forces, both Hindus and Muslims, having communalist vested interests. He vociferously demanded the creation of one nation and rallying under one banner. In 1940, he strongly attacked the Pakistan Resolution of Muslim League based on religion.

Undoubtedly, the issue of national unity was very dear to the heart of Kitchlew which often made him restless and anxious. He was ready to die for the cause of national unity. He said that it was a plain duty of all God-fearing and patriotic persons to establish unity between two sister communities - Hindu and Muslim. During his speech at Amritsar, he had remarked that he would either unite the Hindus and Muslims or if he failed in his endeavours, he would put an end to his own life by Satyagraha. Unity or Death by Satyagraha[20] were the words of Kitchlew.

At the time of talk of the partition, Kitchlew worked hard to mobilise the Muslim public opinion against the partition. He severely condemned the 'partition resolution' proposed by the Congress Working Committee which was put before the All India Congress Committee at the Special Congress held in Delhi on 14-15 June 1947. He considered the partition as a "surrender of nationalism in favour of communalism",[21] but he could not stop it. The fact remains that after the partition, he chose to stay and settle down in India near Delhi rather than to migrate to Pakistan. Obviously, an aforementioned critical analysis of Saifuudin Kitchlew's speeches presents him before all of us as the soldier of national unity

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Gender Dimensions of Workers' Struggle: A Case of Unorganised Women Construction Workers' in Delhi NCR

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Abstract

This paper explores some key aspects shaping the workers' struggle in the unorganised sector through a gender lens. It draws its analysis from a qualitative study of a subset of casual workers working in the construction industry in selected areas in Delhi and National Capital Region. At a generic level, this paper addresses key questions pertaining to the changing nature of workers' struggle in contemporary India while probing particularly the conditions attached to one of the most vulnerable sections of workers, belonging to the casual workforce within the unorganised sector. At a more particular level, this paper attempts to explore the implication of the processes of informalisation on women workers in the construction sector, whether or not they have been able to voice their struggle against the exploitative forces operating at workplace and habitation? While probing into the nature of struggle and conditions of women workers in the construction sector this article provides a critical analysis of contemporary workers' movements shaping in the urban spaces and how it has failed to give due attention towards creation of new opportunities for women workers through capacity building and skill development at the worksites and beyond.

Keywords: Unorganised Sector, Construction Sector, Women Workers, Workers' Struggle, Empowerment, Welfare

The unorganised sector or informal sector[1] represents a cross section of workers' characterised by heterogeneity of occupations, mostly unregulated and lacking a structured

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[1] 'Informal Sector' and 'Unorganised Sector' have been used interchangeably. Both the terms broadly refer to the same sector of the economy where previously conducted body of research have situated the highly disparate group of 'unprotected', 'unregulated' workers. However, conceptually and contextually they represent a subtle distinction, which must be acknowledged. The terms 'unorganised' and 'informal' (used interchangeably) suggests, 'they are not organised' (it lacks collective organisation) or 'they are not formalised' (it lacks statutory regulation from the State), in comparison to the organised and formal sector. For the purpose of this article the term 'unorganised sector' has been used both in the title as well as content based on my observation and reading of the body of research in the context of India. It has been identified to be a preferred vocabulary in most political-economic as well as political-sociological literature in India.

organisation as well as direct interface between the employers and employees. In the absence of the above conditions, it is a challenge for the workers, especially the casual labour and self-employed to organise collectively and engage on issues particular to their occupation and conditions of work. Issues around which the workers' have been struggling are alsodiverse in nature. Mega cities in India provide an interesting opportunity to undertake an exploration of this diverse set of workforce, as employment driven migration from rural areas have been on the rise in the last few decades. The broad objective of this article is to explore the changing nature of workers' struggle in post-globalised India through a gendered analysis of women workers in the construction sector.

The status and condition of women workers in the construction sector has been dismal.Discrimination faced by women workers at worksites and at the household level isa combination of multiple set of factors- social, cultural, economic as well as linked to nature of occupation. This issue is also related to a commonbias towards women working in construction industry, an industry which is considered a male bastion and dominated by a clearly gendered division of labour. While specific laws and policies have been designed to cater to welfare of workers in the building and construction sector[2], they lack both in vision and implementation. The employers (in this case builders and contractors) lack accountability towards the workers because of theexploitative system of subcontracting and informalisation. The workers primarily remain dependent on their *thekedars* who provide them the opportunity to work as well as regulate all their employment related matters. The state has also failed to create a strong machinery to implement the existing laws regarding welfare and working conditions or to update them over the years.

This article has been broadly divided into four sections. The first section reviews some issues and debates related to women and work in the unorganised sector in the existing literature. The second section presents a brief review of selected literature that sheds light on the changing nature of workers' struggle in the unorganised sector in cities. The third section provides a gendered analysis of the construction sector while discussing some key findings from a field based study on a set of casual workers across three construction sites in Delhi NCR. The concludingsection is a critical discussion and gendered analysis of the nature ofstruggle amidst construction workers in Delhi NCR leading towards some key explorations and recommendations.

Women and Work in the Unorganised Sector: Empowerment or Vulnerability?

The urban informal sector in cities with a modernised economy is diverse and complex. It provides employment opportunities to millions of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers

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[2] The Building and Other Construction Workers' (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 along with The Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess Act, 1996 were enacted by the Central Government to regulate working conditions and welfare benefits of registered construction workers through State level Welfare Boards, specific to this sector.

across class, caste and gender. Women workers have a substantial presence in the unorganised sector across the world.Extensive debates have taken place in academia as well as the world of practice regarding the nature and substance of work as well as the hierarchical pattern of production systems within this diverse sector. Broadly, research undertaken across the world have found women's contribution to work (formal or informal sector, wage or unpaid work) unacknowledged, discriminated and stereotyped in comparison to the male contributions. In the post liberalisation era, one can find a trend towards feminisation of workforce in specific sectors like the garment and service sector in India. This has been accompanied by trends such as increase in female participation rate in comparison to male (although there has been a substantial decline in recent times with fall in employment rates), substitution of men by women in traditionally male dominated work, increase in women's 'invisible work' (eg. home based work), etc. It has also redefined industrial work on the basis of new technology and management strategies (signifying low paid, irregular, part time and contractual work).While feminisation has diversified the work opportunities for women, issues like low level of earning and adverse work conditions still remain unattended by State and employers (Sharma and Singh, 1992). In the recent past, changes attributed to the economic reforms and trade liberalisation triggered by global restructuring of the capitalist economy has affected availability of employment opportunities for men and women alike. Whereas some reasons have been a result of segregation of women workers into specific kind of jobs (low wages, low skilled), exclusion of women from productive employment (reflected in a decline in work participation rates and share in salaried/ regular employment) and a rapid increase in unpaid labour (Bhattacharya, 1999).

Some significant observations have been made by Marilyn Carr, Joan Vanek and Martha Chen (2004) as they discuss the overlapping and complex relationship between informal employment, gender and poverty. First, there is a significant gender gap in earning within the informal economy, with women earning less on average than men, primarily because of the large number of women doing home-based work/ self employment that are characteristic of irregular income or at times remain under-paid. Secondly, there are substantial hidden costs associated with working in the informal economy which remain uncalculated in income based poverty measures. Some of these hidden costs include longer duration of work, poor working conditions, high risk and cost of business, no social protection, uncertain legal status, social exclusion and often a lack of union/ organisation representing their voices. Ela Bhatt (1992), founder of Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), remarked in the early 1990s that women would be worst hit by structural adjustment programmes as they have access only to the less skilled and underpaid jobs. The sexual division of labour resides both at home and the labour market, resulting in a double disadvantage and weak organisational strategies amongst women workers in general (Dietrich, 2001).

The reasons attributed to concentration of women in informal sector occupations (especially low wage, low capital intensive, etc.) are both structural and ideological in nature. The

nature and structure of the capitalist system of production and its inherent exploitative tendencies has been extensively debated by the Left. Struggles at the ideological level deal with aspects like domesticity and patriarchy. Other forms of struggles are legalistic in nature given the limited purview of labour laws in the unorganised sector. The unorganised sector in general is characterised by lack of appropriate social security measures for workers, irrespective of gender, class and sectors of work. This accentuates the vulnerability and insecurity, especially amongst women workers as it is often assumed that they are automatically covered by social security coverage as dependents of the male family members (this is applicable for only those sectors where a minimum level of social security protection is provided). Lack of maternity and child care benefits, paid leave, lack of skill training and upgradation of know-how, right to property ownership, sexual harassment at workplace are some of the other struggles encountered by women in the workplaces.

The successful models of organizing women for economic empowerment projects that it can serve to promote shared knowledge, mutual trust, self-help, reciprocity and solidarity among women, which in turn can increase women's participation and bargaining power in local institutions. In other words, most of the economic approaches to women's empowerment are political in nature and necessitate changes in the power relationships in the economic as well as the social and political spheres. The objective of the women's movement has been rephrased to 'the economic is political', as any change in the economic transaction in the everyday lives of women, either at home or the workplace implies structural or political changes (Carr et al. 1996 cited in Anthony, 2001). Naila Kabeer (2000) in her analysis on women working in labour markets in developing countries ascertains the importance of preferences in shaping choice and rejects the idea that these are stable over time or purely subjective to the individual, and hence can be treated as exogenous to the decision making process. Instead, factors like class, gender, race, social background play a crucial role in introducing systematic variations in preferences, in turn shaping the manner in which individuals view their choices and make their decisions. Kabeer identifies a resultant differential ordering of preferences and that not all decisions would be reflective of 'real choice'. This was especially in such cases where 'survival imperatives' overshadowed and left little scope for choice (starkly distinguished from cases where genuine choices were obtainable). Second, inequality within the household and the prospect for power and conflict reflected the fact that the distribution of resources and responsibilities were neither random and balanced nor equitable and efficient. 'Authority' and 'Responsibility were intertwined. Those responsible for collective welfare of the family (mostly men) were also given the authority to decide how it should be defined. And presence of this hierarchy which delimited choice and preferences within the family had its manifestations in public sphere as well. Women's continued reliance on men for social protection and the vulnerability of women without male support to different kinds of risk and threat explained their reluctance to openly challenge the norms of patriarchal authority and thereby risk the breakdown in the

family. Instead, they made a choice to renegotiate norms in order to expand their sphere of action in a manner that would not threaten the established hierarchy in the household.

Structural dimensions have an important role in conceptualising empowerment, on how strategic life choices made by individuals and groups reflect change at multiple possible levels. Change can be reflected at the level of individuals and groups- in their sense of selfhood and identity, in how they perceive their interests and in their capacity to act. There are deeper structures like caste, class and gender which shape the distribution of resources and power in society and reproduce it over time. Another major factor that has shaped women's conditions of work or the lack of employment of unskilled workforce (both men and women) in general is the technological advancement and mechanisation of work. This trend can be witnessed strongly in case of agricultural labour where machines have gradually replaced manual farmers/ workers. Due to lack of knowledge and access to information regarding technology, women workers have been mostly affected by this process of mechanisation. Similar trends have been observed in non-agricultural sector, especially in the construction, garment and electronic industries (Jhabvala, 2003). One of the consequences of technological innovations in women's work has been the gradual influx of male workers into the domain traditionally dominated by female workers. Hence, lack of skills or avenues for training to gain access to new opportunities and jobs have created exclusion for unskilled/ uneducated women, causing a gender bias in employment process. Infact a number of traditional industries such as coir, tobacco, handicraft, khadi where women workers have been higher in numbers, has also begun incorporating male workers.

New dimensions of Workers' Struggle in the Unorganised Sector

Rina Agarwala (2007, 2013) in her research study on the informal workers in two industries- tobacco (beedi) as well as construction across three States in India- Maharashtra, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu has reinstituted some significant questions regarding the changing relationship between the State and labour in India. Agarwala has traced new agencies of collective action representing the worker's struggle since the 1970s through the 1990s and until recent, she has advanced a fresh perspective on the changing process of workers' negotiation of their rights with the State and reinstated it as the space of 'dignified discontent' for the unorganized and vulnerable classes. Agarwala concludes that informal workers have had to alter their organizing strategies in ways that has reshaped the social contract between State and labour. Instead of demanding benefits from their employer or contractor (rights as worker), they end up making direct demands on the State for welfare benefits (rights as citizens). Also these new organizational strategies provide an insight into new forms of institutionalism in the current system of deregulated State control over market and capital and blurred employer-employee relations (Agarwala, 2008). She terms these as conventional and reformulated models of State-labour relations respectively. The latter according to her depicts the ongoing organizational strategies of informal workers (regardless of industry-

wise or State-level variations) in present India. In post reform India, she finds it common parlance that informal workers have been organizing along class lines and using their power as citizens (voters) demand their rights and make social welfare claims. Another important dimension of this study is its gender centred analysis. Findings from the study reveal that apart from facilitating informal workers' access to welfare benefits and social legitimacy, the recognition of their work by the State has empowered women workers by helping them voicing their protest against social and workspace discrimination.

According to Agarwala (2008), in contrast to the recent globalisation literature that claims a diminishing role of State and increasingly unprotected workers, the experience of informal workers suggests the continuing power of both State and workers in shaping the current phase of economic and political transition. Hence, conditions of informal employment do not preclude apriori workers' organisation and interaction with the State. The new institutions through which the labourers have operationalised their appeal to the State are the 'workers' welfare boards' which are funded by the worker, employer and the State, but implemented by the latter. Through the participation of registered unions, the informal workers gain a sense of legitimacy and derive benefits, regardless of who their employers are. These boards have become institutions that have accommodated the workers needs under the current economic condition, although their implementation mechanisms remain weak. Informal workers have also been mobilising against the government through non-violent demonstrations and hunger strikes to demand their citizenship rights and rights to basic needs, rather than demand for better wages. Unions have also re-strategized their efforts by organising workers in their residences and neighbourhoods. This reformulated model, according to her has far reaching implications for future work on informal workers, collective action and democracy. First, the notion of welfare has gone beyond workplace, to their private spaces (social protection); second, on one hand if the neoliberal policies have undermined their power of labour organisation and reduced the role of State in social protection, on the other hand the workers have also capitalised on this power as citizens in the democracy, pushing the boundaries of class politics. It has in turn pushed the State deeper into directly managing and provisioning welfare policies by forcing it to participate in decisions involving health care, education, marriages of workers and their families. Hence the focus of the traditional labour movement has shifted from worker vs. employer to worker vs. the State. She concludes that if liberalisation policies have undermined the informal workers rights to make legal claims on employers, India's democracy has equipped them with the power of political support and the right to make claims of citizenship, directly on the State.

Supriya RoyChowdhury (2003) while delving into the critique of globalization debate advanced across ideological discourse highlights the broad agreement on the importance of securing the class of marginalized and informal workers through State-based welfare interventions. This can be witnessed through social insurance policies. In the context of

post-globalised India, one can witness a new politics of welfare, where new organizations for unorganised workers have emerged in all parts of the country. Their constituencies, as well as issues addressed by them range from class, community, occupation to neighborhood. These are new trade unions, which have a distinctive characteristic from NGOs and traditional unions. According to her, these movements are important to examine as they relate both to left based parties and to trade unions, which were the traditional sources of welfare politics (p. 5278-5279). While probing into the nature of relationship between the civil society and urban poor, RoyChowdhury (2014) in a different paper looks into the specific context of urban India. She argues that cities in developing countries have become the sites of dramatic wealth creation and patterns of consumption generated by the process of globalization and this has in turn pulled down many sections of populations into new types of employments, income and consumption patterns. These are the excluded classes that comprise of those people who are trapped in unskilled, semi-skilled work (for example, construction workers or domestic workers). While work opportunities have enhanced with globalization, no expansion of life chances and opportunities have taken place, creating inter-linkages between increasing informal work, lack of accessibility of basic services for the poor and deprivation in urban areas (due to low wages and low work security). She investigates the manner in which urban poor associate and articulate their interests in the public or political domain within the theoretical discourse and conceptual debates around the relationship between democracies, State, civil society and modernity. Through her case study in Bengalaru (Karnataka), Roychowdhury has identified a number of features of urban activism: First, civil society organizations engage with the physical habitation of the urban poor rather than the factory or workshop or sites where poor work. The issues around which they organize have changed from income and employment related to basic amenities. Second, there are efforts being made by the urban poor to self-represent themselves, with slum dwellers turning into social workers or through creation of slum associations. However, these associations are localized, characterized by low visibility, low impact and at best can be called sporadic and transient in nature. They lack political engagement as they barely align themselves to any political party, although they maintain strategic proximity to any party in power to lobby their demands, before or during elections (p.85-86).

This paper draws from a research study that was conducted on a larger set of construction workers (both male and female) that comprised of both circular migrants (residing in temporary hutments attached to the construction sites) as well as those workers who have overtime become residents of Delhi and dwell in the JJ clusters in the cities peripheral zones.The latter section of construction workers have been able to organize better and demand their rights as they display the same characteristics as discussed above. One does find a plethora of labour unions and NGOs in Delhi that have been attempting to bridge the gap between the footloose workers and the state agencies, reshaping their struggle and widening its scope. However, the challenges faced by circular migrants (who are mostly

hired for limited tenure through sub-contractors, popularly known as *thekedars* or *beldars*) are different in nature as they passive in their approach and far more vulnerable in demanding their right to work, welfare or even decent conditions of work. The position of women workers remains precarious in the given environment, as they face dual disadvantage at worksites as well as households. The next section highlights some key findings on conditions of work at the construction sites and it implications for casual women workers in particular.

Gendered Analysis of Construction Industry: A Study at Selected Sites in Delhi NCR

Construction Sector is one of the fastest growing industries worldwide. In India, it is the second largest employer and contributor to economic activity after agriculture and the 9th largest construction market in the world. According to the NSSO Data (2011-12) about 5 crore workers were employed in the construction activities in India. It employs approximately 11% of India's workforce and accounts for 8% of the country's GDP. Almost 50% of the demand for construction activity in India comes from the infrastructure sector and the rest comes from industrial activities, residential and commercial development etc. Over the last two decades, massive investment in infrastructure development from both domestic and international market players has been witnessed. The construction industry has come to assume in recent times, especially with the modernisation of cities and upgradation of its infrastructure to accommodate global demands and urbanisation. Growth in this sector has created employment opportunities for lakhs of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers, across class, gender, caste and tribe. It has attracted population from rural and semi- urban regions into urban areas for better income and work opportunities. These workers are mostly victims of distress migration and failed agricultural economy, displacement, land grab and debt trap from middlemen. Their literacy level varies according to age, gender and skills at workplace. Male workers are found to be more literate in comparison to female workers, but many lack the requisite skill for undertaking complex and mechanised tasks at workplaces such as the construction sites. Due to its high labour intensive work pattern, various unskilled and illiterate workers readily find access to opportunity for work and wage. The challenge, therefore, lies not in getting an opportunity to work (unlike skilled and specialised work) as there is ample scope for manual workforce but in the transitory and unprotected nature of work and harsh conditions at workplace with hardly any social security or organisational unity. Construction industry has been considered as one of the most exploitative in unorganised sector because of its informal nature and unregulated conditions of work.

This research article draws its analysis from an empirically grounded, qualitative study of 65 construction workers- both male and female workers (approximately 50% each) across three construction sites located in different part of Delhi NCR- a. Central Delhi (a government building developed by Public Works Department, Govt. of NCT of Delhi). b. Greater Noida-West (a mid-sized, multi-storied residential complex developed by a private

builder) and c. Gurgaon (a large sized, multi-storied residential complex developed by a private builder). The sample also comprised of the thekedar (sub-contractor) and some representatives from the management of private developers. The findings of this study describe the working conditions and struggles of women construction workers in these sites based on observation, focus group discussions and semi structured interviews.

Gender Division of Labour

Women workers faced a differential treatment in terms of employment, wages and status. The nature of work in the building construction industry has always been based on a clear division of labour. It is generally fragmented on the basis of skills into highly skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled. Male workers had been employed in all three work types, whereas women dominated the unskilled and casual jobs. Women were only given manual/ labour intensive tasks that are considered as low skilled or unskilled in nature. They were not even given the chance to operate any machinery or equipment as they were mostly illiterate and the supervisors feared its improper usage, if given into untrained hands. They have been assigned tasks of head loaders, cleanersand assistants (coolies) to other male workers or their husbands. They are given instructions by the male *mistris* and hardly get any space for any independent thinking. Hence, they are simply expected to remain compliant at work and perform whatever tasks are assigned to them by their supervisors or contractors.

There is an underlying prejudice against hiring women, especially single or unmarried women. Women mostly entered the construction work either with their husbands or any other male kin. Some of the arguments that are used to justify low or no recruitment of women by the project managers were—"*They are physically less strong than the men and are slower at assigned tasks, that women perform 'lighter work' and are less productive because they constantly balance responsibility and attention between home, children and work*". Hence their productivity, if measured as output generated at work tends to be much lower than men. According to M.S Kaveri (1995) there is a deeper prejudice for women due to factors like pregnancy and old age. Despite existence of legal mechanisms, women workers are not provided any maternity assistance and end up resuming work after delivery of child. Also, due to pressure of heavy work, older women get worn out easily and often lose productivity by the age of 40 years; hence they have lesser chances of job retention (cited in Suri, 1997, p.7). This becomes a reason for the contractors to reduce their intake and women find it discouraging to continue in such an environment. It is a vicious cycle whereby women's contribution in construction is undervalued and this becomes instrumental in denying them opportunities for skill development. Also, because they lack skills, they are always restricted to the low end jobs.

Women workers belonging to the age group between late 30s and early 40s expressed interest to learn new skills at workplace but did not have any avenue or means to acquire them at their worksite or through formal training from institutes. They seem to have grasped

some capital intensive skills and usage of tools linked to masonry, preparing cement slurry and mortar mix, measurement of plumb line work by observing male workers at the site. But whenever they have expressed interest to formally upgrade their work and wage by demanding better skilled based work, they have faced discouragement from their employer, contractor as well as male co-workers. While men, with similar ability do not find it difficult to upgrade their skills and wage, women faced differential treatment. Given such scepticism amongst male workers, women have gradually lost motivation to learn new skills.

Women's self-perception about their work reflected the common belief that 'men perform better and skilled work', which is interlinked to the production and remuneration system. Such biases existed not just among men folk, but also among the women workers. This lack of consciousness amongst women about their own work reinforced this gender wage gap. They have accepted the norm that women always get lower wage rates as compared to their male counterparts for doing similar or dissimilar tasks. And women have chosen not to question the same due to fear of losing work, besides getting ostracized by their husbands, thekedars and the contractors for questioning and demanding their rights. Also, women are not provided enough work compared to the men, leaving them with lesser opportunity to earn more. Often, they are told by thekedars to take their day off in case there isn't enough work for women on site on those days. This leads to an automatic reduction in the number of days women contribute to the construction work. Almost 90% of the respondents claimed that they did not get work for the entire month. An average of 15-20 days was productive as they received their wages and the remaining days they were either unemployed or stayed at home or searched for part time work elsewhere to earn a living. Approximately 80% of the women workers were not aware of the current minimum wage applicable to their category of workforce in the city. The rates according to them were variable depending on their thekedar, place of work or type of work.

Around 95% of the sample responded that the women working on site as helpers and coolies were the wives of male labourers and that they have migrated along with their husbands to earn a living and assist them, financially and taking care of the family and household. Their freedom of movement within the site area was also constrained to some spaces, mostly where other women workers or people from their community, village or family were present. Women felt insecure and feared venturing alone to different parts of the site, especially where groups of only male workers were working together. They feared being subjected to the unwanted male gaze and any act of harassment by employers and co-workers. This has created restrictive zones for women within the site. Hence, there is a pattern of gender division of spaces which often limits accessibility to resources and usability of the site for women, compare to men. Joe Boys (1983) also argues in her essay entitled 'Women and Public Space' that "Men define women's sexuality by their location in physical space and that women are much more restricted than men in the places they can go alone and notion of 'appropriate' areas of work for women are still shaped by conventional norms" (cited in

Suri, 1997, p.12). Hence, factors like the physical arrangement of activity, individual freedom of movement, allocation of tasks, and access of resources are intertwined with each other and often restrict the usability of the site for women in comparison to men.

Lack of awareness about existing labour welfare schemes and laws for the construction workers were found to be a common trend across the sites, especially amongst the unskilled workers (irrespective of gender). They had very minimal or at times nil conception about the role of state labour welfare boards for building and construction workers in undertaking workers' registration to avail of the welfare schemes. Most of them were not aware of the prevalent minimum wages in the city. They were dependent on their thekedar for everything and had no right to circumvent him and seek extra information from external sources. They feared losing their wages and work.

Conditions of Work:

The working conditions at construction sites, as stipulated in the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Working Conditions) Act 1996 have not entirely been implemented into practice, if not flouted most of the times, leaving the workers struggling at workplace, without much choice in hand. Some of the mandatory provisions like safety helmets, safety nets for scaffolders and those working at a height and fire extinguishers had been made available in most cases. At one of the bigger sites located in Gurgaon, identity cards were issued for all workers at entry points and taken back while they left the site, as a method to keep attendance and to ensure that none of the workers went missing at the end of the day. All three sites confirmed theavailability of a first aid kit for addressing minor injuries and accident cases. But when workers were asked about the same, almost 60% workers were unaware of its existence or were never told about its utility because their thekedar had never briefed them about it. When asked about usage of safety boots and gloves, most unskilled workers reported that these were only made available in limited numbers to workers when they were required to carry out hazardous work on site. Not all workers were provided with an individual set.

Drinking water for workers was not provided directly by the prime contractors or owners. It was the sub-contractor's duty to guarantee this facility. Few earthen pots with water were found in couple of places in the ground floor but some workers complained that the water was not clean and drinkable. They had to carry their own water bottles from home and used the pot water in case of emergency. The Act had mandated for creating provisions of a canteen for workers, but none of the sites had one. In fact one of the private building sites had a canteen facility for the engineers and staff only. Workers had to carry packed lunch from home and purchase tea from a local vendor outside the main gate. There were no proper or separate toilet facilities for workers inside the site area. The workers generally relieved themselves in hidden corners within the site or had to walk down half a kilometre to one kilometre to nearby shrubs or forest areas.

Women workers faced very difficult circumstances and often complained of unhygienic and unclean conditions at workplace, lack of basic facilities and privacy for themselves. Pregnant women had to battle such unhygienic circumstances and in the process grappled with ill-health and medical ailments. With a sense of helplessness, groups of women workers across all the sites shared a common remark that, *"They have learnt to adjust within the given circumstances as their demands have never been fulfilled in the past and they do not have much hope for things to improve"*. No provisions for crèche facility existed at any of the three sites and women had to constantly juggle around with work and children, creating further risks and vulnerabilities for the infants. At times, left with no choice they had to just leave their children in the workers' hutments under guardianship of an elder sibling or family member. However, most of the time infants were found loitering in the dust and debris at the site. While standing outside an under construction building and interviewing some workers, the researcher happened to observe that an infant was crawling around the edge of an unfinished balcony in the 2nd floor. There was no protection to prevent anybody from falling on the ground and this was an infant. On raising an alarm from downstairs, the mother came to rescue, only to relocate the infant towards the interiors.

The average working hours ranged from 8 to 10 hours each day. A typical working day would begin from 8am and lasted until 5.30 to 6pm. On days when work would stretch beyond the normal working hours, an overtime wage would be provided as compensation. But, the exhaustion and tiredness from work would drain the workers and they are left with no energy to prepare themselves for their household tasks. Women faced a double challenge here as they had to cook the evening meal for the family, feed and take care of their infants and children and then look after their own needs at the end of the long working day. While in a closed group, most women shared their distress and concern about the days when their husbands under influence of alcohol created nuisance in the house. At times the men picked up fights and arguments with other male co-workers and under stress also beat their wives if they disobeyed their orders.

In the larger building project site located in Gurgaon, the living conditions inside the temporary hutments (made of bricks and asbestos sheets) were deplorable. One small shed had to accommodate five to six single persons who didn't have families. Otherwise, each shed had to house an entire family together, irrespective of its size. Water and electricity were provided by the contractor. Almost all workers pointed out that water supply provided in the labour hutments were not enough to suffice the daily needs of all workers. There were times, when there was no electricity at night. There was a common toilet facility beside the cluster of hutments and this facility had to be used by both men and women. Nobody took responsibility of cleaning them as a result women preferred to defecate and bath in private spaces created by them away from the crowd. In the medium sized building project site in Greater Noida, the mandatory provision for creating workers settlements inside or near the site was cancelled due to paucity of space and sanitation problems. As a

result the workers had to create for themselves temporary slums in the nearby villages, where land was provided by the government land owning authorities at the request of the builder. But the distance from their respective work sites to their dwellings ranged from 2 to 4 kms. Conditions of living were similar, if not worse than the one mentioned in the preceding section.

During one of the site visits, when asked about existence of any policy or initiative undertaken by the developer for the welfare and benefit of the sub-contracted workers, a senior employee of the company (who was posted in the site office and had direct interface with the contractor and sub-contractors) remarked, *"The company has no obligation to design any policy for sub-contracted workers who have come to work for short term. The company fulfils it responsibility by depositing the mandatory cess amount of 1% to the State labour welfare board. However, as a Project Director, I am directly in touch with the ground situation and on humanitarian grounds have tried to arrange for some facilities for the labourers who have been associated with the company for a long time and continue to work for us through the same thekedar"*. Some of these facilities include recreation facilities for sports, organising team games for workers to enjoy during their weekly off day, community television in the housing area, distributing utility gifts on festive occasions like diwali, etc. The Project Director shared one of his best practices during an interview session. He had maintained a register with database of all workers- unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled who were working in the site during the tenure of the project. The details included their names, guardian's name, residential address (place of origin), age, gender, specialised skill and contact number. A passport size photograph of each worker was also attached beside his or her detail. When asked about its utility, the company official gave a thoughtful answer, "*We have faced situations when workers go back to their villages without taking their dues, or take advance from thekedar and don't return on time. At times we need to contact their family members in case of any emergency and this database comes useful under such circumstances*." However, no such practice was found in other sites.

Gender Exclusionary Practices:

Absence of crèche facility where more than twenty to thirty women workers are present along with their infants and young children and are working on site for the full day, lack of hygienic and clean toilet spaces, no provision for canteens, unclean portable drinking water, low and unequal wages, no social security, no skill training and an unsafe, insecure workspace for women. These observations and practices clearly indicate towards massive failures of enforcement and implementation of legal provisions of the legislations related to construction workers. Workers' exercise their right to work as they earn a minimum wage (most of the time it is below minimum), but lack of humane conditions at work place along with discriminatory practices for the women render them dispossessed of a minimum

livelihood where they can shed their lack of freedoms and improve their capability to exercise their choices.

A senior male worker remarked, when asked about the role of women in this sector, "*Construction work has always been the domain for the masculine, as one needs a lot of physical strength and skilfulness to endure through the process of creating such massive structures. Women can never sustain themselves as they do not have much bodily strength to perform the same tasks. You will see, soon these machines will replace the few existing women who work with us, who assist us, as we undertake the tough job at hand*."

Another male co-worker (a beldar) commented about his wife who also worked with him in the same site. He said, *"My wife often complains of the rough and tough nature of work and how much it affects her health. I think she does not enjoy doing this work. Who does? If we were educated enough to do better work, why would we be here? Whenever I ask her to leave this work and stay at home, manage the house and bring up our children well, she replies in frustration, how will we educate these kids and support our family back home (native village) if I do not work and earn as well? Do I have much choice?"*

Both the narratives portray the predicament and struggle of women workers in the construction sector. But the variations in the attitude of the male workers towards women workers depict the two sides of the same story. The first narrative totally disregards the contribution made by women workers to the construction work and portrays a dismal image of women's work, whereas the second narrative acknowledges the woman's effort and ability to multi-task. It also shows how the woman was aware of her own ability to make a living and contribute to the development of her household and future generations.

The bottom line is women in the construction sector have been facing multiple challenges at workplace and homes. The nature and condition of work, lack of awareness and ability to negotiate their rights and wages, dependence on their husbands, thekedars for regular work, social and economic inequalities have limited their economic opportunities and made it difficult for women to sustain themselves in this sector. These practices and social attitudes can at best be described as gender exclusionary, leading to a gradual phasing out of women from this sector.

Strategies of Survival: Alternative Work or Unemployment

The plight of unskilled women workers in the construction sector was found to be dismal. They have been struggling through various challenges and vulnerabilities at worksites. The gradual reduction in their numbers is symptomatic of the exclusionary nature of the work and workplace. Lack of opportunity for skill enhancement, unequal treatment with regard to wage distribution, lack of safe and secured conditions at work sites are some of the key factors responsible for the gradual disengagement of women from this sector. The dominance

of male workers and rapid mechanisation of construction activities have also reduced the scope for negotiating better terms and conditions for work. Lack of skill development and low level of awareness of the rights amongst women workers in the unorganised sector have always been an impediment to their employability and advancement.

In such circumstances, women workers are left with no choice but to hunt for alternative avenues of employment with tenable conditions of work with or without skill development opportunities. This phenomenon primarily contributes towards the horizontal expansion of employment opportunities (similar nature of work), but thwarts the vertical enhancement of the sphere of women's employment (like wage and skill improvement). During the field study, approximately 60% of the respondents (women) expressed their desire to quit construction work after a certain age and shift towards better work. Their definition of 'better work' implied something that is less strenuous on their body, safer, preferably skilled work where they could earn better income. Having said that, they also were highly sceptical under present dispensation about absorption in skilled work, as they did not have any support and means to acquire fresh training. For them, domestic work (cleaning, cooking, and child care) or home based work seemed the only viable alternatives. Some of the women who had reached their middle age (above 40 years) did not even have the hope of finding alternative work with similar income. A group of women said that their tenure of work was dependent on their husband's tenure of work in any given space. Also, if their husbands (some addressed their husbands as *malik,* literallymeaning owner) decided to leave construction and move on, they will move on with them and find another source of income. In case they do not find any alternative employment in this city or elsewhere they would prefer to return back to their native village with their children.

Conclusion:

This empirical study of the employment conditions and livelihood patterns of a set of construction workers' (both male and female) in a megacity like Delhi and its satellite industrial townships like Greater Noida and Gurgaon reveals a number of facets regarding structural, political as well as social conditions that have shaped their struggle to survive amidst the social and economic transformations. These struggles have defied all the characteristics of traditional movements due to lack of organizational milieu amongst the workers and endorse the thesis presented by Agarwala and RoyChowdhury on the changing nature of workers' struggle in urban spaces.

Worksites do not provide much freedom and choice for the workers to create informal forums for airing their grievances, such democratic practices also depends on the nature of management and employers who hire these workers. As construction work is primarily based on indirect employer-employee relations due to high levels of flexible and sub-contractual work patterns, this is inevitable. Field observations from a parallel study on construction workers residing in the different slum pockets in the city presents a their

gradual yet limited organisational capacity to independently wage struggles around issues of work or citizenship, while their concern for both are intertwined. Their struggle has instead been represented through various labour unions[3] (specific to the construction sector)whose representatives facilitate workers' claim to avail welfare benefits directly from the state. While their workplace does not provide them the freedom to express their choices, dissent or protest as there is a constant fear of losing work and wage, their identity as citizens of the city have given them better opportunities to negotiate a decent living[4]. They have been able to negotiate some rights, but they have to constantly re-assert their demands with the state representatives to ensure their well-being. Due to lack of awareness, lack of unity and an inherent trust deficit on their political system, the workers have remained conditioned in their comfort spaces. The larger fear of loss of work, wage and residence (and illegality) has made them passive recipients of State policy, rather than empowered citizens.

Cities have simultaneously developed large horizontal networks of slums, often termed as encroachments alongside vertical mega-infrastructures depicting prosperity and seat of global capital. The growth of slums have been parallel to the growth of migration, however their maintenance, rehabilitation and upgradation, with decent and serviceable conditions of living has been a failure in Delhi. The migrant workers, in this case construction workers who have become permanentresidents and citizens of Delhi have been facing a dual predicament, both at worksites as well as slums, grappling with their right to equal and inclusive citizenship. Due to lack of interface with their elected representatives- State as well as local, most of the city's slum dwellers and migrant workforce in the unorganised sector remain dependent on the civil society organisations operating in their locality for negotiating their rights. The need of the hour is to assess the problems specific to these slum dwellers and migrant workers and rework the strategy to reach out to them at the local level. There is a long way to achieving this task at hand. In order to achieve this, one could possibly consider reviving the already waning networks of local bodies- municipalities and ward committees in large cities like Delhi, rather than creating new institutions and autonomous agencies lacking accountability to the public at large.

Amidst the changing nature of workers' struggle, have women workers been able to effectively exercise their rights at workplace and beyond? Do they have awareness and accessibility to welfare provisions mandated by the government to provide them social

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[3]These unions specifically cater to the construction workers. In Delhi there are approximately 50 construction workers unions registered with the State Labour Department and Building and Construction Workers' Welfare Board. Some of most active unions in Delhi whose representatives were interviewed during this study are- Nirman Mazdoor Panchayat Sangam, Nirman Mazdoor Shakti Sangathan, Nirman Mazdoor Sangh, Building Workers' Union, Nirman Mazdoor Adhikar Abhiyan, Asangathit Nirman Union, SEWA.

[4]This observation was gauged from a field study conducted with informal workers residing in some JJ Clusters in Delhi since the last two decades.

protection? Findings from this study reveal manyfactorsbehind the existing appalling state of affairs of women in unorganized sector. There isboth lack of opportunity and willingness amongst female workers to associate and to develop their own agency, absence of a policy on improving women's employability through training, ineffective enforcement of safeguards to protect female workers in terms of their working conditions which have resulted inlack of empowerment amongst women workers. Under existing circumstances it is not out of place to say that the government ought to make efforts to improve and strictly enforce the working conditions in terms of occupational safety, working hours, equal pay and basic facilities at workplace in order for them to lead a better life. However, given the nature and expanse of the unorganised sector, its deregulated nature and lack of accountability of the employers due to presence of multiple heads as a result of contractualisation and sub-contractualisation of employment, prevailing gender imbalance as well as lack of gender-friendly practices; the path towards attaining equal opportunity and treatment remains distant. One can also conclude from this ongoing discussion, based on findings from field interactions with workers and unions that women workers have failed to develop their own agency, independent of labour unions. Unions have been at best external agents and facilitators of their welfare rights and operate through a system of paid annual membership. Women workers who associate and interact through women centric self help groups like SEWA, in selective slum clusters were found to be better aware and capable of exercising their real choices. For instance, they have been able to negotiate alternative work to earn a decent living and have learned strategies to learn new skills and negotiate their rights with guidance and help from SEWA Sathis (community workers). But, this is not the story of the majority of workers who continue to struggle for regular work and minimum wage. This does not mean that male workers have been successful in organizing themselves compare to the female. There are various constraints and struggles, common to both male and female construction workers. But, they are able to exercise their choice and negotiate wages with the employer and thekedar independently. Whereas, women workers fail to attain the minimum level of freedom at workplace, as depicted in the field study.

The particular case study chosen for this research was construction workers in the unorganised sector. The reality of this sector projects a dismal picture for women workers. Women have traditionally been working in this sector as coolies or head loaders or helpers. They continue to work in the same assigned task, due to lack of choice, skills as well as opportunity. Even though social protection policies have been designed, enacted and practiced over the last decade, there is a wide gap in accessibility to avail these schemes. State governments have not been able to hold the employers or contractors accountable or responsible for enforcing these schemes and mandatory laws at worksites. Nor have the labour department or welfare boards themselves been able to maintain transparency and accountability regarding smooth implementation. At the end of the day, there seems to be a lack of initiative on the part of the State governments in correcting the existing flaws in its

implementation machinery. Failure in compliance, lack of awareness, poor accessibility and complex procedures and multiple authorities have all been factors responsible for failure of the existing social protection machinery in Delhi. In order to reach to the grassroots and empower the disempowered workers, the government must channelize these policies and schemes through a decentralised system.

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Intra-Industry Trade of India with Oceania and South-East Asia

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Abstract

This study looks into Intra-Industry Trade levels of India with nations placed at different levels of development as depicted by their GDP per capita belonging to Oceania and South-East Asia. The analysis reveals India to be significantly engaging in two-way trade in the post-liberalisation period in a few product groups with the continents undertaken. Thus as the Indian Economy opened its gates to the world in 1991 it not only increasingly engaged in one-way trade but in two-way trade as well. India is observed to be engaging in significant IIT in a larger number of product groups with Oceania placed much ahead of India as per GDP per capita than with South-East Asia that is placed closer, although both are unequal trade partners of India. Thus greater share of IIT with nations at similar levels of development does not find support in India's two-way trade.

Introduction

Indian Economy faced severe economic crisis on its Balance of Payments (BOP) front in 1991 due to the following reasons: deceleration in the domestic oil production, increasing obligations of repayment to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and declining invisibles due to the Gulf crisis. These reasons worsened the situation with the Current Account Deficit (CAD) of 2.1 per cent of the GDP in the first three years of the seventh plan and a scenario whereby the foreign currency reserves in June 1991 were only $1.1 billion. Thus the policymakers adopted Liberalisation, Privatisation, and Globalisation in 1991. The opening of the economy was expected to push trade on the one hand and to make capital inflows possible thus enabling increased foreign reserves in the nation. (Economic Survey, 1991 to 2009)

Intra-Industry Trade (IIT) or two-way trade is the export and import of goods belonging to the same industry for example in the automobile industry the export of a TATA car for a Volkswagen car. Industry (Grubel, H G and P J Lloyd,1975) here refers to allowing for substitution in consumption or production. IIT was discovered by Verdoorn (1960) in 1960 while he analysed the trade in the Benelux region, followed by Balassa (1966) in 1966 observing the European Economic Community trade, both found nations to be trading within an industry rather than between industries as stated by the traditional trade theories of Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and Heckscher and Ohlin.

Balassa (1986) looked into the extent of the U.S. trade with 37 countries exporting

manufactured goods in 1617 manufactured industries and found that Intra-Industry Trade in U.S. with individual countries is negatively related with inequalities in per capita incomes and total GNP. Culem and Lundberg (1986) studied the Intra-Industry Trade in manufactured goods for the period 1970 to 1980 at the 4-digit level of ISIC and found the following: share of Intra-Industry Trade varies with different country groups, in particular with groups at different levels of development, for all countries under study; Intra-Industry Trade was found to be higher with the developed countries than the developing countries; the product patterns in the trade between developed countries and between developed and the developing countries are different although results point that they are converging overtime; trade between developed and the developing countries has increased rapidly; and it has also been found that the share of Intra-Industry Trade between two countries tends to be higher the lesser the difference in their average incomes. Tharakan (1986) looked into the Intra-Industry Trade patterns in manufactures using the Grubel-Lloyd Index between the developing world and members of the Benelux region and found that the implications accruing from the existence of Intra-Industry Trade between the developed and the developing countries varies. For the developed countries increased Intra-Industry Trade implies availability of greater product variety and reductions in unit costs but in case of the developing nations it is found that the gains of increased Intra-Industry Trade in terms of larger product variety accrues to people in the high income groups that can afford better quality and high priced goods. Balassa and Bauwens (1987) studied the manufactured goods for 38 countries including 18 developed and 20 developing countries and found that the extent of Intra-Industry trade is positively correlated with average income levels and the average country size. Stone and Lee (1995) analysed 68 nations divided into manufactured and non-manufactured nations using unadjusted Grubel-Lloyd Index for the period 1970 and 1987 found that effects of per capita gross domestic product and gross domestic product are significantly positive on Intra-Industry Trade. Nilsson (1999) looked into the Intra-Industry Trade levels of European Union (EU) and the developing countries for the period 1980 to 1992 using Nilsson's measure (1997) and found that over the period the number of products and the level of Intra-Industry Trade between the EU and the developing countries have greatly increased. The study also found that EU and developing countries Intra-Industry Trade decreases with differences in factor-endowments and the economic size of the nations. Taegi and Oh (2001) did cross-sectional analysis for 50 nations over the period 1970 to 1994 and found that Intra-Industry Trade will be large if the two economies are of similar size, if the capital-labour endowment ratio of both the countries is similar and if the total size of the two economies is large. Veeramani (2002) analysed the Intra-Industry Trade for India using Grubel-Lloyd Index at 4-digit Indian Trade Classification and found that the Intra-Industry Trade of India was relatively less with countries at similar stages of development and was more intense with high income countries than with low or middle income countries. In this study the per capita income difference was included as a variable to capture the national endowment differences on Intra-Industry Trade and the relation is found to be positive up

to a limit and then turns out to be negative. Positive can be explained with the existence of Vertical Intra-Industry Trade and negative implies greater share of Inter-Industry Trade. Das (2005) during the period 1975 to 1992 analyses trade in manufactures using Grubel-Lloyd Index found that over the period the Intra-Industry Trade of India shows consistent upward movement, most of India's commodity trade is accounted for by the developed nations and lastly, that most of India's trade partners are industrialised nations. Silvente and Walker (2007) in a study during 1972 to 1992 found that North-South trade would be pushed upwards if the inequalities in South were to be reduced and that horizontal Intra-Industry Trade has important implications for the North-South trade as well. Sawyer, Sprinkle, and Tochkov (2010) looked into the Intra-Industry Trade for 22 nations in East, Southeast, South, and Central Asia for 2003 and found that difference in economic size had an adverse effect especially for manufactured goods.

Most studies reviewed indicate that nations operating at the same level of per capita GDP are expected to engage in two-way trade more intensely than with nations at different levels. Thus the objective of the present study is to analyse the Intra-Industry Trade (IIT) of India with Oceania and South-East Asia in the post-liberalisation period. Nations belonging to these geographical regions are operating at different levels of GDP per capita, although, Oceania is ahead of South-East Asia and thus as per the studies reviewed indicate that India would engage in more intense two-way trade with South-East Asia than Oceania.

Methodology

Grubel-Lloyd Index (1975) is applied to measure the intensity of IIT.

$$GLi = \frac{[(Xi + Mi) - | Xi - Mi |]}{(Xi + Mi)}$$

Gli is the measure of IIT for Industry 'i' and Xi and Mi are the exports and imports of Industry 'i'. The value of the GLi ranges between 0 and 1. At '0' it points to all trade being Inter-industry and at '1' all trade to be IIT.

Data

Secondary data is undertaken as per the Harmonised System of Coding (HS) at the single digit level. The study covers the years 1992-93, 1996-97, 2000-01, 2004-05, 2006-08, and 2008-09. The data for 1992-93 was obtained from National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi and for the remaining years from the official website of Directorate General of Foreign Trade. The nations are selected if their exports account for more than 1 per cent of India's total merchandise exports. Australia is the only nation selected under Oceania, and Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore are chosen under South-East Asia. These nations are placed at different levels as per their GDP per capita as given under the World Bank (from 1991-2014). Australia's GDP per capita in current US dollars is sixty times of India in 1991, Thailand is six times in 1991, Malaysia is nine

times, and Singapore is forty-seven times. Thus Oceania represents a continent at a much higher level of GDP per capita of India as compared to South-East Asia, though both represent unequal trade partners of India but of varying degrees.

Level of IIT

IIT levels of India with Oceania are presented in Table 1 and discussion follows thereafter.

Table 1

Intra-Industry Trade of India with Oceania during 1992 to 2009

PRODUCT GROUPS	1992-93	1996-97	2000-01	2004-05	2006-08	2008-09
Vegetable Products	0.22	0.35	0.98	0.80	0.57	0.77
Mineral Products	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.004
Products of Chemical or Allied Industries	0.53	0.69	0.96	0.95	0.88	0.61
Plastics and Rubber	0.65	0.58	0.81	0.44	0.54	0.45
Paper and Paper Board	0.28	0.50	0.72	0.89	0.72	0.74
Pearls, Precious or Semi-Precious Stones, Metals and Articles Thereof; Imitation Jewellery and Coin	0.001	0.99	0.88	0.09	0.08	0.13
Machinery and Their Parts, Electrical Electronic Equipment, Parts Thereof and	0.84	0.72	0.83	0.88	0.97	0.81
Transport Equipment	0.64	0.48	0.41	0.99	0.55	0.31
Instruments, Apparatus; Clock and Watches, Parts and Accessories Thereof	0.24	0.57	0.46	0.63	0.49	0.47
Arms and Ammunition; Parts Thereof	0	0	0.73	0.73	0	0.99

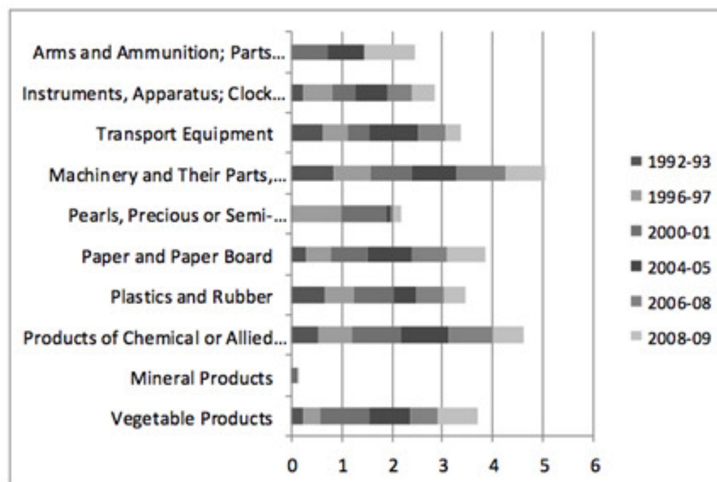
Source: Author's Calculations

Note: Calculations done as per Grubel-Lloyd Index

Looking into the Table 1, displaying two-way trade of India with Oceania, it is observed that quite significant two-way trade (GL is greater than 0.50 for all the years under study) emerges in Products of Chemical or Allied Industries, and Machinery and Their Parts, Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Parts Thereof. And significant two-way trade (GL is greater than 0.50 for most years under study) is registered in Vegetable Products, Plastics and Rubber, and Paper and Paper Board.

Figure 1

Intra-Industry Trade of India with Oceania during 1992 to 2009



Source: Author

Thus the figure 1 vividly depicts significant two-way trade of India with Oceania in the following product groups: Machinery and Their Parts, Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Parts Thereof; Products of Chemical or Allied Industries; Vegetable Products; Plastics and Rubber; and Paper and Paper Board. Similarly in some other product groups' as well significant two-way trade is recorded but on closer observation it is observed that the GL indices are not evenly distributed during the years of the study.

To conclude, as per the analysis conducted for India and Oceania, significant two-way trade is recorded in the following product groups: Machinery and Their Parts, Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Parts Thereof; Products of Chemical or Allied Industries; Vegetable Products; Plastics and Rubber; and Paper and Paper Board. Thus, India and Oceania are found to engage in two-way trade.

Table.2

Intra-Industry Trade of India with South-East Asia during 1992 to 2009

PRODUCT GROUPS	1992-93	1996-97	2000-01	2004-05	2006-08	2008-09
Vegetable Products	0.04	0.04	0.32	0.09	0.09	0.10
Mineral Products	0.55	0.91	0.99	0.14	0.95	0.81
Products of Chemical or Allied Industries	0.69	0.80	0.93	0.78	0.71	0.68
Plastics and Rubber	0.51	0.63	0.49	0.31	0.35	0.34
Paper and Paper Board	0.11	0.18	0.24	0.92	0.15	0.31
Pearls, Precious or Semi-Precious Stones, Metals and Articles Thereof; Imitation Jewellery and Coin	0.41	0.50	0.32	0.15	0.27	0.42
Machinery and Their Parts, Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Parts Thereof	0.18	0.29	0.42	0.36	0.30	0.43
Transport Equipment	0.84	0.75	0.89	0.79	0.95	0.82
Instruments, Apparatus; Clock and Watches, Parts and Accessories Thereof	0.09	0.23	0.38	0.63	0.77	0.56
Arms and Ammunition; Parts Thereof	0.74	0.69	0.40	0.29	0	0.03

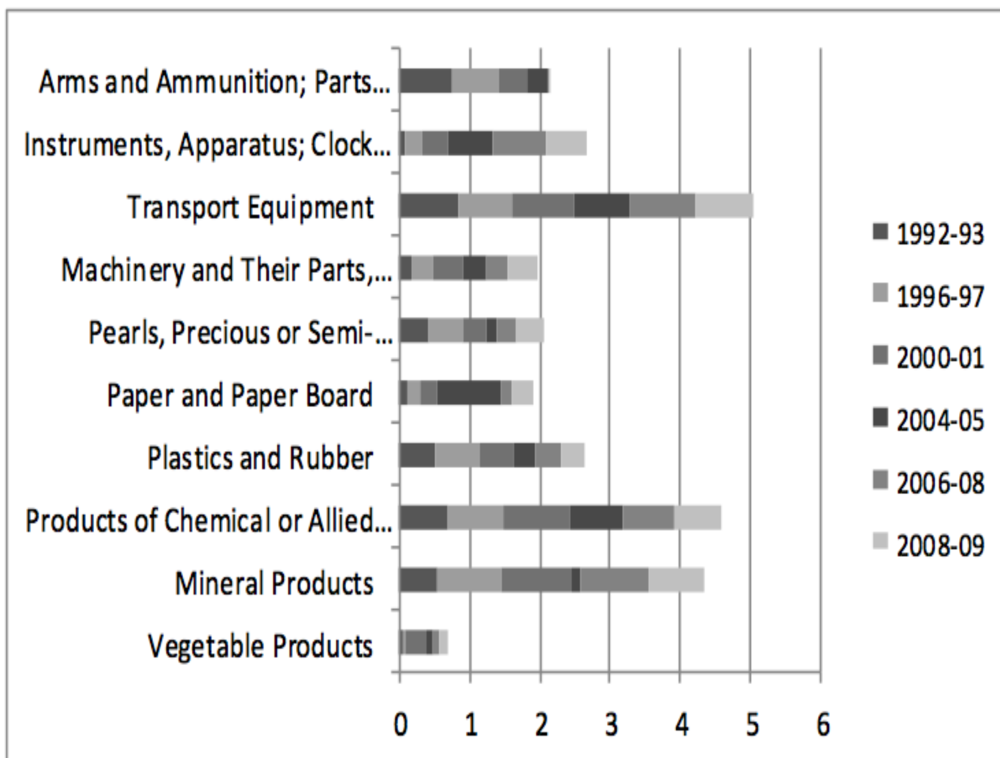
Source: Author's CalculationNote: Calculated as per Grubel-Lloyd Index

Looking into the Table 2, displaying two-way trade of India with South-East Asia, it is observed that quite significant two-way trade (GL is greater than 0.50 for all the years under study) emerges in Products of Chemical or Allied Industries, and Transport Equipment.

And significant two-way trade (GL is greater than 0.50 for most years under study) is registered in Mineral Products.

Figure 2

Intra-Industry Trade of India with South-East Asia during 1992 to 2009



Source: Author

From Figure 2, the following observations can be made firstly, that the IIT levels have been high for Transport Equipment, and Products of Chemical Industries and they are evenly distributed over the years under study. The graph also points at quite high levels of IIT in the case of Mineral Products but looking carefully we see that though the levels of IIT are comparatively high but are not evenly distributed over the years of the study. The levels of IIT for Mineral Products for the year 2004-05 are almost negligible. As for the rest of the products the IIT levels depict an uneven pattern for the years under study.

Conclusion

The IIT analysis indicates at the following conclusions:

- For India and Oceania, significant two-way trade exists and is recorded in the following product groups: Machinery and Their Parts, Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Parts Thereof; Products of Chemical or Allied Industries; Vegetable Products; Plastics and Rubber; and Paper and Paper Board.
- Analysing India's IIT with South-East Asia, significant two-way trade is recorded in Products of Chemical or Allied Industries, Transport Equipment, and Mineral Products.
- India and nations belonging to both Oceania and South-East Asia are placed at different levels as per GDP per capita, but the nation chosen under Oceania is at a much higher level as compared to the nations chosen under Oceania. But the two-way trade analysis indicates to significant IIT levels of India in a larger number of product groups with Oceania than with South-East Asia.
- Thus India is found to engage in two-way trade with its unequal trade partners and in a larger number of product groups with Oceania than with South-East Asia.
- The product group in which significant two-way trade is recorded for India with both Oceania and South-East Asia is Products of Chemical or Allied Industries. Therefore India engages in significant two-way trade in largely in different products with the nations belonging to both Oceania and South-East Asia.

To sum up the findings it has been observed that India engages in two-way trade with nations belonging to both Oceania and South-East Asia. India is found to engage in significant two-way trade in a larger number of product groups with Oceania than South-East Asia, although, the former is placed at a much higher level of GDP per capita than the latter. Thus nations indulge in significant two-way trade with nations placed at similar levels of development than at different levels is not found to be true in the case of India.

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Re-contextualising Industrial Sector in Punjab

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Abstract

Sound agriculture development provided a favourable base for growth of industrial sector in Punjab, however, it made a very slow progress when it was compared to that of other states in India.The industrial sector in Punjab is in a palpable stagnation and even suffering a decline. In order to attract private investment, the state government has fallen overboard in offering incentives to national and multinational business houses. In the light of previous policy efforts made by state government, this paper raises a point that new measures seem to be an old wine in new bottle. Further, it calls for the central government lead integrated industrial strategy for Punjab and adjoining states wherein industrial development is based on complementarity rather than competitiveness.

Introduction

As the agriculture sector, a hitherto economic mainstay of the state of Punjab, is drifting down after reaching its pinnacle, an urgent comprehensive strategy is required to bring in structural transformation of the state economy with a concern of transferring workforce from agriculture sector to highly productive modern industry. Developed agriculture sector supplemented by good infrastructure and enterprising people provided a sound base for an industrial take off in Punjab, but the state has not been able to realise its potential due to multi-faceted inhibitions.

The paradox is that when other states started on the path of increased growth rate, particularly in terms of industry, Punjab started declining. At the time when the Indian economy was growing at 7-8 percent per annum after the liberalisation ofIndian economy, in Punjab the growth was almost half of the country (Sawhney 2009). Competition created in the changed milieu of globalisation has dealt a fatal blow to the economy of Punjab particularly in terms of small scale industries (Singh 2005; Sawhney 2009). Return of political stability and peace to the state after a decade of militancy provided the appropriate backdrop for a transition from the agriculture-intensive pattern to the industrialisation. But the successive state governments have not been able to play their role effectively to respond to the 'paradigm shift' that had been underway. If we go by Stephen Howes' explanation of shift in development paradigm with reforms at state level (Howes 2003), the tale of Punjab was that of a failure. Governments of the state, irrespective of political affiliation, have not been able to perform an effective role as a facilitator of market economy and market opportunities and as a

fiscal manager. World Bank's assessment in 2003 confirmed that the industrial climate in Punjab had clearly lagged behind other states (Ahluwalia, Chaudhry and Sindhu 2009).Singh (1997)suggests economic reality in the state cannot be understood without delving deep into the political manoeuvrings. This paper attempts to approach industrialization in Punjab in politico-economic perspective.

Historical Account

The pre-reorganisation Punjab inherited a weak industrial base after the partition of India. Most of the industrial centres of erstwhile united Punjab such as Sialkot, Gujranwala, Wajirabad, and Lahore were left on the other side of the border (Sahota 1960, 111.1). Consequent on the partition, most of the areas supplying raw materials were also left with Pakistan (Sandhu and Singh 1983, 133). Even before the partition it was one of the relatively backward areas of the subcontinent (Rangnecker 1960). The secondary sector comprised of small, medium and large industries, occupied a less important place in the state economy as compared to all India. During 1964-65 the industrial sector's contribution in terms of net output was 16.5 per cent in comparison to 22.3 per cent atthe all India level (NCAER 1970). Later, Indo-Pak conflict in 1965 and 1971 gave a jolt to industrial growth in north western India by exposing its vulnerability to foreign attack. As far as the large establishments were concerned, undivided Punjab witnessed consequent disinclination of the capital to come to the state from other parts of the country and abroad (Johar and Kumar 1983, 184). Besides, the area lacked minerals and similar natural resources (Johar and Khanna 1983, iii). Thus, the environment prevailing in the region was not very encouraging for the growth of large and medium industries.

Evidently, the most important contribution to rapid rise of prosperity of Punjab in 1970s and 1980s came from agriculture sector. After the advent of green revolution, agriculture was more advanced in Punjab than any other state in India. In terms of per acre productivity, it compared well even with advanced countries. As one turns from agriculture to industry, it is evident that Punjab has not shown much advancement in the sphere of organised large industry. Studies emphasised that advanced agriculture without matching industrialisation was an imbalance in itself (Gill and Gill 1990). It was widely recognised that the growth based on agriculture was not sustainable. Thus, there was no escape from industrialisation.

Certain degree of industrialisation was induced in the state by market forces but its extent and scope was limited. Whatever industrialisation took place, it was mainly in the small scale sector (Johar and Khanna 1983, ii).Within ten years of independence, small scale industry in the region graduated from the production of consumer goods such as hosiery, sports goods to engineering products such as cycle parts, sewing machines parts, electricity goods and large variety of machine tools (Rangneckar 1960, 1.5). In terms of small scale sector, the industrial production in Punjab went up by 60 per cent over the period of six years from 1951 to 1956. This growth rate was nearly twice that of all India. One centre,

Batala alone was reported to be producing nearly half of the country's output of private sector in production of machine tools (Sahota 1960, iv, 5). During the following decades also, structure of industry in Punjab was characterised by predominance of small scale sector. In 1973-74 more than three-fifth of the total industrial production was accounted for by small scale sector. Prominent factors for this situation were; existence of vast number of entrepreneurs who were enterprising in the field of industry but were constrained by finances; lack of metallic minerals and fossil fuels for the establishments of large metallurgical or chemical complexes or even for setting up specific industries based on minerals in the large scale sectors; closeness to sensitive international border; absence of a well developed stock exchange market, business houses and port facilities which could help in promoting large scale industrial investments; and absence of active participation of banking institutions in financing industrial ventures in the state due to risk involved (Sandhu and Singh 1983, 134).

Owing to the intervention of government during the late 1970s, the establishment of large and medium scale industries made a steady progress. The share of large and medium industries in the total industrial production (organised sector) which was 40.9 per cent in 1973-74, increased to 48.6 per cent in 1978-79 and exceeded the production from small scale sectors in 1979-80, when it accounted for 51.6 per cent of the total industrial production in the state (Sandhu and Singh 1983, 140-141). However, the medium and large scale industries were lesser developed than that of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, and Tamil Nadu (Johar and Khanna 1983, iii). Even the sufficient linkages between agriculture and industry on the one hand and between various sets of industries on the other were lacked (Singh 1983, 152). With regard to industrial sector in Punjab the Sixth Five Year Plan Document (1978-83) notes:

> Large and small industries that have come up are not mutually integrated and are not the type which would sustain and promote each other's growth.

Though, the sound agriculture development provided a favourable base for growth of industrial sector in Punjab, it made a very slow progress when it was compared to that of other states in India. Relative backwardness of this sector was also evident from contribution made by it to the Net Domestic Product (NDP) of the state during that period. On average this contribution had been 13 per cent as against 26 per cent in case of Maharashtra (Singh 1983, 139; Johar, Khanna and Raikhy 1983,160). Contribution of industrial sector to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Punjab was only 11.7 per cent as against 24.9 per cent in Maharashtra and 23.0 per cent in Tamil Nadu even during 1978-79 (Sandhu and Singh 1983, 140-141). With petering out of the positive effects of green revolution, Punjab economy began to lose its fast dynamism of progress (Gill and Ghuman 2001).

It was mooted that the case for industrial development in Punjab was fairly strong one. Factors such as level of per capita income and consumption habits of the general populace,

existence of a prosperous market, availability of skilled and semi-skilled labour force, availability of large savings including those from abroad in the form of inward remittances, and a highly developed infrastructure base were favourable to the region's industrialisation. Yet the growth of industry in Punjab did not commensurate with either the need or the potential for its growth (Johar and Khanna 1983, iv). Government of Punjab was required to play an aggressive roleto overcome the factors hampering growth of industry. State government also realised earlier that there was no escape from industrialisation.

Policy Interventions

Efforts were started, as early as, in 1978 and the growing awareness was reflected in 'March 1978 Statement on Industrial Policy'. The Statement visualised; a network of village and small industries so as to cover all the villages in the next five years; sustained growth of small scale industries with special emphasis on tiny units so as to create maximum employment; development of medium and large scale industrial units which were agro-based to the maximum extent possible; attracting maximum number of industrialists and small entrepreneurs for setting up industries with special incentives for non-resident Indians; maximum export of the state industrial output; continuous up gradation of technology in industry.

The state government adopted incentives-based approach for the promotion of industries that included incentives such as interest free loans, land and other subsidies (area based), exemption from electricity duty, financial assistance for feasibility studies, a variety of tax incentives, technical assistance etc. (Singh 1983, 166-167). Area based subsidies were available in graded manner, depending upon the extent of backwardness of the area where the unit was to be set up. These area groups were (Tulsi 1980, 220-222):

Group I: Focal Points/Industrial Areas

Group II: Specified areas of different districts

Group III: Areas other than specified areas. These areas were the areas falling within 10 miles from the municipal limits.

Group IV: All sub-mountain areas declared as such by the state government; other areas within 16 km of the declared borders.

After 1978,government of Punjab formulated industrial policies in 1982, 1989, 1996, 2003 and 2009. Objectives of Industrial Policies of 1982 and 1989 were to create a climate that was conducive for the industrial investment through development of infrastructure and to make the small scale industry competitive (Government of Punjab 2009).

The Industrial Policy, 1996 used incentives and subsidies as its instruments to promote industrial investment. The policy also provided for strengthening of the single window

concept and time-bound clearance to new industrial units. In a changed environment due to the liberalisation of Indian economy in 1991, industrial sector in Punjab was facing a stiff competition from outside. Thus, the Policy envisaged modernisation and technological up gradation for existing industry, particularly small scale industry. As the basic reliance of this policy was on direct financial incentives, in form of subsidies and tax exemption, the state finance experienced an adverse stress.

There was a declining trend in industrial growth in the state in the late 1990s. During the year 1996-97, 2497 new industrial units with an investment of Rs. 854.47 crore were set up in the state. But, the number came down to 1187 with investment of Rs. 622 crore during the Year 2001-2002. Industrial sector witnessed a growth rate of 11.78 per cent during the year 1998-99, but during 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 the rate of growth declined to 5.90 per cent and 5.73 per cent respectively. In other words there was industrial sickness in the state. Reserve Bank of India in its statistical analysis revealed that out of 106329 small scales industrial units financed by banks in Punjab, 6304 units with an investment of Rs. 233.57 crore had gone sick as on March, 2002 (Government of Punjab 2003).

Shift in Approach

The government of Punjab claimed to have a paradigm shift in its approach in the Industrial Policy, 2003. From a role of direct promotion and direct financial assistance, the government tried to adopt the role of a facilitator. In the era of trade liberalisation brought about by various WTO agreements, industry in the state was facing challenges of higher product standard and environmental parameters and hence technological up-gradation was needed. The Policy made a case for strengthening and rejuvenating the existing industry. For the first time, it called for rapid development of services and knowledge based industry. The broad objectives of the policy were to create a conducive investment climate through infrastructure creation, reduced regulations and general facilitation; to rejuvenate and make competitive the existing industry, particularly in the small scale sector through improved technology, product quality and marketing; and to create a special thrust in the areas where Punjab had an edge in terms of cost and competitiveness.

To achieve its objectives, Industrial Policy 2003 stressed upon hassle free dealing for entrepreneurs. In an attempt to rejuvenate the small scale industries in changed context due to liberalisation of Indian economy, it provided for a State Level Industrial Revival Forum. It also opened doors to private investment in the creation of adequate infrastructure and also for up-gradation of infrastructure. It was for the first time that Industrial Policy introduced self-contained industrial entities with adequate social infrastructure in Punjab. It was declared that efforts would be made to take maximum advantage from the schemes of the Central Government such as special economic zones, apparel parks, cluster development etc.(Government of Punjab 2003).

Industrial Policy, 2009 was framed on the basis of a report titled 'Punjab Industrial Review', submitted by a team under Isher Judge Ahluwalia to the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). Through this Policy, state government wanted to streamline the industrial process further. In this pursuit, it brought about Punjab Facilitation Act, 2005 to expedite the industrial approvals. It provided for a single-window clearance in a time-bound manner with a provision of deemed clearance if approval was not granted in the notified time schedule (India SEZ Politics, 2009).

Status of Industrial Sector

The industrial sector in Punjab is in a palpable stagnation and even suffering a decline. It was growing at the growth rate of 4.2 percent, having attracted less than 2 percent of the country's total investment proposals between 2001 and 2007 (India Today 2007). A report on industrial review in Punjab by UNIDO noticed tha development of modern industry had not receivedadequate attention by state government. The issues of administrative delays, apathetic approach of the government officials and blatant corruption were also highlighted by the report. It further expressed its concern that though rule under the Industrial Facilitation Act, 2005 were notified but these were not being enforced in spirit. It noted that *Udhyog sahayak* is the 17th stop on the train of government approvals rather than one and only one as it is supposed to be (Ahluwalia, Chaudhry and Sindhu 2009).

Industrial sector in Punjab has also suffered from preferential policies of the central government for development of hilly states in its vicinity i.e. Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand (Khanna 2013). These states are receiving stimulus for industrial investment in the form of incentive package that included capital investment subsidy, freight subsidy and other incentives. In this milieu investors are finding the industrial investment in Punjab as more capital-intensive. The problem has been aggravated by astronomical prices of land in the state that has been corroborated by the UNIDO report.Already facing a handicap due to its geographical location, Punjab has witnessed a flight of industry in addition to decline in fresh investment in industrial sector. The state government revealed that 274 industrial units, involving an investment of Rs. 3679 crore, had moved out of Punjab as a result of incentive packages to neighbouring states. Due to stagnation in industrial growth, the contribution of manufacturing sector in GSDP of the state was as low as 6.8 per cent in comparison to that of 16 per cent in Himachal Pradesh (Khanna 2013).

Industrial sector seems to be in ineluctable need of active support of the state government, but the response of government in state of Punjab has been found wanting in many respects. Overall response of the government is not very encouraging for industry, particularly in case of small scale industry. Though state government has announced a slew of new measures to attract investment in industrial sector, the previous decisions were not put into effect. The government do not have any concrete roadmap to deliver the already existing policies.

Industrial areas are inflicted with problem of dilapidated infrastructure.Government has no supportive policies with respect to power. Small scale entrepreneurs complained about receiving frequent notices of revision of power charges, those too with retrospective effect. An inquest about the flaws in policy-measures brought out weak commitment and lack of vision as major blemishes of policy-environment. The stakeholders picked holes in implementation of the policies and criticized that policy environment in the state was inflicted with policy reversals (Kumar 2014).

Punjab's economy could be benefited from its comparative advantages in a free trade environment. It was claimed that industrial projects were cleared without any delay under a single window service. An empowered committee was constituted to clears mega projects with investment above Rs 100 crore. In 51st meeting of National Development Council the government announced that 35 such projects had been cleared with investment of Rs 8500 crore (Government of Punjab 2005).

However, on the basis of information revealed by Industrial Promotion Policy, 2013 regarding percentage distribution of the state GSDP from 2004-05 to 2011-12 (Table 1), it can be inferred that the growth of industry in Punjab has been stagnant for almost a decade.

Table 1: Sector-wise Distribution of GSDP in Punjab

Sector	2004-05	2011-12
Primary	32.7	30.3
Secondary	24.7	26.8
Tertiary	42.6	42.9

Source: Government of Punjab 2013, Industrial Policy 2013.

The data available till 31.03.2009 reveal that in terms of value of production,small scale industries have a significant place industrial sector in Punjab. Industrial Promotion Policy, 2013 concedes that 95 per cent of total industrial units are small and medium category (Government of Punjab 2013).As far as industrial growth is concerned, the small scale industries in Punjab experienced a decline in growth from 11.43 per cent in the pre-liberalisation period to 2.31 in the post-liberalisation period. For large and medium scale industries also the decline was from 5.91 to 1.81 for the same period (Kaur and Bhatia 2010).

Conclusions

The economy of Punjab is facing a pressing need of transformation from agriculture centred to industry based, to generate alternative avenues for employment outside the agriculture. Keeping in view the debilitated fiscal health of the state, governmenthere looks towards

private capital to develop industrial infrastructure for industry to thrive on. An insight into political aspects of policies and parameters of industrialisation brought out a widespread disenchantment prevailing among industrialists for the policy environment in Punjab due to weak commitment for existing policies on the part of state government.

A slew of measures have been taken recently by government of the state in the form of policy actions. In order to attract private investment, the state government has fallen overboard in offering incentives to national and multinational business houses. It has been claimed that several companies have signed MOUs with state government to make investment in the state. However, in the light of previous policy efforts made by state government, new measures seem to be an old wine in new bottle, thus, materialisation of these MOUs is yet to be seen.

Studies have revealed that relatively more prosperousregions tend to receive more industrial investment because they have the existing infrastructure to support new industrial projects(Gulati and Hussain 2002).The regional political economy, in this context, has an important role in the outcome of economic policies made at the national level(Vijaybaskar, 2010).It is high time that industry in the state be re-contextualised. The government of the state should devise long term industrial porgrammes to generate synergy not only between large, medium and small scale industries but industry and local economy at large. It should restructure, if not dismantle, subsidies and incentives. It should capitalise on the revenue saved by rationalising subsidies on modernisation of Focal Points and making power sector suitable for industry. The political party in power has to raise itself above the short term political gains. It should make its public relations effective to generate acceptance for restructuring of priorities.On the lines of the central government SEZs, Standard Design Factories should be provided to small entrepreneurs on subsidised annual rent. It can help them enhance their comparative advantage in terms of cost and quality of their production. In the long term, the state would be able to develop their comparative advantage in terms of industrial infrastructure, and subsequently enlarge the scope for investment in large capital intensive industrial activities. Further, the government of Punjab should ensure an unwavering commitment to the implementation of policy initiatives to fill the credibility gap.

A holistic approachfocused on integrated industrial strategy should be devised for whole of the north-western region, wherein development of industrial sector in Punjab and adjoining states including hill states is based on complementarity rather than competitiveness. Contribution of the central government is significant in this regard. It has to act as a precursor to stimulate industrial activities in Punjab and adjoining states.One step can be the declaration of the whole of the north-western region as North Western Investment and Manufacturing Zone, on the lines of National Investment and Manufacturing Zones (NIMZ) along the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor.

The structural shift of economy in the state is possible only with a clear sense of priorities on the part of government. Persistent remodelling of priorities in the light of emerging opportunities and impediments is crucial to create and sustain competitiveness and growth of economy. More precisely, the predicament of stunted growth of industrial sector in the Punjab yearns for political answers to economic questions that entail pragmatism and long term vision on the part of governments both at the centre and in states.

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Situating Sohan Singh Bhakna in Post Ghadar Period

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Abstract

Sohan Singh Bhakna was the founder of Hindi Association of the Pacific Coast which was popularly called as Ghadar Party. In 1913, when entire nation was in a deep political slumber, this outfit mobilised the immigrant Indians to overthrow the British rule. The effort of Ghadarites was like a summer storm which withered as fast as it originated but left a long term footprints in the political landscape in the form of ideology, ideals and sacrifices. Bhakna was arrested in 1915 and released in 1930. Over all, he spent twenty-six years in different jails. A highly respected Ghadarite, peasant leader and a committed communist worker, Bhakna, till his last breath continued his struggle against the exploiting forces of the society.He always kept close to his heart the principles of the Ghadar Party, whom he regarded as sacrosanct. There is little documentation of Bhakna's activities in the post Ghadar period. This paper is an attempt to locate Sohan Singh Bhakna in the midst of national movement and study his political activities after his release from the jail, in 1930.

Key Words: *Sohan Singh Bhakna, Kirti-Kisan Party, Peasant Struggle, Leftist Ideology*

On 19 February 1915, Ghadar Party's armed attemptto liberate Indiadid not fructify. Many Ghadariteswere hanged for their daring endeavour while many transported to long incarcerations in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Sohan Singh Bhakna was also sentenced to death but later on it was changedto life imprisonment. Bhakna was released from the jail on 17 June, 1930. Long period of confinement, off and on hunger strikesand mal-nutritious food had almost ruined himphysically. Frail looking, Bhakna was not able to move on his own.Wasakha Singh and some other old members of the Ghadar Party helped him to step in the public life once again.Citizens of Lahorecame in large numbers tofelicitatehis release.An assemblage at Gurdwara Dera Sahib, Lahore, honoured him by bestowingupon him a *Siropa*(robe of honour) and a turban. At Amritsar, Congress and Akali Dal jointly organised a procession toshow their respect for the founder of the Ghadar Party.

On his return to the native village,people gathered in large numbers to receive him.It was a nostalgic moment. The site of countryside, itslanes and places had faded from his memory. It was only with the help of the village elders that he could locate his home which had been abandonedand there was no one to greet him there.Long time ago, hisblood mother and stepmother had passed away. His spouse, Bishan Kaurhad left the house to live with her parents. He poignantly remarks, "Except the village elders, nobody has a lasting memory of myearlier life. Younger generation doesnot know me and I, too, fail to recognise its face. I can hardly identify the old places of my village(Waraich, 2003, pp. 61-62). Indeed, the gap

of twenty-one and a half years, between when he left and returned to his native village was not a small one.

Although physically, Sohan Singh Bhakna was left weak, but mentally, he was strong enough to cope up with the awful moments of life. At threescore, he had to start his life afresh. As a die-hard patriot, he vowed to continue his fight against the British rule. In the company of his wife, friends and neighbours, he regained his health. For some time, his activities remained confined to his village. Ghadar Party in America, through its emissaries, established contact with its founder at his home. Bhakna slowly stepped out of his village to take part in active politics. Government, through its toadies and intelligence agencies kept a close watch on his activities in and outside his village. Being a keen observer of political developments, Bhakna founded that nation was at the threshold of complete independence demand. Political scene in India, in 1930s was different from what it was in 1914-15 when the Ghadarites had returned from foreign lands to foment an open revolution.

In July 1930, at the time of Bhakna's release, Civil Disobedience Movement was embracing the fabric of the life of the nation. By this time, most of the Ghadarites also came out of the prisons. In the politically agitated environment, Bhakna could not help but be drawn into the ambit of intense political activity that was taking place all around him. He joined the Indian National Congress and was appointed as a member of the Provincial Congress Committee. But his association with the Congress did not last long. At the end of 1930, he felt disillusioned with the programme of the Congress as well as with its leadership. Bhakna's decision to leave the Congress can be seen in the light of a collective political line adopted byGhadarites. All Ghadariteswere active members of the *Kirti-Kisan* Party, and they severely criticised the Congress leadership for its undue stress on non-violent creed. Bhakna criticised Mahatma Gandhi for his compromising policies. He remarked, "My revolutionary ideals had no match with the moderate policy of the Congress, so I left it" (Bajaj, 1967, p. 49). Bhakna's transition to Marxism must be placed in the context of what was the most striking feature of Punjab's politics in 1930s – the mobilisation of peasants and workers into *Kirti-Kisan* Party. Although, not well versed in socialist literature, he was drawn into the ambit of communism and joined the *Kirti-Kisan* Party.

At this time, leftist trend in Indian politics had become an integral part of the anti-imperialist struggle. By the end of 1930, large batches of the members of the Ghadar Party returned to India from United States of America and Canada to join *Kirti-Kisan* Party(Josh B. , 1979, p. 108). The Soviet trained Ghadarites aimed at bringing the youth of Punjab into their ambit. Bhakna decided to carry out *Kirti-Kisan* Party's programme by mobilising the students, and setting up the branches of the party in the city. Bhakna mentions,"Russian leaders demanded more cadre from India. They wanted F.A. qualified students. Only educational institutions could return such students. I took the responsibility on my shoulders and opened a milk dairy outside Khalsa College, Amritsar for the

purpose"(Bhakna,Manuscripts, Acession No. 11152, DSCN 5861). It is reported that students paid regular visits to his dairy and held deliberations on political matters with him in a makeshift library room which he had taken on rent. Students came to learn about his role in the Ghadar Party and the long ordeals of Ghadarites faced in the British jails. It seems his personality inspired the students and "he made twelve students to get ready to visit Russia to study Marxism" (Bhakna, Manuscripts, Acession No. 11152, DSCN 5862).The activity did not go unnoticed. College authorities reported the matter to the police and got him arrested on the charge of making seditious propaganda among the students. He was charged with recrudescence of the revolutionary activities in Amritsar, and was tried under Section 17 (1) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, for which he was sentenced to three months' jail in Multan(The Ghadar Directory 1997, p. 272). He was released from the jail on 30 December, 1930(Asli Quami Dard (Newspaper), 2 January, 1931). Bhakna states that although the job at dairy came to a standstill, yet many students, after his release continued to visit him at his village.Later on, he sent two youngsters to Russia for learning Marxist philosophy(Jas, 1983, p. 216). He remarks, "I have sown the seed of nationalism among the youth of Khalsa College" (Bhakna,Manuscripts, Acession No. 11152, DSCN 5862).

As a founder of the Ghadar Party, Bhakna was concerned about his imprisoned companions. He took into his hands the task of getting all the Ghadarites released who despite of completion of their jail sentences were languishing in different jails of the country. He joined Political Prisoner's Release Committee or *Desh Bhagat Qaidi Parivar Sahayak Committee.*[1] He started a fervent propaganda and issued a pamphlet entitled, *'Twenty-Four Imprisoned Souls'* representing prisoners as live-martyrs and heroes of the freedom struggle (Asli Quami Dard, 8 January, 1931) He prepared a list of all imprisoned Ghadarites, consulted other like-minded activists and carried out a sustained propaganda. Bhakna's endeavour captured public attention when he issued a press note in *Asli Qaumi Dard* appealing to the members of the Punjab State Assembly to raise the issue of imprisoned Ghadarites. He regretted (Asli Quami Dard, 8 January, 1931):

> I want to bring to attention of my countrymen the apathetic condition of those patriots who had been imprisoned during 1914-15 by the British authorities. These prisoners were convicted by the colonial state during the Lahore and Burma Conspiracy Cases. They all had completed nearly sixteen years of their life sentences. Mentally and physically, condition of all these prisoners was serious. It is pitiable that government does not want to release them. All these prisoners are suffering from multiple diseases. They have spent the prime time of their lives in the jails and it served no purpose of the government to keep them behind bars despite completion of their sentences.

[1]*Desh Bhagat Qaidi Parivar Sahayak Committee* was established by Wasakha Singh in 1925. Sohan Singh Bhakna was elected Secretary to the committee by its members.

According to him the police had in March, 1916 arrested the patriots including Harnam Singh, Kirpa Singh, Pakhar Singh, Sundar Singh and Karam Singh. In the Third Lahore Conspiracy Case, jury sentenced Veer Singh and Kartar Singh to life term. In the Burma Conspiracy Case, thirty Ghadarites were implicated by British authorities for revolutionary activities. Since then the prisoners were languishing in different Indian jails. To this effect, "It is a moral duty of all countrymen, press and members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly to put pressure on the government for the release of imprisoned Ghadarites" (Asli Quami Dard, 8 January, 1931).

Sohan Singh Bhakna left no stone unturned in his endeavour to get the prisoners released. His fervent propaganda was taken note of in the Punjab Legislative Assembly where member, Sant Singh questioned the government officials about the fate of the prisonerswho had been sentenced in the Lahore and Burma Conspiracy Cases (Asli Quami Dard, 16 February, 1931). Sant Singh demanded a list of names of all those Ghadarites who had been hanged by the orders of the government and also those who had been released. Bhakna's efforts bore fruit and some other associations supported him. Sikh Association of Amritsar passed a resolution in his support and demanded unconditional release of all Ghadarites(Asli Quami Dard, 18 March, 1931).At this time, government issued an order in Bhakna's name, restricting his activities only to his village.

At this time, the Civil Disobedience Movement, launched by Mahatma Gandhi was in full swing. On 5 March, 1931 Viceroy Irwin and Gandhi signed an agreement which came to be known as Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Gandhi's refusal to make the pact conditional on commutation of the death sentences of Bhagat Singh and his comrades had generated a widespread resentment among youth. Bhakna had also showed his resentment on signing of the pact. Out of resentment, Bhakna planned an agitation along with some radical youngsters at Karachi where Mahatma Gandhi was expected to come to attend the meeting of the Congress. Ram Singh Ghala Mala, a prominent leftist worker from Amritsar recalls those days in his memoir, "Sohan Singh Bhakna called a meeting of our group to register the protest against Mahatma Gandhi on his arrival at Karachi railway station. Mulkh Raj, Inder Singh Bijli, Gurmukh Singh Ambalvi, Pyara Singh, Ganda Singh, Kartar Kaur, Atma Devi, Raghubir Kaur, Comrade Jugal Kishore, Harbans Singh, Dusandha Singh, Santa Singh Gandiwand *etc*. were the prominent members who attended this meeting. Bhakna instructed the workers not to resort to the violent methods during the protest". (Singh, Karamjit (ed.), pp. 25-26). On 29 March, 1931 they reached Karachi. Approximately, seventy members were in the group. Sohan Singh Bhakna led the protest. On arrival of Gandhi, they broke security cordon of Congress volunteers and presented a black flower to him. They shouted the slogans, "Mahatma Gandhi – Go back", "The Killer of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru – Go back". Later on, a heavy contingent of police force arrived on the scene which took Gandhi away from them. Sohan Singh Bhakna was a driving force for all of them in the protest. After the successful protest,

Bhakna praised them all (Singh, Karamjit. (ed.), pp. 26-27).[2] At about the same time, Workers and Peasants Party (*Kirti-Kisan* Party) also held its Second All India Session alongside the Congress Session at Karachi. This session opposed tooth and nail the Gandhi–Irwin Pact as well as the participation of the Congress in the Round Table Conference. Here, Bhakna paid tribute to Bhagat Singh in his speech, "Bolshevism in India was first started by the martyrs of 1914-15, that a host of Bhagat Singh would appear in future and lead the country towards freedom (The Ghadar Directory 1997, p. 272).

Sohan Singh Bhakna remained active as a political propagandist. He presided over Nau Jawan (Youth) Conference held in Multan in the end of June, 1931. Next month, he was elected as a working committee member of the Provincial *Kirti-Kisan* Party (The Ghadar Directory 1997, p. 272). At this time, he conceived the idea of building a *Kirti-Kisan* Ashram in his village. It was perceived by him as a home away from home for the children of interned Ghadarites. Bhakna wanted to educate children to lead a good life and to be ready for the national service (Waraich, 2003, pp. 63-64). *Kirti-Kisan* Ashram became a centre for rehabilitation of the children of interned freedom fighters - cum - asylum for roving activists of the Ghadar Party. Baba Wasakha Singh praised his work in these words (Kirti (Newspaper) , 11 February, 1934):

> Sohan Singh Bhakna's initiative to educate the children of Ghadarites is a noteworthy example of selfless service. Ashram has become an institution in itself where children are being imparted the lesson of hard work and self esteem. It has changed the lives of four children to whom I know personally.

Meanwhile, Bhakna continued his efforts for the early release of the interned Ghadarites. He again brought the issue of these prisoners into public notice. Wasakha Singh and Bhakna made a joint appeal for the release of Choohar Singh, a member of the Ghadar Party who had been on a hunger strike in Multan Jail against the inhuman conditions in jails. Bhakna consistently carried on the propaganda and issued a press note chastising the heartless policy of the British government (Nava Jug (Newspaper) , 9 January, 1933, p. 7).

> Choohar Singh has been on a hunger strike for the past several days to register his protest against inhuman conditions in the British jails. This is not for the first time that Choohar Singh has registered his protest. Before being transferred to Punjab jail, he had gone on hunger strikes in Andaman, United Provinces and Central Province jails. But this time, he is committed to either put an end to the inhuman punishments or to end his life in the jail. I strongly appeal to the political and religious organisations to register their protest to save the life of a committed freedom fighter.

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[2] Sohan Singh narrates the incident himself in Malwinderjit Singh Waraich (ed.), *Jeewan Sangram te hor Likhtan,* Balraj Sahni Yadgar Prakashan, Chandigarh, n.d., pp. 146-47.

Sohan Singh Bhakna consistently pursued the case of Choohar Singh. He also released a detailed press note about the whereabouts of the political prisoners and sought their immediate release.[3] At last, the government relented and released Choohar Singh and some other Ghadarites(Waraich, 2003, p. 69). However, Choohar Singh passed away soon after his release on 9 September, 1933 (Singh, B. R., 2010, p. 439).

The Ghadarites, despite of their belief in communist credentials earned a great respect among Sikh organisations especially, Akal Takht (Supreme spiritual seat of the Sikhs). Although, Bhakna became a follower of communism, he never reneged on his faith in egalitarian philosophy of the Sikhism. During the elections of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee which were held in1936, Bhakna shared an important responsibility. Wasakha Singh with the help of Sohan Singh Bhakna prepared a list of those candidates whom they considered fit to be the members of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (Ghuman, 2008, pp. 154-55). Although, the list recommended by Bhakna was not wholeheartedly accepted by Mastar Tara Singh and Gaini Sher Singh, but the issue was solved amicably; except six or seven, more than hundred candidates were elected unopposed whose names had been proposed by Sohan Singh Bhakna (Nava Zamana, 1 November, 2009).[4]

In 1937, elections to the provincial assemblies were held under the Government of India Act 1935. The Communist Party decided to join ranks with the Congress to contest the provincial elections. In communist circles, under the presidentship of Jawala Singh, Desh Bhagat Election Propaganda Board or *Baba Board* was constituted to nominate the candidates. Sohan Singh Bhakna was also among the members of the board. Nine candidates were nominated by the *Baba Board*. They were – Baba Karam Singh Cheema, Baba Roor Singh Choorchak, Comrade Harjap Singh Mahilpur, Raghubir Kaur, Sohan Singh Josh, Parkash Kaur, Fazal Ilahi Qurban, Master Kabul Singh and Teja Singh Swatantar (Singh, Karamjit, (ed.),p. 35). Since Communist Party had been banned outfit, communist candidates contested elections on the symbol of Congress.

In these elections, Indian National Congress, all over India won a thumping majority, but in Punjab, it lost elections to Unionist Party led by Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan. Khan, who became the Premier of Punjab, was a loyalist to the British rule. His ministry had promised to reduce the burden of excessive revenue demand, but nothing was done to this effect. Panjab

[3]*Nava Jug,* 13 February, 1933. Bhakna has mentioned a list of Ghadarites imprisoned in different jails. Jawala Singh, Madan Singh and Baghel Singh were in Lahore Central Jail; Kesar Singh, Dyan Singh were in Rawalpindi Jail; Choohar Singh was in Multan Central Jail; Nand Singh was in Multan District Jail; Jagat Ram was in Gujarat Jail; Muhhamad Mustaffa was in Bareilly Jail; Parmanand was in Ahmadabad; Kehar Singh was in Rajamundri Jail; Amar Singh was in Rangoon Jail; Kirpa Ram, Kapoor Singh, Hardit Singh and Veer Singh were in Andaman; Harnam Singh was in Ferozepur Jail; Kartar Singh and Sundar Singh were in Montgomery Jail.

[4] See also *Amritsar Qumantry Times,* 12 September to 18 September 2012, p. 29.

Kisan Sabha mobilised the poor and small holding peasants, both against the landlords and moneylenders. It propagated that tillers, not big *zamindars* should be the land owners. Sohan Singh Bhakna, Kesar Singh, Roor Singh Choohar Chak, Harnam Singh Gujjarwal, Sher Singh Wein Puin, and Harnam Singh Tundilat took active part in the work of the *sabha.* With glorious revolutionary traditions to their credit, they imparted a great moral tone to the peasant movement (Singh M. H., 1984, p. 187).

Amritsar agitation in July, 1938 had overshadowed all other peasant agitations. Here, miniscule *Bandobast* and *Kisan* committees were set up to lead the agitation. Main demands of the agitators were ---to increase water supply for irrigation purposes in canal outlets and to oppose enhancement of land revenue in *Majha* area of the Punjab. Sohan Singh Bhakna was in forefront of the agitation. Bhakna mentioned that *Kirti,* Communist and Akali workers constituted the central *morcha* force of this agitation. Udam Singh Nagoke, an Akali *Jathedar* was elected as the leader of the *morcha.* Members of the *Bandobast* Committee and allied bodies decided to stage a demonstration on 20 July, 1938 outside canal and settlement offices in civil lines. It was decided that first *jatha* of agitators would present the draft statement of demands to the Deputy Commissioner. The Unionist Party was, at this time, pursuing the policy of repression against anti-government and anti-imperialist elements in the province, and had taken steps to curb the activities of the *Kisan Sabhas* and trade unions (Rai, 1984, p. 245). To prevent any gathering, an order under Section 144 was imposed on 19 July, prohibiting any procession in the areas around these offices. Despite this ban, a massive demonstration from Jallianwala Bagh proceeded towards district courts to present a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner. The *jatha* included prominent men of the freedom struggle and the Gurdwara Reform Movement – *Jathedar* Udham Singh, Gehal Singh Chhajjalwaddhi, Rattan Singh Sarhali, Jaswant Singh Kairon, Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna (of the Ghadar Movement fame), Baba Lal Singh Bhure, and many others (Josh B. , 1979, p. 227). Superintendent of police deputed police personnel to intercept the demonstrators at *Bhandari* Bridge. Without any warning, all the agitators including Sohan Singh Bhakna were brutally thrashed by the police. Many protesters fell unconscious. Police arrested Sohan Singh Bhakna, Udam Singh Nagoke, Darshan Singh Pheruman, Acchar Singh Chhina, Fauja Singh Bhullar, Santa Singh Gandiwind, Ram Singh Majitha, Dalip Singh Jauhal, Jaswant Singh Kairon, Inder Singh Verka, Harnam Singh Kasel, Gopal Singh, Rattan Singh *etc.*

Sohan Singh Bhakna was a highly respectable leader among peasants. On many peasant conferences, he had been honoured with a privilege to raise the peasant flag. He attended the fifth session of All India Kisan Sabha which was held at Palsa, Vizagapattam in Andhra Pradesh, from 26 to 27 March, 1940. Rahul Sankritayayan, the president-elect, had been arrested on the eve of this session. On his place, Bhakna was given the honour to preside over the session in his absence (Singh M. H., 1984, p. 290). At that time, *Kisan Sabha* had more than 225000 members.

A totally new political perspective was seen in India after the outbreak of World War II. Sikandar Hayat Khan was against all those organisations which were spearheading anti-War and anti-recruitment propaganda. Police arrested all the five communist legislative members – Baba Roor Singh, Harjap Singh, Kabul Singh, Hari Singh and Sohan Singh Josh. Arrest warrants were also issued to Sohan Singh Bhakna in July 1940. Bhakna, at that time had gone to Calcutta to attend the meeting of All India Kisan Sabha. On 9 August, 1940 on the way back to Punjab, Bhakna and Dr. Bhag Singh were arrested from the office of *Chingari*[5] at Benaras. Bhakna spent a month in Gaya jail, Bihar. Later on, he was shifted to Deoli Military Camp, Kotah in Rajputana (now Rajasthan).

Inside the jail, national leadership of CPI discussed the causes of factionalism in communist ranks in Punjab with Bhakna and other Ghadarites. Both factions of the leftist movement in Punjab, *Kirtis* and communists, although participated together in several agitations against the British rule, but due to clash of personalities, especially between Teja Singh Swatantar and Sohan Singh Josh, they failed to pose for unity. S.V. Ghate, B.T. Ranadive, S.A. Dange, and Z.A. Ahmad asked them to make efforts for communist unity. Bhakna writes: "The first General Secretary of the Communist Party, Comrade S.V. Ghate initiated negotiations with us for communist unity in Punjab. He emphasised that we are the followers of a common ideology, then why are we treading separate paths? We should sit and work to diffuse our internal strife." (Waraich, 2003, p. 70). Bhakna, being a key interlocutor made earnest efforts to sort out the thorny issues between both the factions. "Comrade S.V. Ghate argued day and night with the Ghadarites for cementing communist unity. Comrade Ghate was very cordial with Ghadar Party Babas – Sohan Singh Bhakna, Kesar Singh, and Baba Wasakha Singh. He succeeded in winning half the battle by persuading them to give up their separation and isolation, join the CPI and talk to others to join the party" (Josh S. S., 1991, p. 240).Thus, with the efforts of Ghadarites, communist unity in Punjab was achieved.After two years, the British authorities closed Deoli prison camp and transferred all detainees to their respective provinces. Bhakna and other Punjabi prisoners were brought to Gujarat district jail in Punjab.

During the War years, a major shift came in communist politics in India. The CPI in January 1942 lined up with the rest of the international communist movements and gave full support to British government against the anti-fascist People's War. While British policies in India remained as repressive and reactionary as ever, Britain was now the ally of the world's only socialist state engaged in life-and-death struggle for survival(Sarkar, 2001, p. 384). As a good gesture, British government lifted the ban on CPI and released most of the communist leaders. But, Bhakna did not support the official line of the CPI and remained a detractor of

[5]*Chingari* was a Marxist-Leninist monthly started by Harkishan Singh Surjeet and Iqbal Singh Hundal from Saharanpur in 1937.

the regime as before. He had spent some more time behind the bars. Bhakna came out of jail only in 1943, and his release became a momentous event in his village Bhakna.

All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) honoured Sohan Singh by holding its Seventh Session in village Bhakna from 2 to 4 April, 1943. Comrade Bankim Mukerji presided over the session. It was in a way a revival session of the Kisan Sabha after three years of repression and abnormal way of the functioning(Rasul, 1974, p. 98). Government released Bhakna at this time. His release, prior to the session might be a sign of a conciliatory approach followed by government towards communists. Comrade E.M.S. Namboodripad, who came to Moga in 1954 to attend a peasants' conference recalled moment of Sohan Singh Bhakna's release: "Eleven years ago, when the AIKS Session was being held at Bhakna in Punjab, some of us who had never been to Punjab before were moved by the sight of several old veterans – respected old revolutionaries like Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna whose political career had started as early as the last years of the nineteenth century, who had just then been released from jail and were given a magnificent reception".(Namboodripad, 1954, p. 7). Bhakna's services were duly recognised by the Kisan Sabha members and he was elected as the Vice President of the AIKS. After this session, Bhakna, as a delegate, attended the First Congress of the CPI, which was held from 23 May to 1 June 1943. Vimla Dang, a young communist worker from Punjab travelled with Bhakna. She called her journey with him "a sagacious experience of life"(Bakaya, 2007, p. 18).

Immediately after independence, leftist ranks split in Punjab. The differences between *Kirtis* led by Teja Singh Swatantar, and communists headed by Sohan Singh Josh could not be reduced even after the truce had been mediated between them by Sohan Singh Bhakna and other Ghadarites. General Secretary of CPI, Ajay Ghosh expelled Teja Singh and his associates from the party for three years. Bhakna expressed his unhappiness, "For me, the decision to expel Teja Singh and other *Kirtis* from the CPI was arbitrary. I do not know whether Ghosh himself decided this, or on suggestion of someone else. Both groups were equally responsible for discord and disharmony in the party and both deserved punishment, but general secretary did not listen to the side of *Kirtis* and sacked them. This was a blunder as prospects of unity almost ruined by this unilateral decision" (Waraich, 2003, p. 71).

Kirtis believed that they had been let down by the CPI leadership. Teja Singh Swatantar, Karam Singh, Booja Singh, Ram Singh Duttand others decided to form a new party. At Lahore, Bhakna met them and advised them not to form a new party as this step would perpetuate the rift. He told them, "Injustice is not meted to you only, but also to the old guard of the party. To set up a new outfit is not a workable solution. Wait for some time, injustice would come to the fore and national leadership would recognise your services and take you back into the party fold." (Waraich, 2003, p. 72). Ignoring his advice, the splinter group formed Lal (Red) Communist Party on 8 January, 1948. Bhakna expressed his grief over the split and kept himself aloof from party politics.

If repeated splits weakened the growth prospective of communists, their inconsistent policies failed to prepare masses for a socialist revolution. Communist Party's reactionary stand on independence forced the government to strictly deal with its cadre. As a pitfall, in March 1948, government arrested many CPI workers all over India. In Punjab, the police arrested Bhakna, Sohan Singh Josh and some other Ghadarites from *Kirti-Kisan* Ashram without mentioning any valid reason for their arrest. Bhakna was transported to Yole jail, in Kangra, in Himachal Pradesh. It was, indeed, a dreadful experience for him. The detention, this time was more painful for Bhakna as it had taken place in an independent India. He resorted to hunger strike against the ill-treatment of the jail officials. To resort to a month long hunger strike at this old age proved fatal for his health. A spinal deformity caused hunchback in his body posture. He remarks about his curved back: "Whenever someone asks me about my hump, I answer that this is a stamp of the national government on my back." (Waraich, 2003, p. 74). Old guard of Ghadar Party made hue and cry about detention of the Ghadarites without having any fault of theirs. Wasakha Singh, president of the *Desh Bhagat Parivar Sahayak Committee* met Jawaharlal Nehru and apprised him about the arrest of Sohan Singh Bhakna. After this meeting, Punjab Government released Bhakna and others whom police had arrested along with him.

Despite his old age, Bhakna remained active in politics. He was an inspiring personality for *Kirti-Kisan* leaders and workers. In 1954, Communist Party of India organised the Twelfth Session of the AIKS at Moga. Ghadarites were special invitees to the session. It was presided over by Indulal Yagnik. E. M. S. Namboodripad recalled: "After reading a number of messages received from abroad, he called Sohan Singh Bhakna to address the conference. The veteran revolutionary speaks in a firm voice indicative of the energy he possesses even today at eighty. We all envy him for the fact that, even at this age, not only does he move about the whole Ruhr Singh Nagar but insists on attending every session".(Namboodripad, 1954, p. 17). In his address, Bhakna paid tribute to his comrades and colleagues whom he knew in sixty or more years of his political career by recounting several of them by name. Bhakna covered in his speech the vast canvas of the history of anti-imperialist movement in India. He said that Kisan Sabha inherited the legacy of anti-imperialist struggles in India and pointed out, "During 1930s, when the Ghadarites came out of the British jails, the Indian National Congress' presence in Punjab countryside was as good as absent. It was we, who took the Congress to the villagers. We then decided that it is more meaningful to organise Kisan Sabhas in the villages, rather than strengthening the Congress."(Waraich, 2003, p. 74). He criticised the leadership of the Congress in his speech and stated, "Is not the Congress a multi-class organisation, in whose ranks there are landlords as well as peasants, capitalists as well as workers? Whose side then the Congress would take in the wake of a conflict between the landlords and peasants?" Referring to the plans of economic re-construction started by government, Bhakna stated, "They say that Bhakra will bring water and electricity to the villages. But what is the use of water if the peasant has no land? What

is the use of electricity if he has no house where he can install electricity"? Bhakna gave a sincere piece of advice to the Punjab Kisan Sabha leaders to put an end to the mutual squabbling. He was hopeful that proletarian class would work to bring a socialist revolution in India. "I may not be alive by the time you meet in the next annual session. But I am sure that you will carry forward and win. I am confident that India will change, that she will have a people's revolution." (Namboodripad, 1954, p. 18).

A highly respected Ghadarite, peasant leader and a committed communist worker, Bhakna, till his last breath continued his struggle against the exploiting forces of the society.His personality was of an ardent nationalist. Even in the twilight of his life, Bhakna was full of revolutionary zeal. He always kept close to his heart the principles of the Ghadar Party, whom he regarded as sacrosanct. He constructed a Ghadar memorial in his village with a message to peasant and working classes that they must unite for ushering in a socialist revolution for eradicating injustice and inequalities from India. He left a glorious legacy of Ghadar Movement behind him. What was more creditable to Bhakna was that he did not accept any favour from the state and kept a low profile. It is worth to assess him as a person and his message to the posterity. Bhakna tried to give a concrete shape to uncountable voices of freedom in alien lands, has not rested on the success or failure of the cause, but on his efforts and sacrifices, which he made for his country.

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Indebtedness among Rural Households – A case for Shri Muktsar Sahib District of Punjab

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Abstract

The present paper is an attempt to assess and analyses the debt position of rural households of Sri Muktsar Sahib District of Punjab.The study reveals that 69.23 per cent of the rural households are under debtin Sri Muktsar SahibDistrict. The average amount of debt per household is the highest for farm households and the lowestfor all other households.Source wise, agricultural labourand all other households have similarities in pattern. For these households major source of debt are the large farmers, traders and commission agents. For the farm households, the major sources of debt are the commercial banks, co-operative banks and commission agents.The farm households availed loans mainly for the purchase of farm inputs and mechanical equipments. The agricultural labour and all other households haveavailed the maximum proportion of the total debt for family maintenance expenditure.Thefarm households and the other households have availed the maximum amount of debt at lower rates ofinterest but, the agricultural labour households have availed the maximum amount of debt at higher rates of interest. These households are still depending upon non-institutionalloans which charge exorbitant rates of interest.The estimates of regression coefficient suggest that the variations in the magnitude of indebtedness of the rural householdsare explained to a large extent by ratio of credit from the non-institutional sources, familysize, income from subsidiary occupations, and value of assets, total consumption expenditure and farm-size. Thecontribution of these explanatory variables is statistically significant.

Introduction

The development of agriculture sector lays astrong base for thesteady economic growth of our country which clearly indicates that agriculture is the most important component of the development process in the rural areas(Kaur and Kaur, 2017). In Punjab, a large proportion of the total population is still living in the rural areas and most of them have been sustaining their livelihood through agriculture (Kumar and Kaur, 2017).At all India level, estimated number of rural households was 147.90 million of whom 60.4 per cent

were farmer households. Out of 89.33 million farmer households, 43.42 million were indebted(GOI 2012-13). National Sample Survey found that estimated prevalence of indebtedness among farmer households was 65.4 per cent in Punjab and the average debt per farm householdin Punjab was the highest amongst all the states of the country (NSSO, 2005).

The agriculture sector in the state is showing signs of a serious slow-down over the past few years. The agriculture sector recorded a negative growth of -2.36 per cent in 2014-15 against the positive growth of 2.35 percent in 2013-14. Slow growth of the agricultural sector resulted in negative overall growth of agriculture and allied sector which stood at -0.50 percent in 2014-15. The growth in agriculture sector is slowing down as cropping intensity and irrigation potential have already been fully exploited; and the growth in productivity has also reached a saturationpoint as very few R&D advances have taken place over a long period of time (GoP, 2015).

Adoption of new agricultural technologyconsisting of hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides, herbicides and modern agricultural practices set Punjab agriculture on to a new growth trajectory (Sidhu, 2002).The expenditure incurred by the farmers on modern inputs has been steadily growing. Most of the farmers cannot afford heavy investments out of their own funds.On the other hand, the New Technology has created the cultural links of the rural population with cities. In the race of maintaining good standard of living the consumption expenditure of the rural households increased at a still faster rate. The rural households are also spending more on socio religious ceremonies and construction of better houses. The growth of consumption expenditure has absorbed almost the entire rise in income.

But the uncertainty in earnings from agricultural operations, along with the increasing dependence on purchased inputs, means a higher level of borrowing including borrowing from informal sources (Path, 2008).Fallingincome, a longproduction period with occasional crop failure, accompanied by high consumption standards, expenditure on celebrations has brought various sections of the peasantry under increased debt (Gill, 2006).

Overthe past decade, the state has experienced deceleration of its economy and has slipped in the ranking of the prosperous states in the country.The slow down is accompanied by a significant reduction in the share of agriculture in national product, but without much reduction in the share of workers depending on it for their livelihood(Kaur, 2016).The state of Punjab, earlier regarded as an agriculturally developed region of India, has been passing through a severe economic crisis.There is a decline in the proportion of cultivators in the total work force of the state that has added to the unemployment or semi-employed work force, and has put pressure on an already over-crowded agricultural labour market (Singh and Bhogal, 2014).

The decreases in production, increase in cost of production and bare minimum increase in Minimum Support Prices have made agricultural activity unremunerative. As a result,

indebtedness in agriculture has increased (Mahajan, 2015).The burden of indebtedness has continuously compelling the farmers and agricultural labourers to commit suicides.During 2014, major causes of suicides among male farmers were 'Bankruptcy or Indebtedness' and family problems, which accounted for 21.5 per cent and 20 per cent respectively of total male farmers' suicides in India (Dhaka and Urmila, 2016).Indebtedness and bankruptcies are said to be the main reason behind suicides, followed by family problems and other related issues among households in rural Punjab (Toor, et al, 2016). The new agricultural technologyhas not made any significant impact on the conditions of rural labourers.The study by Ghuman et al.(2007) has also adduced evidence to the fact that the poverty situationof agriculture in Punjab is becoming grim. Only 28.92% casual labourers were employed in agriculture and rest in non-agricultural activity. A sizable proportion of local casual labourers in rural Punjab are not able to find sufficient amount of work in agriculture. The monthly wages of agricultural labourers are lower than the non-agricultural labour.The average wage rate of the agricultural labourer is Rs.73.07 per day and the highest average wage rate 95.17 per day in non- agricultural sector. Their earnings per day range from Rs.73 in a day to Rs.95 per day. The monthly wages of 31.95% casual labourers in agricultural is only Rs.657.63 in a month and the remaining 67.14% earned upto Rs.1096.05 per month.

In recent years Punjab is undergoing an agrarian crisis. The study conducted by Singh and Bhogal, 2014has also specified that over 20% of small farmers of the state (who till land below 2 hectares) are below poverty line. The study has also mentioned that out of total 7000 rural suicides, 78% of total suicides during last over 25 years committed by small or marginal farmers. The total number of small and marginal farmers in Punjab was around 5 lacs which were reduced to 3 lacs in 2005 which is attributed to the rapid decrease in profit in agriculture and their indebtedness. They have started doing labour in cities (Singh and Bhogal, 2014).Very painful facts have come to light in a census survey in respect of farmers and agricultural labourers suicides conducted for Government of Punjab under the supervision of teachers of Department of Economics, Punjabi University , Patiala, Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar, and PAU, Ludiana. According to this survey during the last one decade 4687 suicides of farmers and agricultural labourers have been reported in Punjab. In this way per year figure of suicides comes to 469 (Singh, 2014).Most of the studies on prevalence of indebtedness in agriculture sector of Punjab mainly deal with the farmers; very few have touched the severity of the same among the agricultural labour and all other rural households who are economically more vulnerable, as they own very few productive assets. Jha (1997) discussed only the plight of agricultural labourer, but in the present study other sections of rural population also considered.

Within this general context of agrarian crisis, our paper makes an effortto estimate the extent and distribution of indebtedness among different categories of rural households according to source, rate of interest and purpose of indebtednessamong the rural households

of Sri Muktsar Sahib District.An attempt has also been made to identify economic factors influencing indebtedness among the rural households of Sri Muktsar Sahib District.

Research Methodology

There are four development blocks in Sri Muktsar Sahib District. For the purpose of this study, one village from each development block has been selected on random basis. Thus, in all, four villages have been selected from the district for the survey. A representative proportional sample of all households comprising farmers, agricultural labourer and all other households has been taken up for the survey. All other households comprisenon-agricultural labourer, rural artisans and small businessmen households.As many as 20 percent households out of total households are selected for survey on random basis. As a result, total 182 households have been investigated. Out of 182 households, 76 households belong to farmers, 83 households belong to agricultural labourer, and 23 households belong to other households

Functional Analysis: It is important to study the factors associated with indebtedness. linear regression has been used to analyze the relative indebtedness of different categories of rural households in the Muktsar Sahib District as given below:

$$Y= f (X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6, X_7)$$

Where, Y= Indebtedness (Rs.)

X_1= Family size

X_2= Ratio of credit from non institutional sources

X_3= Income from subsidiary occupations other than the main occupation (Rs.)

X_4= Expenditure on unproductive purposes(Rs.)

X_5= Total assets(Rs.)

X_6= Total consumption expenditure (Rs.)

X_7= Farm-size (acres)

Results and Discussion

Extent and Distribution of Indebtedness

The reports of suicides in rural Punjab during 1995-98, as also to a lesser extent during 2002-04, received attention as these occurred in a state with high levels of per capita income and low levels of rural poverty. However, the entire discourse of suicides tended to focus on the levels of rural indebtedness and the availability or otherwise of institutional credit (Satish, 2006). Table 1 showsthe extent and distribution of debt among different categories of the rural households. The table shows that 69.23 per cent of the rural households are under debt. This percentage is 65.79 per cent for the farm households, 77.10 per cent for the agricultural labour households and 52.17 per cent for the all other households.

Table 1

Extent of Debt among Sampled Households

Sl. No.	Particulars	Farm Households	Agricultural Labour Households	All Other Households	All Sampled Households
1.	Number of Sampled Household	76	83	23	182
2.	Indebted Households	50	46	12	126
3.	Percentage of Indebted Households	65.79	77.10	52.17	69.23
4.	Amount of Debt Per Indebted Households(Rs.)	716731	72940.75	172766.67	345504.5
5.	Amount of Debt Per Sampled Household(Rs.)	475015.13	56243.5	90139.11	235398.68

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The average amount of debt per sampled household is Rs. 235398.68 in Sri Muktsar SahibDistrict. The average amount of debt per household is the highest Rs. 475015.13 for the farm households. The amount of debtis Rs. 90139.11 and Rs. 56243.5, for the agricultural labour and all other households, respectively.

The amount of debt per indebted household is Rs. 716731 for the farm households, Rs. 72940.75 for the agricultural labour households, Rs. 172766.67 for the all other households. The average amount of debt per indebted household is Rs. 345504.50.

It can be seenthat average amount of debt is much higher for the farm householdsthan the agricultural labour and all other households. This is so because without investing in operational as well as fixed costs, the major share of income of the farm households cannot be generated

Sources of Debt

The average amount of debt taken by the different categories from various institutional and non-institutional credit providing agencies has been listed in Table 2. The institutional sources include co-operative credit societies or banks, commercial banks etc. and non-institutional sources include large farmers, money-lenders and commission agents, traders.

The table shows that the average amount of debt for an average rural household is Rs. 235398.68 from which Rs. 187694.24 is incurred from the institutional agencies and the remaining Rs. 47704.44 has been incurred from the non-institutional agencies. In the case of institutional sources, the commercial banks are the main source of debt. In case of the non-institutional sources, the large farmers are the main source of credit for rural households.

Table 2

Debt Incurred from Different Credit Agencies

(Mean Values, in Rs.)

Sl. No.	Source of Debt	Farm Households	Agricultural Labour Households	All Other Households	All Sampled Households
A.	**Institutional**				
1	Co-operative credit societies/ banks	16241.42	.00	0.00	6782.14
2	Commercial banks	430315.8	2674.7	0.00	180912.1
	Sub Total	446557.22	2674.7	0.00	187694.24
B	**Non- institutional**				
1	Money-lenders	2346	2434.4	14257.13	3891.84
2	Commission agents	22111.6	0.00	4417.39	9791.82
3	Traders	0.00	20112	29665.98	12920.86
4	Large farmers	4000.31	31022.4	41798.61	21099.92
	Sub Total	28457.91	53568.8	90139.11	47704.44
	Total	475015.13	56243.5	90139.11	235398.68

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The farm households haveincurredRs. 446557.22 from the institutional sources, while Rs. 28457.91 from the non-institutional sources. The farm households mainly prefer the commercial banks from the institutional sources and the commission agents from the non-institutional sources. The agricultural labour households are indebted to the extent of Rs. 53568.8 to the non-institutional sources and Rs. 2674.7 to the institutional sources. Theall other households haveincurred the whole amount of debt from non-institutional sources.

The farm households have incurred large amount of debtfrom the institutional agencies. On the other hand, agricultural labour and all other households have incurred the large amount of debt from the non-institutional sources. Thus, here this fact is established that these households find it easy to get loans from private agencies and they hesitate to take loan from the institutional agencies because of the time-consuming formalities and cumbersome procedures.

The proportionate shares of different credit agencies in total debt are given in Table3. The table shows that an average sampled rural household has incurred 79.73 per cent of the total debtfrom the institutional sources. The remaining 20.27 per cent of total debthas beenincurred from the non-institutional sources. An average sampled rural household have incurred about 77 per cent of the total debtfrom the commercial banks. The farm households have incurred 90.58 per cent of the total debtfrom this source. The agricultural labour

households have incurredabout 5 per cent of the total debt from commercial banks. The co-operative credit societies contribute about 3 per cent to the total debt. The farm households have incurred 3.42 per cent of the total debt from this source.

The large farmers are animportant source of the non-institutional debt.The average sampled rural household had availed about 9 per cent of the total debtfrom large farmers. This percentage is as high as 55.16 per cent and 46.37 per cent, respectively for the agricultural labour and all other households. The trader comes at next rank from which an average sampled rural household has obtained 5.5 per cent of the total debt. This proportional share is the highest for the agricultural labour household followed by the allotherhouseholds. The share of commission agents in the total debt is 4.16 per cent for an average sampled rural household. This percentage is the highest for the all other households. The share of money-lenders in the total debt is about 2 per cent for an average sampled rural household.

Table 3

Debt Incurred from Different Credit Agencies

(Percentage of Total Debt)

Sl. No.	Source of Loan	Farm Households	Agricultural Labour Households	All Other Households	All Sampled Households
A	**Institutional**				
1	Co-operative credit societies / banks	3.42	0.00	0.00	2.88
2	Commercial banks	90.58	4.75	0.00	76.85
	Sub Total	94.00	4.75	0.00	79.73
B	**Non- institutional**				
1	Money –lenders	0.5	4.33	15.82	1.65
2	Commission agents	4.70	0.00	4.90	4.16
3	Traders	0.00	35.76	32.91	5.5
4	Large farmers	0.01	55.16	46.37	8.96
	Sub total	5.9	95.24	100	20.27
	Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Computed from Table.2

All other householdsthat comprise non-agricultural labour, rural artisans and small businessmen householdshave incurreddebt mainly from the non-institutional agencies and the agricultural labour households also prefer the non-institutional agencies yet they also take some amount of debt from the institutional agencies. Source wise, the agricultural labourand all other households have similarities in pattern. For these households major sources of debt are the large farmers, traders and commission agents. For the farm

households, the major sources of debtare the commercial banks, co-operative banks and commission agents. These facts clearly brings out that even after seven decades of independence, the agriculture labour, and all other households are still in the clutches of the non-institutional agencies particularly large farmers and traders. Moreover, the institutional agencies were not able to satisfy consumption and social needs of farmers. The private loan sources therefore are easy access without many requirements of documents and time lapse, etc. (Sale et al., 2016).

Indebtedness According to the Purpose of Loans

The purpose for which the debt has been taken is an important indication of its potential to be repaid (Kaur andSingh,2010). The information about debt incurred for various purposes is given in Table 4.The table shows that the maximum amount of debt is availed forthe purchase the farm inputsand mechanical equipments by an averagesampled rural household. An average sampled rural household incurs Rs 74730.6 for this purpose. The farm households spent the highest amount on the farm inputsand mechanical equipments. Next important purpose ofdebt is meeting their family requirements. An average sampled rural household incurs Rs. 66046.80 for the family maintenance expenditure. The all other households have incurred the highest amount for this purpose. Rs. 38856.4 has been incurred for the celebration of marriages and socio-religious ceremonies. The farm households have incurred Rs. 82788.2 for this purpose. The agricultural labour and all other households have incurred Rs. 8109.9 and Rs. 4625.25,respectively for this purpose.

Table 4

Debt Incurred for Different Purposes

(Mean Values, in Rs.)

Sl. No.	Purpose	Farm Households	Agricultural Labour Households	All Other Households	All Sampled Households
1.	Purchase of farm inputs and mechanical equipments	178960.42	0.00	0.00	74730.6
2.	House construction, addition of rooms and major repairs	45371.71	12152.8	24730.43	27614
3.	Family maintenance expenditure	118634	22875.14	48073.89	66046.8
4.	Expenditure on health care	0.00	5784.7	0.00	2638.2
5.	Marriages and other socio-religious ceremonies	82788.2	8109.9	4645.25	38856.4
6.	Redemption of old debt	7222	3226.99	9819.54	5728.33
7.	Others	42038.8	4093.97	2870	19784.35
	Total	475015.13	56243.5	90139.11	235398.68

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The fourth rank goes to the other purpose and an average sampled rural household has availed a debt of Rs. 19784.35 for this purpose. An average sampled rural household incurs Rs. 27614 for the house construction, addition of rooms and major repairs. A small amount of debt is usedfor health care and redemption of old debts.

The agricultural labour and all other households have incurreddebt mainly for the family maintenance. The farm households have incurreddebt mainly for thepurchase offarm inputsand mechanical equipments.

The proportionate share of debt taken for different purposes is presented in Table 5. Among the different purposes, the highest proportion goes to the purchase of farm inputsand mechanical equipments. About 32 per cent of the total debt spent on this purpose. The farm households spent the highest (37.7 per cent) amount on the purchase of farm inputs and mechanical equipments. An average sampled rural household has incurred28.05 per cent of the total debt for the family maintenance expenditure. This proportion is as high as about 40.67 per cent and 53.33 per cent for the agricultural labour and all other households, respectively. The third main purpose of debt is the celebration of socio-religious ceremonies, which accounts for 16.50 per cent of the total debtof an average sampled rural household. This proportional share is the highest, i.e., 17.42 per cent for the farm households followed by the agricultural labour and all other households. An average sampled rural household has availed 11.73 per cent of the total debt for the house construction, addition of rooms and major repairs. This proportion is as high as 27.44 per cent for the all other households followed by the agricultural labour and farm households.The high expenditure on non-productive purposes, such as marriages and other socio-religious ceremonies and house construction is due to conservative approach towards maintaining fake social status, which is far from reality (Singh,1993).

Table 5

Debt Incurred for Different Purposes
(Percentage of Total Debt)

Sl. No.	Purpose	Farm Households	Agricultural Labour Households	All Other Households	All Sampled Households
1.	Purchase of farm inputs and mechanical equipments	37.70	0.00	0.00	31.74
2.	House construction, addition of rooms and major repairs	9.55	21.6	27.44	11.73
3.	Family maintenance expenditure	24.97	40.67	53.33	28.05
4.	Expenditure on health care	0.00	10.3	0.00	1.10
5.	Marriages and other socio-religious ceremonies	17.42	14.42	5.15	16.50
6.	Redemption of old debt	1.52	12.14	10.89	2.40
7.	Others	8.90	7.28	3.19	8.50
	Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Computed from Table.4

8.5 per cent of the total debt has been incurred for the other purposes by an average sampled rural household. This proportion is the highest for the farm household followed by the agricultural labourer and all other households. All categories have availed very little share of the otal debt for health care and redemption of old debts.

The forgoing analysis shows that the farm households haveincurred debt mainly for the purchase of farm inputs and mechanical equipments. The agricultural labour and all other households haveincurred the maximum proportion of the total debt for the family maintenance expenditure.Theconsumption expenditure exceeds income of the rural households, soto maintain a minimum level of consumption and to bridge the income consumption gap they have to borrow from various institutional and non- institutional sources.

Indebtedness and Rate of Interest

The mean values of debt according to their rate of interest are given in Table 6. The table shows that an average household in the rural areas of Sri Muktsar Sahib District has availed the maximum amount of debt at the rate of interest ranging from 10 to 20 per cent per annum followed by the 20 to 30, 0 to 10, 40 to 50 and 30 to 40 per cent ranges of rate of interest. The farm households have incurred Rs. 15698.03 at the rate of interest ranging between 0 to 10 per cent, Rs. 451485.52 in the range of 10 to 20 per cent, Rs. 7831.58 in the range of 20 to 30 per cent per annum.

Table 6

Debt according to Rate of Interest

(Mean Values, in Rs.)

Sl. No.	Rate of interest (Per cent,Per annum)	Farm Households	Agricultural Labour Households	All Other Households	All Sampled Households
1.	0-10	15698.03	0.00	0.00	6555.22
2.	10-20	451485.52	11132.53	79521.73	203658.8
3.	20-30	7831.58	43642.02	1053.04	24501.6
4.	30-40	0.00	616.87	0.00	281.32
5.	40-50	0.00	852.05	104.34	401.76
	Total	475015.13	56243.5	90139.11	235398.68

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The agricultural labour households have incurred the highest amount of debt at the rate of interest ranging from 20 to 30 per cent followed by the interest rate ranging from 10 to 20 per cent, 40 to 50 per cent and 30 to 40 per cent. The other labour households have incurred Rs. 79521.73 at the rate of interest ranging between 10 to 20 per cent, Rs. 1053.04 at the rate of interest ranging between 20 to 30 per cent andremaining Rs 104.34 at more than 30 per cent rate of interest.

The relative shares of different ranges of rate of interest in the total debt are given in Table 7. The table shows that 86.52 per cent of the total debt of all the categories taken together has been incurred at the rate of interest ranging between 10 to 20 per cent. This proportion is as highas 95.05per cent and 88.22 per cent for the farm households andall other households,respectively. The agricultural labour households have incurred about 19 per cent of the total debt at 10 to 20 per cent range of rate of interest.

Table 7

Debt according to Rate of Interest

(Percentage of Total Debt)

Sl. No.	Rate of interest (Per cent, Per annum)	Farm Households	Agricultural Labour Households	All Other Households	All Sampled Households
1.	0-10	3.30	0.00	0.00	2.78
2.	10-20	95.05	19.8	88.22	86.52
3.	20-30	1.65	77.59	11.66	10.41
4.	30-40	0.00	1.1	0.00	0.12
5.	40-50	0.00	1.5	0.12	0.17
	Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Computed from Table.6

Another substantial proportion, i.e., 10.41 per cent of the total debt for an average sampled rural household comes in the range of 20 to 30 per cent range of rate of interest. This proportion is as high as 77.59 per cent of the total debt for the agricultural labour households. About 3 per cent of the total debt has been incurred at0 to 10 per cent range of rate of interest. The farm households have been incurred 3.30 per cent at 0 to 10 per cent range of

rate of interest. An average sampled rural household has incurred 0.29 per cent of the total debt at more than 30 per cent range rate of interest. The agricultural labour and all other households have incurred 2.60 per cent and 0.12 per cent, respectively at the rate of interest more than 30 per cent per annum.

The forgoing analysis brings out the fact that the farm households and the other households have availed the maximum amount of debt at lower rates of interest but, the agricultural labour households have availed the maximum amount of debt at higher rates of interest. These households are still depending upon non-institutional sources which charge exorbitant rates of interest.

Determinants of Indebtedness

Agricultural indebtedness increases in Punjab mainly because of a sharp deceleration in the growth of prices of many agricultural commodities and increase in the cost of cultivation after the introduction of economic reforms (Rao andSuri, 2006).

An attempt has also been made in this paper to identify economic factors influencing indebtedness among farmers, agricultural labourers and all other households. The amount of debt at a point of time is influenced by several economic and noneconomic factors. The various economic factors, important as they are in the policy framework, are subjected to analysis. It is hypothesized that indebtedness depends upon family size, ratio of credit from the noninstitutional sources, income from subsidiary occupations, expenditureon unproductive purposes, value of assets, consumption expenditure and farm-size. This objective is met by fitting a number of series of regression function. Regression function finally selected is based upon the better coefficient of multiple determination (R^2), significance of the parameters and sign of the regression coefficients of the parameters which are theoretically consistent. In order to determine and signify the factors influencing indebtedness among the rural households in Sri Muktsar Sahib District of Punjab, multiple regression model is used. The results obtained are presented in Table 8.

Farm Households: The estimated linear relationship between indebtedness and explanatory variables for the farmers is given in Table 8. The estimates indicate thatthe income from subsidiary occupations, value of assets, consumption expenditureand farm-size are the main determinants of indebtedness for the farm household.The regression coefficient for income from subsidiary occupations is found to be negative which implies inverse relationship between income and indebtedness.Therefore, various institutional training programmes should be organized to provide knowledge and skills to the farmers regarding subsidiary occupations (Gill and Saini,2010). The regression coefficient forvalue of assets, consumption expenditure and farm-size are positive. It implies that with an increase in

farm-size, increase inconsumption expenditure and increase in the value of total assetsindebtedness also increases. The regression coefficients for family size, ratio of credit from the non-institutional sourcesandexpenditure on unproductive purposes are positive but non-significant statistically. Itis generally said that farmers in Punjab spend too much on so called non-productive purposes, but this is not true in the case of small and marginal farmers who are struggling to meet their basic necessities of life, viz. food and clothing. They have to spend some income on socio-religious ceremonies as required by the society(Pal and Singh, 2012). Together, all the explanatory variables explain 75 per cent of the variation in the magnitude of indebtedness of the farm household.

Agricultural Labourers: The estimates of regression coefficients suggest that the variations in the magnitude of indebtedness of the agricultural labourers are explained to a large extent by ratio of creditfrom the non institutional sources, expenditure on unproductive purposes and value of assets.The regression coefficients for ratio of credit from the non institutional sources, expenditure on unproductive purpose and value of assets are positive. It implies that with an increase in unproductive expenditure, value of assets and increase in debt from the non-institutional sources indebtedness also increases. The regression coefficient income from subsidiary occupations is negative and nonsignificant statistically. Theregression coefficient for family size is negative indicating negative relationship of family size with indebtedness. This may be due to the increase in income with an increase in the family size.The coefficient of multiple determinations is 0.57. This suggests that explanatory variable explains 57 per cent variation in the dependent variable.

All other households: The estimates of regression coefficient suggest that the variations in the magnitude of indebtedness of the all other householdsareexplained to a large extent by family size and ratio of credit from the non institutional sources.The regression coefficient for family size is positive and significant at one per cent level, indicating positive relationship of family size with indebtedness. This may be due to the increase in expenditure on family maintenance, shelter and so on with an increase in family size. Theregression coefficient for ratio of credit from the non institutional sources is positive and significant at five per cent level, which indicates indebtedness increases with the increasein ratio of credit from the non institutional sources. The regression coefficients forincome from subsidiary occupations, expenditure on unproductive purposes and total consumption expenditureare positive and statistically non significant. The regression coefficient for the value of assets is negative andstatistically non significant.The coefficient of multiple determinations is 0.50. This suggests that explanatory variable explains 50 per cent variation in the dependent variable.

Table 8

Factors Determining Indebtedness among Rural Households

(Results of Multiple Regression Analysis)

Sl. No.	Factors	Farm Households	Agricultural Labour Households	All Other Households	All Sampled Households
1	Family-size	38398.411 (1.338)	-4162.444 (-1.387)	61732.626* (2.859)	21716.421** (2.002)
2	Ratio of credit from non-institutional sources	2294.292 (1.294)	401.780* (2.634)	2231.958** (2.300)	1282.553** (2.51)
3	Income from subsidiary ccupations	-.762*** (-1.790)	-.571 (-1.657)	.491 (.366)	-.776* (-3.26)
4	Expenditure on unproductive purposes	.210 (1.156)	.414* (2.59)	2.568 (.264)	.152 (1.36)
5	Value of assets	.075*** (1.95)	.585* (6.115)	-.005 (-.195)	.057* (2.69)
6	Total consumption expenditure	.143* (8.38)	.114 (1.339)	.043 (.166)	.144* (13.0)
7	Farm-size	23625.157*** (1.95)			27819.738* (3.93)
	R^2	0.75	0.57	0.50	0.75

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

* Significant at one per cent
** Significant at five per cent
*** Significant at ten per cent

All Sampled Households: In the case of all the categories of the rural households taken together, the contribution of the explanatory variables such as ratio of credit from the non-institutional sources, familysize, income from subsidiary occupations, value of assets, total consumption expenditure and farm-size are statistically significant. The regression coefficient for income from subsidiary occupations is negative which indicate that indebtedness decreases as the income from subsidiary occupations increases. The regression coefficient for family size is positive and significant at five per cent. This implies that with the increase in family size the indebtedness also increases. Positive relation between farm-size and indebtedness shows that the capacity to take loans and pay back loan increases as farm-size increases.Theregression coefficient for ratio of credit from non institutional sources is positive and significant at five per cent level, which indicates indebtedness increases with the increaseinloansfrom non institutional sources.Together,

all the explanatory variables explain 75 per cent of the variation in the magnitude of indebtedness among rural households.

The above analysis of determinants of indebtedness shows that increase in income from subsidiary occupations, educating them to control family size and expenditure on unproductive purposes and encouragingthem to getloans from non institutional sources, the magnitude of indebtedness in the rural areas ofSri Muktsar SahibDistrict of Punjab state can be curtailed to some extent.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

The above analysis shows that 69.23 per cent of the rural households are under debt.The average amount of loan per sampled household andper indebted households is Rs. 235398.68 and Rs. 345504.50, respectively in Sri Muktsar SahibDistrict. The average amount of debt per household is the highest for the farm households and the lowestfor the all other households respectively.The agricultural labour households and allother households have incurreddebt mainly from the non-institutional agencies. Source wise, the agricultural labourand all other households have similarities in pattern. For these households major sources of debt are the large farmers, traders and commission agents. For the farm households, the major sources of debt are commercial banks, co-operative banks and commission agents. These facts clearly brings out that even after seven decades of independence, the agriculture labour, andall other households are still in the clutches of non-institutional agencies particularly large farmers and traders.The farm householdsincurred debt mainly for the purchase of farm inputs and mechanical equipments. The agricultural labour and all other households haveincurred the maximum proportion of the total debt for the family maintenance expenditure. Theconsumption expenditure exceeds income of the rural households,to maintain a minimum level of consumption and to bridge the income consumption gap they have to borrow from different sources.Thefarm households and the other households have incurred the maximum amount of debt at lower rates of interest but, the agricultural labour households have incurred the maximum amount of debt at higher rate of interest. These households are still depending upon the non-institutional sources which charge exorbitant rates of interest.The estimates of regression coefficient suggest that the variations in the magnitude of indebtedness of the rural householdsare explained to a large extent by ratio of credit from non-institutional sources, familysize, income from subsidiary occupations, value of assets, total consumption expenditureand farm-size. Thecontribution of these explanatory variables is statistically significant.

Majority of farm, agricultural labourers and other households are unable to meet their consumption expenditure with their income in the rural areas of Sri Muktsar Sahib District. This expenditure-income gap compels these households to use some proportion of debt to meet their daily requirements. This gap compels these households to use a major proportion

of debt to maintain their minimum level of consumption. In spite of the fact that the institutional agencies are the most important source of agricultural credit, it appears that the burden of indebtedness is likely to continue in the coming years on account of low income and their outstanding loans. Indebtedness will continue to grow in the case of rural households if their income remains static and no efforts are made to improve their economic condition

As Punjab is an agriculturally developed state, the agro-based industries can prove to be very helpful for increasing the income of the people living in the rural areas. The government must provide the free and compulsory education and provide text books up to elementary level. The government should launch a program in order to provide cost free technical education to the rural peoples so they may be able to establish their own ventures. On the other hand, government should also promote vocationalisation of education to enhance self-employment as it helps to increase their income and decrease debt. Effective measure should be taken to increase the income of rural households by developing subsidiary occupations like dairy farming, poultry-farming, bee-keeping etc. The government must provide exotic-breed of milch animals at subsidized rates.The subsidy system for agricultural inputs has to be reviewed by the government. Government should give more subsidies to the small and marginal farmers, rural artisan and labour households and also tries to encourage the people for small businesses to earn their livelihood. The government must take effective check on the activities of non-institutional agencies like commission agents, large farmers etc. and must provide institutional credit to the rural households at reasonable rates. This will help to protect the poor people from the clutches of the non-institutional agencies.

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Book Reviews

Farida Khaq no Nindee-ai: Panjab da Virsa, Itihaskari te Sahitkar

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Ishwar Dayal Gaur, Farida Khaq no Nindee-ai: Panjab da Virsa, Itihaskari te Sahitkar, Panjab University Press, Chandigarh, 2016.

The book under review is a highly valuable contribution to the consistently growing space of scholarly works on the medieval historiography of Punjab. What makes this study unique and engaging is its being grounded in the folk of medieval Punjab meticulously preserved in the rich treasure of the poetry of Punjabi sufis, gurus, and bhaktas. Medieval Punjabi poetry, a seamless blend of devout and erotic idioms, provides a solid aesthetic and poeticbackgrounder to the often neglected field of Punjabi folk history and historiography. The medieval Punjabi poetry rooted in the syncretic communal character of the medieval Punjab taught the lesson of the unity of *Being* and His *khalquat* (human beings) and warned against all sorts of divisions in the name of religion, caste and creed. The medieval Punjab reveredits poets and saints on equal footing. Its glimpse cannot be obtained from the peer reviewed mainstream historical research based on research material of official data-bank. The mainstream history and historiography represents the people of Punjab through different colours of religious glasses. It simply tells us the structured 'history of the poetry'. But it fails to reveal the 'poetics of History'. The socio-cultural space of Punjab (Punjabi-*tiranjan*), informed the author,is beyond the reach of the mainstream medieval Punjabi historiography.

The learned author weaves an engaging and challenging counter narrative of medieval Punjabi history while delving deep into the rich and until now unexplored vast domain of Punjabi folk, culture and literary world of the unlettered. To come closer to the natural milieu of medieval Punjabi world of folk life and vision, Ishwar Dayal Gaur chiselled new paradigms of "Farid-Nanak Kaida", (primer of Farid and Nanak)"Satjugi Darwar" (Kingdom of Spiritual world) and "Tiranjan of Eman" (socio-cultural space of faith). It is through the iconoclastic barrels of such paradigms that the author enabled the marginalised and emaciated people of the mainstream historiography to once again come on the stage to speak for themselves. It enabled the people of Punjab and their poets, pirs, murshids and *qissakar*s (story-tellers) to speak for themselves. The author tells us that folk is alive and it has its own genealogy. Any history that disconnected itself, cautioned the author, from its own folk genealogy becomes dry and oppressive.

The erudite author further writes that "Farid-Nanak Kaida"/"Satjugi Darwar" reminds us that Punjabi society owes its evolution to an interfaith dialogue among divergent faiths,

religions and social movements occurring at the single folk time zone which is far more complex to be decoded by the linearly tailored and modernity oriented paradigms of historiography based on the methodologically sound mainstream history. Farid-Nanak paradigm introduced an alternative way to exploremedieval Punjab buried under the debris of one-sided historical facts well preserved in the State guarded official archives. It gives, the authoremphasised, more space and value to the folk memory judiciously kept alive in the 'universal' memory of the syncretic community's cerebral space. It is such a folk paradigm, argued the author, which gathers the required strength to make a rupture in the mainstream hollow historiography. The mainstream historiography did not provide any space to folk literature and often presents the later as non-intellectual thing. The people history and folk archives,asserts the author, need to be brought into the pages of factual history.

Ishwar Dayal Gaur emphasizes that the Punjab cultural matrix (socio-cultural space) is a soothing concoction of divergent social, religious, cultural and linguistic signifiers, creations and artefacts laced with syncretic folk musk. It is much more ancient than ancient limits of the mainstream historiography. It has no affinity with those discourses, narratives, stories, ideologies, practices and idioms that foment enmity between clans and faiths, and constructcounter hegemonies of varied varieties. It considers *Khaq* or *mitti*(one's primordial cultural space/vernacular cultural space) as pious and native where folk memory digitised in the *Kalams* (poetic narratives) of sufis, qissakars and pirs sets the rules of social and individual interaction devoid of caste and religion. Baba Farid and Baba Nanak assign utmost importance to the primordial cultural space of people. The author has referred to many couplets of the spiritual poetry of Baba Farid and Baba Nanak in order to highlight the importance of folk history and its contributions towards the evolution of syncretic Punjabi socio-cultural space. He further stated that the new paradigm of Farid-Nanak Kaida teaches the art of making a distinction between the 'history of literature and culture' and 'literature and culture of history'.

The learned author made a logical distinction between the 'history of literature and culture' and 'literature and culture of history'. The 'history of literature and culture', argued the author, thrives on the factual database accumulated in the official archives of the State. But the 'literature and culture of history' has nothing to do with the dominating and hegemonising sermons of the mainstream historiography. It owes its evolution to fertile land of Punjabi-*tiranjan*. The mainstream literary historiography, according to the author, presents a distorted picture of the medieval Punjab while pigeonholing it into mutually contradictory faiths/ religions. Whereas the 'literature and culture of history' provides a holistic perspective wherein socio-culturally diverse space of Punjabi society can be seen naturally interacting among itself. Dialogue and continuous interaction between various view-points, meticulously narrated in the folk literary world of medieval Punjab, made it totally different

from the one (mutually repulsive) as projected in its mainstream history. The major difference between people history and mainstream archival history is that the former talks about the syncretic tradition of socio-cultural ethos of Punjabi society whereas the later tells us only about its divisive discursive logic. The former lives in the memory of people and folk-literature. The later is kept alive by the hegemonic dictates' of the elite/State. The author opined that ideologues of those movements/ ideologies who discarded/forgotten the paradigm of socio-cultural faith as taught by Baba Farid and Baba Nanak are either already vanished away from the land of Punjab or are on the brink of the extinction or got absorbed by the mainstream.

In a nutshell, the author has carved a brilliant counter-narrative that forces the reader to think afresh and at the same time to doubt what s/he learnt from the silky pages of the official texts. This bold and engaging study will give rise to a new thinking and debate about the urgent need of relooking at medieval Punjab through the eyes of its pirs, poets, qissakars and gurus and to find new ways to encounter the complex challenges faced bythe contemporary Punjab. I congratulate the author for preparing this brilliant book on the history and historiography of medieval Punjab.

Vivekananda: A Reader

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A. Raghuramaraju ***Debating Vivekananda: A Reader, Oxford University press, New Delhi, 2016, pp. xxviii+514.***

Raghuramaraju's *Debating Vivekananda: A Reader* is principally a rigorous academic evaluation of Swami Vivekananda's life and world experience in a philosophical perspective. The book has strong conceptual arguments enriching the liberal academic space to understand this contemporary Indian thinker for strengthening the plurality of thought and to avoid farrago in drawing conclusions. The volume brings together remarkable essays that throw new light on Vivekananda and critically points out the voice in intellectual space in India where a thinker can be approached from different outlooks. Across the volume, the arguments examine Vivekananda on practicing Vedanta, relation with his beloved guru Ramakrishna, the impact of Indian tradition and the West on Vivekananda, Universalism, Fundamentalism, Secularism, Women, and Science.

The book has been composed to fulfill dual purposes: to arrive at a meticulous assessment of Vivekananda and to take stock of what is available in the existing resources. It suggests for an open debate to evaluate this seminal thinker in the context of contemporary India by accumulating different themes. The editor laments the mechanical accumulation of academic works in contemporary India and seeks to promote debates that can form foundation for philosophical engagements. The book tries to provide concepts, theories and methods to have a creative and critical engagement with the contemporary. Some essays in the book echo the remark that the Indian intelligentsia, during the colonial period, was quick to take note of the significance of modern science and the ways in which it is culturally embedded and of which they were aware throughout the nineteenth century and even in the beginning of the twentieth century. They convinced themselves that the best products of modern science were already anticipated by what they considered to be the national philosophy of India, namely, the Vedanta. Such an effort was aimed at internalizing an alien system of knowledge, on the one hand, and, exhibiting rational and empirical significance of the Vedantic thought, which was treated, at best, as ethnophilosophical by the western philosophical world, on the other; one comes across this concern of Vivekananda which is expressed in some of the writings in the book.

The first section highlights views of Vivekananda's colleagues like Brajendranath Seal and political figures such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Jawaharlal Nehru. In his essay, Brajendranath Seal shares his adolescent life experience with Vivekananda whereas Nehru

identifies Vivekananda's two contributions as modern and progressive idea: the *experimental character of Yoga* and *rationality*. In contrast to Nehru's views, Tilak recollects early preoccupation of Vivekananda, both within and outside of India, where he emphasized progressive and modern ideas. In this section, Prabha Dixit, a historian from of the University of Delhi, claims that popularization of Vedanta cannot be considered as a unique achievement of Vivekananda alone. She further claims that during colonial rule instead of inspiring people for political action to support radical social reforms, he occupied himself to develop political escapism in people. Prabha Dixit's arguments precisely present a radical mechanism of researching Vivekananda and his position on numerous social and political disputes. For example, he strongly celebrated the nature of caste system as originality of Indian society. On the matter of equality in society, he recommended that upper caste should change their hearts towards untouchables and give them equal space. But tragically, it validates the caste system which subsequently became a roadblock in the march of untouchables towards equal civil rights through constitutional provisions rather than surviving on the mercy of elites.

The second section traces the source of Vivekananda's thought that builds his image as a global figure. It brings attention to Paul Hacker's writing where he differs with Vivekananda especially on practical Vedanta. Further, in the realm of practical Vedanta, Hacker criticizes that Vivekananda has borrowed the doctrine of '*tat tvam asi* ethics' from Deussen, a student of Schopenhauer. In the same context, Hacker argues that the modern Indian thought largely depends on western scholarship. On the contrary, Wilhelm Halbfass rejects Hacker's claims and illustrates that Vivekananda is not a mere object of historical and ideological research, but somebody who speaks back, who challenges Hacker's own fundamental premises, a partner, and opponent in an implicit dialogue. In his response, Krishna Prakash Gupta strongly rejects the claims about the role of Vivekananda in the Ramakrishna Mission movement as a prototype of the native response to the Western challenge, he also persists that Vivekananda's reformulation of Vedanta was western only in appearance, in essence it was Hindu. These essays, besides providing different insights to understand the nature of Vivekananda, reveal how Indian society is able to open and close at the same time to outside influence.

The third section consists of two essays, by Sumit Sarkar and Carl Olson, both focusing on different dimensions in the relation between Ramakrishna and his disciple Vivekananda. They induce the comparison between disciple and guru, who are contrasting in nature; whereas Ramakrishna is more liberal and approachable to all besides caste and class, Vivekananda is likely limited to only upper middle-class devotees. In the fourth section, Krishna Prakash Gupta locates the source of secularism in Vivekananda within the Hindu tradition where the West is accepted strictly in Hindu terms. He establishes that Vivekananda operates in Hindu paradigm, is obsessed with Hindu degradation and seeks Hindu renaissance. In his reply, Ashis Nandy elucidates that Vivekananda found attractiveness of Christianity as a threat to

Indian society instead of the colonial system as the West had made deeper inroads into the minds of Indians. Similarly, Nirmal Mukherjee also responds to Gupta, who says that Gupta analysis is unaware of some basic facts of modern India such as the mental transformation of minority communities and gradual weakening of spirit of liberal values.

In the next section, essay by Nemai Sadhan Bose cites Vivekananda as central to universalism and detach him from Hindu fundamentalism whereas Jyotirmaya Sharma argues that Vivekananda's thoughts emerge as a proponent of a strong, virile and militant idea of Hindu nation which can be seen very clearly in contemporary Indian society. In the further section, essays by Indira Chowdhury and Vrinda Dalmiya portray Vivekananda views on Women which claim that Vivekananda did not accommodate questions of women as he constructed a "femininity" that was not threatening and cleansed of their subjective potential. The volume concluded with Vivekananda's engagement with Science—D. H. Killingley elaborates how Vivekananda attempts to make Vedanta, a way of evolution relevant in modern scientific age. He countered Darwin's evolution theory with the traditional idea of evolution available in the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali.

In the modern world, one of the greatest struggles is the battle between science and religion. It is believed that one can never have both, but must pick a side. However, this is not the case when it comes to Vivekananda. This book highlights that Vivekananda's contribution to science-religion dialogue is relatively unexplored compared to his well-known inter-faith movement. Swami believed religion was a science: religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world. There is a compelling need to keep this dialogue going as two competing hypotheses of what is able to comprehend the features of the world around us without violating any logical canons.

Debating Vivekananda succeeds to a large extent in making a case for new scholars exploring Vivekananda to establish their arguments beyond relation of text and politics. The book has included different and critical essays which provide an in-depth understanding of Vivekananda. It gives a different platform to innovate Vivekananda in a post-colonial society. It is noteworthy that the current volume has covered both criticism and critical appreciation of Vivekananda and brings forth a narrative for further debates. However, certain things could also have been the focus such as Vivekananda's influence on his followers such as Sister Nivedita. The volume could have included more writings on the political and cultural fabrication of Vivekananda by Hindutva in the contemporary scenario where Vivekananda is being celebrated as warrior of Hinduism rather than celebrating him as figure of religious camaraderie. Also, a comparative study on Vivekananda, Gandhi, and Ambedkar could have been provided. Nevertheless, the essays of volume add innumerable value to the scholarship on Vivekananda and generate curiosity towards his philosophy.

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